

RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER SECULAR OF ST. FRANCIS

CHAPTER I

Reception, Novitiate, and Profession

1. Only those may be received as members who have completed their fourteenth year, and are of good character, peace-loving, and above all of tried fidelity in the practice of the Catholic Faith and in loyalty to the Roman Church and the Apostolic See.
2. Married women may not be received without the husband's knowledge and consent, unless their confessor judges otherwise.
3. The members shall wear the small scapular and the cord as prescribed; if they do not, they deprive themselves of the rights and privileges of the Order.
4. All who enter the Order must pass the first year in probation; then they shall duly make their profession upon the Rule of the Order, pledging themselves to observe the Commandments of God and of the Church, and to render satisfaction if they have failed against their profession.

CHAPTER II

Rule of Life

1. In all things let the members of the Third Order avoid extremes of cost and style, observing the golden mean suited to each one's station in life.

2. Let them with the utmost caution keep away from dances and shows that savor of license, as well as from all forms of dissipation.
3. Let them be temperate in eating and drinking, and devoutly say grace before and after meals.
4. They shall fast on the vigil of the Immaculate Conception and on that of St. Francis; they are to be highly commended who, according to the original Rule of the tertiaries, also either fast on Fridays or abstain from fleshmeat on Wednesdays.
5. They shall approach the Sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist every month.
6. Tertiaries among the clergy, since they recite the Divine Office daily, shall be under no further obligation in this regard. Lay members who recite neither the Canonical Hours, nor the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, shall say daily twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glories, unless they are prevented by ill health.
7. Let those who are entitled to make a last will and testament, do so in good time.
8. In their daily life let them strive to lead others by a good example and to promote practices of piety and good works. Let them not allow books or publications which are a menace to virtue, to be brought into their homes, or to be read by those under their care.

9. Let them earnestly maintain the spirit of charity among themselves and towards others. Let them strive to heal discord wherever they can.
10. Let them never take an oath except when necessary. Let them never use indecent language or vulgar jokes. Let them examine their conscience every night whether they have offended in this regard; if they have, let them repent and correct the fault.
11. Let those who can do so, attend Mass every day. Let them attend the monthly meetings called by the Prefect.
12. Let them contribute according to their means to a common fund, from which the poorer members may be aided, especially in time of sickness, or provision may be made for the dignity of Divine worship.
13. Let the officers either personally visit a sick member, or send someone to perform the services of charity. In case of serious illness let them remind and urge the sick person to arrange in time the affairs of the soul.
14. At the funeral of a deceased member the resident and visiting tertiaries shall assemble and say in common five decades of the Rosary for the soul of the departed. Moreover, let the priests at the Holy Sacrifice and the lay members, if possible, having received Holy Communion, pray with fervent charity for the eternal rest of the deceased.

Chapter III
Offices, Visitation, and the Rule Itself

1. The offices shall be conferred at a meeting of the members. The term of these offices shall be three years. Let no one without good reason refuse an office tendered him, and let no one discharge his office negligently.
2. The Visitor, who is charged with the supervision of the Order, shall diligently investigate whether the Rule is properly observed. Therefore it shall be his duty to visit the Fraternities every year, or oftener if need be, and hold a meeting, to which all the officers and members shall be summoned. Should the Visitor recall a member to his duty by admonition or command, or impose a salutary penance, let such member meekly accept the correction and not refuse to perform the penance.
3. The Visitors are to be chosen from the First Franciscan Order or from the Third Order Regular, and shall be appointed by the provincial or local superiors when requested. Laymen cannot hold the office of Visitor.
4. Disobedient and harmful members shall be admonished of their duty a second and a third time; if they do not submit, let them be dismissed from the Order.
5. Those who offend against the provision of this Rule, do not incur the guilt of sin, unless in so doing they also transgress the Commandments of God or of the Church.

6. Should a just and serious cause prevent a member from observing any provisions of the Rule, such person may be dispensed therefrom, or the regulation may prudently commuted. For this purpose the ordinary superiors of the First and the Third Order Regular, as also the aforesaid Visitors, shall have full power.

CONSTITUTIONS OF THE THIRD ORDER SECULAR OF ST. FRANCIS

Introduction

“Dearly beloved brothers and eternally blessed children, hear me, hear the voice of your Father. We have promised great things, greater things have been promised to us. Let us keep the former and long for the latter. Pleasure is brief; punishment is eternal. Suffering is slight; glory infinite. Many are called; few chosen. To all an award will be made.” (Words of St. Father Francis, compiled and edited by James Meyer O.F.M., Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1952).

“The Third Order was, as it were, the culmination of the outstanding and immortal services which Francis rendered Christianity.....; and nothing illustrates better the extent and the intensity of his burning zeal to promote far and wide the glory of Jesus Christ. For, having given anxious thought to the evils which beset the Church in his day, with unbelievable tenacity Francis set about restoring all things in accordance with the Christian standard; he founded two religious families, one for men, the other for women, who would follow the humble way of the cross by taking solemn vows. But he was not able to receive into the cloister all who everywhere desired to follow his way of life. So, he determined to give those living in the midst of the world’s turmoil a means of acquiring Christian perfection. He founded the Order – in the true sense of the word – of tertiaries: an Order not indeed bound, as were the previous two, by religious vows, yet characterized by the same simplicity of life and spirit of penance. Thus, what no founder of a religious order had ever thought of doing – making the religious life available to everyone

– he was the first to conceive and, under God, to realize with complete success.”
(Pope Benedict XV, *Sacra Propediem*, 6 Jan. 1921, *Acta Ap. Sedis*, 1921, p. 34).

CHAPTER I
ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE OF THE THIRD ORDER

SECTION I
Nature and Purpose of the Third Order

Article 1.

The Third Order Secular of Saint Francis is an association of the faithful who try to achieve Christian perfection in the world, under the direction of the Franciscan Order and according to its spirit, but in a manner suited to life in the world. This they do according to the Rule drawn up for them by the Seraphic Father Francis, as approved and interpreted by the Apostolic See (cf. Can. 702, §1).

Article 2.

The life of the Franciscan tertiaries is this: to observe the holy gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ while living in the world, and this in such a way as to be an example to others; to seek out the glory of God by sanctifying themselves and their neighbors, to which they are bound by virtue of the profession they made before the Church; to live faithfully in the spirit of penance, by observing the Rule with care in their individual and social life.

Article 3.

This life can be perfectly lived only in the union of the mystical Body of Christ, in which the tertiaries are intimately united by their profession. Hence, joined together by gospel charity, they should zealously foster a family spirit both in their own fraternity and in the whole order, and thus prove themselves a true community.

Article 4.

It is the duty of the Third Order, as a leaven of the gospel perfection put into the world, to give stability and strength to Christian life within the Church, and to maintain and spread Christ's kingdom by setting before others a pattern of genuine holiness.

Article 5.

Therefore the tertiaries, instructed and trained in the gospel life, which is truly apostolic, should imitate in their own daily lives their Seraphic Father, who did not think himself a friend of Christ if he did not devote himself to the souls redeemed by Him.

Article 6.

The Third Order, because it aims at perfection and is imbued with the apostolic spirit, can meet the demands of all the different circumstances of life in the world. Consequently, besides the normal divisions of the fraternity, other special groups may be formed within it, provided that the character of a family, proper to the order, is always kept.

Article 7.

As the Supreme Pontiffs have attested, it is very beneficial for the clergy also to be enrolled in the Third Order. Hence superiors and all the other friars should spare no effort towards this end. Furthermore, where this can be done, the commissaries should establish fraternities for the clergy, especially in diocesan seminaries.

Article 8.

Since in the Third Order there are always members who have consecrated themselves to God either by private vows or by promises, these may be gathered into groups of their own, subject to particular norms, in order that they may progress more surely in virtue and grow in numbers, and act more efficaciously as a gospel leaven in the life of the fraternity.

Article 9.

Since the Third Order was instituted for the sanctification of the married state as well – for the first tertiaries were a married couple – it would be an excellent work to form and foster groups for married and engaged couples where such members are sufficiently numerous.

Article 10.

Since, after the example of Christ and of his saints, it is of great assistance to one's own sanctification and to that of one's neighbor, to accept sufferings willingly from the hand of God and to bear them in union with the agonizing pains of Our Lord, the commissaries should see to it that the sick tertiaries are associated in groups, where this can be conveniently done. By means of regular letters and visits they should encourage the sick to offer up the pains and difficulties of life for the good of the Church and of the Order, to bear their sufferings with the patience portrayed in the gospel, and thus win for themselves treasures of grace and merit.

SECTION II
Enrollment in the Third Order

Article 11.

Since the continual growth of the Third Order should be in holiness rather than in numbers, careful inquiry shall be made whether candidates are fit for entry into the Order, according to the conditions laid down in the Rule and these Constitutions. Those are fit for membership, who, called by divine grace, desire to dedicate themselves to God in a special way in the world; that is, wish to be pleasing to God and to be of service to the Church and to human society according to the spirit of St. Francis.

Article 12.

Lay candidates shall be tested as postulants for at least three months before they are admitted to the novitiate. Secular clergy, however, and those who come from other Franciscan associations, or who for other reasons are considered sufficiently instructed, as also those who are received as isolated members, may be admitted to the novitiate immediately. Postulants shall be briefly instructed in Christian doctrine, in the life of our holy Father Francis, and in the Third Order. Thus prepared, they shall go forward to receive the habit.

SECTION III
Novitiate

Article 13.

According to the Rule, those are invalidly admitted to the novitiate who have not yet completed their fourteenth year; for candidates should be old enough to make a sufficiently serious and prudent judgment on the form of spiritual life they are about

to choose. According to common law, the following also are invalidly admitted:

- 1) those bound by the ties of religious profession (can. 704, §1);
- 2) those enrolled in another Third Order, if they have not obtained an indult to belong to both (can. 705);
- 3) non-Catholics, and those enrolled in forbidden societies, or those who have notoriously incurred a censure, and, in general, public sinners (can. 693, §1).

Article 14.

The following are, moreover, illicitly admitted: married women without the husband's knowledge or contrary to his will, unless their spiritual director or the Director of the fraternity judges otherwise; those who through their own fault are burdened with debts which they cannot pay; those who are not of a kindly and peaceful disposition, but are prone to bickering, gossip, detraction, and calumny, or to unusual forms of devotion.

Article 15.

Those who have been found suitable shall be admitted to the novitiate of the fraternity by the Director on the advice of the Council.

Article 16.

Postulants are received into the novitiate by means of the clothing of the habit, which consists in receiving a blessed scapular and cord, according to the form prescribed by the Ceremonial of the Order. Moreover, if novices are to be admitted into a fraternity, it is required for validity that their names be recorded in the register of the fraternity (can. 694, §2), without prejudice to the regulation

of Article 34 concerning isolated tertiaries. For this ceremony it is praiseworthy to use a habit or scapular shaped like a garment.

Article 17.

In their daily lives the tertiaries shall wear the small scapular under their outer clothing in any becoming manner; and also the cord, which is the badge of the Franciscan life, and an excellent reminder of penance and perseverance. For a reasonable cause, however, they may lay aside the cord and scapular for a short time. But in individual cases and for a just cause, the Director may dispense from wearing them; or he may allow to be used in their stead a metal medal bearing the image of our Lord Jesus Christ or of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of our holy Father Francis. In the case of individual fraternities, the major superiors of the Franciscan Order have the same faculty, provided that the reasons, submitted in writing by the Director and Council of the fraternity, are really sufficient. It is a praiseworthy tradition of the Order to wear the habit or large scapular during sacred functions.

Article 18.

At the time of clothing each tertiary shall be given a certificate of membership with the appropriate information, signed by the one who officiated at the ceremony.

Article 19.

The novitiate shall last one complete year, as prescribed in the Rule.

Article 20.

The purpose of the novitiate is so to prepare the novices that they may afterwards dedicate themselves to God by profession, with a

full realization of their obligations. They shall, therefore, be thoroughly formed by means of a solid grounding, both theoretical and practical, in the Christian and Franciscan life. Should any novice be unable to attend the regular instructions, the Director together with the Minister Prefect must provide for him in some other way, unless it is clear for other reasons that he is sufficiently advanced in Franciscan doctrine.

Article 21.

The novices shall be carefully instructed in the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the life and spirit of our holy Father Francis, in the nature, purpose, and history of the Third Order, and in the regulations of the holy Rule and of these Constitutions. They shall learn thoroughly the means by which they can live in the midst of the world in the spirit of Christian penance, fulfill their duties in the various circumstances of life, and perform works of religion, of charity, and of the apostolate.

Article 22.

Novices enjoy all the privileges and spiritual favors both of the Third Order in general and of the fraternity in which they are enrolled. In danger of death a novice may be admitted to profession and, thus professed, he enjoys the same privileges as the other professed members; if however he recovers his health, the profession ceases to have force, and must be made when the period of probation is complete.

Article 23.

Towards the end of the novitiate the Director, if he thinks fit, shall test the knowledge and intentions of the novices, and seek the advice of the Council as to whether they are worthy of being admitted to profession. If a novice through his own negligence

has not attended the majority of the instructions, or if it remains that he is not worthy and suitable, the novitiate shall be prolonged, but not beyond six months. If, however, when the year of novitiate is completed, a novice through his own negligence fails to make profession within two years, the novitiate must be repeated if he wishes to be admitted to the Order. Where isolated tertiaries are concerned, Articles 33 and 34 shall be observed.

SECTION IV Profession

Article 24.

Profession in the Third Order is a solemn religious act whereby one of the faithful, moved by divine grace, dedicates himself to God, promising to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the world, by living according to the commandments of God and the Rule of our holy Father Francis; and promising to atone for transgressions committed against the Rule or these Constitutions, should the Visitor or the Superior so wish. Profession is, therefore, a special renewal of the baptismal promises and a self-consecration, whereby one of the faithful living in the world promises to use particular means for leading a life in full accord with the gospel. In this way he unites himself by a closer bond to our Lord Jesus Christ and becomes a member of the great Franciscan family. Because of this, tertiaries should hold their holy profession in high esteem throughout their lives.

Article 25.

For profession to be valid it is required that those who are about to make it:

- 1) be fifteen years old;
- 2) have duly completed the novitiate, in accordance with these Constitutions;
- 3) do so freely and expressly in the presence of the lawful superior or another who has the proper faculties.

Profession shall be made according to the form prescribed by the Ceremonial and shall be noted in the register of the fraternity, without prejudice to Article 34 concerning isolated tertiaries.

Article 26.

In order to make their profession with greater fruit and fervor, the novices shall prepare themselves well for it, if possible by first making a retreat.

Article 27.

The rite of profession, as laid down in the Ceremonial, shall be carried out with great solemnity. It shall take place in conjunction with the Sacrifice of the Mass, where this can conveniently be done. This ceremony shall not be held too often, so that it may not be cheapened through frequent use; but, rather, that those making the profession and all those who are present may draw from the ceremony an increase of holiness. The vernacular may be used both in the rite of profession and of clothing.

Article 28.

At the time of profession, the certificate of membership, spoken of in Article 18, shall be completed with the appropriate information.

Article 29.

In the Gospel our Lord gives this admonition: “No one who looks behind him, when he has once put his hand to the plough, is fitted for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Therefore, the tertiary brothers and sisters – as persons who have embraced a constant way of life in the world – shall strive to strengthen themselves more and more in their holy resolution. Hence, they are urged to make a frequent renewal of their profession with devotion, at least privately; but to make it publicly on the anniversary of the profession of our holy Father Francis (April 16), and at the time of retreat.

SECTION V

Unaffiliated or Isolated Tertiaries

Article 30.

An unaffiliated or isolated tertiary is one who, for just and reasonable causes, cannot be enrolled in any fraternity, or who was admitted invalidly to some fraternity because of omission of registration – provided that he was received by a priest who had the faculty of receiving even isolated tertiaries.

Article 31.

All superiors may receive isolated tertiaries without seeking the consent of the local ordinary (can. 703, §2); others may do so, however, only if they have obtained the proper faculty from the competent superior. This faculty can be granted for prudent

reasons to priests who do not belong to the Franciscan Order, always without prejudice to the regulation of Article 34.

Article 32.

Isolated tertiaries must carry out the year of novitiate as laid down in these Constitutions, Moreover, special care is needed in their case, lest they go to profession without sufficient preparation, or later lose the Franciscan spirit little by little. Indeed, since they do not have the benefit of the very frequent instructions that are given in the fraternities for the spiritual formation of tertiaries, they should be given a full training, in whatever manner this can best be done.

Article 33.

When the novitiate year has been duly completed, the superior, if he thinks fit, shall test his knowledge and intentions either personally or through another priest; and if they are found worthy, they shall be admitted to profession.

Article 34.

Although it is not required for validity that the names of isolated tertiaries be entered in the register of the Order, it is nonetheless very useful, so that clear proof may be had of the clothing and of the profession ceremonies (cf. can. 694, §2). Therefore, in such cases, the priest who carries out the clothing or receives the profession shall inform the proper provincial commissary as soon as possible, mentioning the surname, the Christian name, and the residence of the member, as well as the day, the month, and the year of the clothing or of the profession. The commissary will write this information into a register specially kept for this purpose.

Article 35.

Every isolated tertiary is strongly advised to maintain contact, if possible, with the provincial commissary or with the one who received him into the Order; to subscribe to some Franciscan magazine; to attend the more solemn functions with the nearest fraternity, whenever an opportunity occurs; to present himself for visitation there at least every three years, and occasionally to inform the provincial commissary about his Franciscan and apostolic way of life.

Article 36.

The provincial commissary shall send a circular letter to the isolated tertiaries at least twice a year, and shall get them to meet sometimes for a day of reunion.

Article 37.

Isolated members enjoy the rights and privileges which tertiaries have as individuals, but not those they have as members of a fraternity.

Article 38.

If an isolated tertiary wishes to be admitted to some fraternity, it suffices that he be accepted by that fraternity and entered in its register.

CHAPTER II WAY OF LIFE

“Oh how happy and blessed are they who love the Lord, and who do as the Lord himself says in the Gospel: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy neighbor as thyself* (Mt. 22, 37-39). Let us therefore love God and adore him with a pure heart and a pure mind... And let us praise him and pray to him day and night... Let us, moreover, produce the good fruit of penance (Lk. 3, 8). And let us love our neighbors as ourselves” (Our holy Father Francis, *First Letter to all Christians*).

SECTION I

Christian Perfection According to the Franciscan Spirit

Article 39.

Although the Third Order is not a body of persons who are already perfect, it is principally a school of integral Christian perfection, imbued with the genuine Franciscan spirit. For, it was instituted for this purpose: “to satisfy fully the sincere desires of those who had to remain in the world but who did not wish to be of the world. Therefore, the Third Order wishes to have as members those who burn with the desire of striving for perfection in their own station in life” (Pope Pius XII, *Address to Tertiaries*, 1 July 1956, *Acta Ap. Sedis*, 1956, p. 573-577).

Article 40.

Tertiaries shall meditate on and put into practice before all else that well-known two-fold commandment of Christ: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole mind. This is the greatest of the commandments, and the first. And the second, like it, is this, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew, 22: 37-39).

Article 41.

Since Christ is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6), tertiaries should have the deep conviction that, by reason of their baptism and holy profession, they must become like Christ crucified, and must follow his gospel as their rule of life. For, the observance of that gospel in a perfect way is the reason for the Rule of our holy Father Francis. Thus, the members, “Although they pass their lives in the midst of the world, should be imbued with the mind and spirit of Christ” (Pope Pius XII, *Address to Tertiaries*, 20 September 1945).

Article 42.

Charity unites not only God with men but also men with one another, as is shown in the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ: “I pray...that they may all be one; that they too may be one in us, as thou Father, art in me, and I in Thee” (John, 17: 20-21). Tertiaries, therefore, shall regard all others as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ our Lord. They shall treat each one with the greatest kindness and courtesy, that is both sincere and heartfelt, praising virtues and mercifully concealing faults – in keeping with the exhortation of the Apostle: “Bear the burden of one another’s failings; then you will be fulfilling the law of Christ” (Galatians, 6:2).

Article 43.

That they may more easily practice love of God and charity towards their neighbor, members shall follow the example of Christ who said of himself: “The Son of Man did not come to have service done him; he came to serve others, and to give his life as a ransom for the lives of many” (Matthew, 20:28). Further, with the Seraphic Francis as their model, they shall, instead of living merely for themselves, make every effort to be of service to others, and to spread Christ’s kingdom by word and work. They shall strive to settle disagreements and discord wherever they may come upon these, and make the greatest endeavor to restore and promote the spirit of charity and peace.

Article 44.

Led by the spirit of submission, and with hearts full of joyous gratitude, tertiaries shall regard as outstanding gifts of God the benefits of the Creation, of the Incarnation, and of the Redemption. But they shall use the goods of this world in the fear of the Lord, and put themselves under the yoke of service and of loyalty to God by controlling the gratification of corrupt nature, the gratification of the eye, and the empty pomp of living (cf. 1 John 2:16). They shall always bear in mind that, through baptism and holy profession, they have died with Christ, and must lead a new kind of life, living for God in Christ Jesus our Lord (cf. *Romans*, 6:3 – 11).

Article 45.

They shall love and venerate the Holy Roman Church with utmost devotedness, because to it alone Christ entrusted the treasures of truth and holiness. So, with a promptness of will, the submission of sons, and a sincere loyalty, they shall pay homage to the Supreme Pontiff, Christ’s Vicar on earth, to their bishops, regular superiors, parish priests, and all other shepherds of souls. They shall love, honour and revere the priests of the Church, who, as our Seraphic Father says, consecrate and administer to others the most holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Article 46.

Imbued with the spirit of poverty, the members, while they may prudently provide for their present and future needs, shall take care to disengage their hearts from the things of this world. They shall bear in mind that they will be children of their Seraphic Patriarch only in so far as they foster this spirit of mortification.

Article 47.

Accordingly, let them beware of committing any sin in acquiring and enjoying temporal goods. Rather, let them share these things with their neighbors, bearing in mind that all temporal things – private property itself included – have been given to them by God not only for their own advantage but also that they may be administered well for the good of society. Moreover, let them, in good time, will their property, with due regard for justice and charity.

Article 48.

Since daily work is an excellent and continual practice of penance and the companion of Christian joy, tertiaries shall prove themselves untiring, faithful, and diligent at work, doing

everything for God's honor and glory. Thus they will earn for themselves the necessities of life, avoid idleness, develop and perfect their natural skills in an excellent way, and be able to perform great works of charity.

Article 49.

Tertiaries shall avoid all vanity in their appearance and clothes, and adhere to the standard of simplicity, moderation, and propriety that befits each one. With regard to food and drink, they shall observe the frugality enjoined by the Rule and also the fasts imposed by the Church and the Rule.

Article 50.

They shall steadfastly avoid dances, theatrical performances, films, and television shows that tend to be offensive to good morals, and also all forms of dissipation. Concerning dances in general, tertiaries shall observe exactly the regulations laid down by the Church in their various localities, so that they may never be the cause of scandal. To put the spirit of penance into practice better and to foster recollection, it is to be recommended that they abstain altogether from dances and worldly shows.

Article 51.

As lovers of the eminent virtue of chastity, members shall regard their own bodies and those of others as holy, and observe the Christian precepts on this matter in keeping with each one's state of life. The unmarried shall hold the state of continence or virginity in high esteem and keep it unsullied; those who are engaged shall chastely prepare themselves for entrance into holy matrimony; and married tertiaries shall draw from the sacrament they have received the graces necessary to raise and train their

children well and watch over their married life faithfully, holily and chastely.

Article 52.

Those tertiaries are worthy of very great praise who, experienced in the ways of the Lord, and on the advice of their spiritual director, take one or other private vows.

Article 53.

In order to recognize one another more easily and to be more effectively drawn together in bonds of fraternal charity, tertiaries shall wear an external Franciscan emblem, where this can be prudently done. Further, it is urged that one and the same emblem be worn throughout the world. Likewise, tertiaries shall salute one another with the Franciscan greeting *Pax et Bonum*, or in any other religious manner according to local usage.

SECTION II

The Divine Office and Other Exercises of Religion

Article 54.

The tertiaries, going through the world, shall, with joy and thanksgiving, contemplate God in all creation. Always and everywhere they shall proclaim His glory, acting as heralds of the Great King after the example of their Seraphic Father. In a more excellent way still, they shall glorify God in union with Christ and His Church by active participation in the sacred functions.

Article 55.

With all due care they shall keep holy Sundays and the feastsdays of obligation. They shall be painstaking in their attendance at the functions recommended in the Rule and in these Constitutions,

and at other sacred functions, especially those carried out in their parochial Franciscan churches.

Article 56.

The Union with Christ which is begun in the faithful by baptism is renewed and strengthened through participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Consequently, tertiaries shall be on fire with love for the most sublime Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to the words of their Seraphic Father: “Brothers, kissing your feet, and with all the charity of which I am capable, I beg you all to show every reverence and honour possible to the most holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all things in heaven and on earth are set at peace and are reconciled (cf. *Colossians*, 1:20) to Almighty God” (*Letter to the General Chapter*).

Article 57.

If at all possible for them, tertiaries shall strive to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass daily, and to go frequently to Holy Communion with devotion. Those unable to do so shall take care to make a spiritual communion. Thus, united with the Eucharistic Christ, either sacramentally or in spirit, they shall start their daily work with confidence.

Article 58.

They shall show deep reverence for God’s churches, whether these are large and richly furnished, or small and poor; and they shall make visits to them readily, whenever an opportunity occurs. There they shall adore Christ with the words of their Seraphic Father: “We adore You, most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Your churches throughout the world; and we bless You, because by Your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.”

Thus, through participation in the Eucharist, they shall realize and profess their membership of the Mystical Body of Christ, of whose unity this most sublime Sacrament is the symbol, the sustaining power, and the perfection.

Article 59.

They shall fulfill their obligation of reciting the office faithfully, attentively, and devoutly – saying daily any one of the following: the Canonical Hours; the short office granted by the Church in various forms for lay brothers and sisters; the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the *Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father*, recited twelve times. If it is convenient, they shall recite these prayers at different times of the day after the manner of the Canonical Hours. It is commendable to recite them in common and in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. With the exception of the Canonical Hours, these prayers may be recited in the vernacular.

Article 60.

In accordance with the Article 167, priest-tertiaries may use the Roman-Seraphic Missal and Breviary. Likewise they are recommended to recite it daily, on completing the Divine Office, some antiphon or responsory and a prayer in honor of our holy Father Francis.

Article 61.

In accordance with the Rule, tertiaries shall receive the sacrament of penance every month or even oftener; and, when possible they shall have a competent spiritual director. They shall, moreover examine their consciences daily, and correct the sins they have committed by truly repenting of them.

Article 62.

Daily, if possible but especially on Sundays and holy-days, tertiaries shall devote some time to mental prayer or spiritual reading. They shall make frequent use of the Sacred Scriptures, particularly of the holy Gospel, and also of the life of our holy Father Francis and of the other saints of the Seraphic Order. Likewise, by means of the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, they shall reflect, especially during Lent and on Fridays, on the last sufferings of Christ.

Article 63.

Tertiaries, even those who belong to other pious associations, shall do their utmost to attend the monthly meetings enjoined by the Rule. In the morning, where possible, Mass shall be celebrated, with a sermon and general Communion of the members. In the afternoon, or evening, the meeting shall be held in this way: after the recitation of the opening prayers as laid down by the Ceremonial, the Director shall preach on some point of Franciscan spirituality, adapting his discourse to the congregation; he shall then make the announcements about past and future activities; lastly, after the recitation of the final prayers, he shall bring the meeting to a close with Benediction of the most Blessed Sacrament, if possible. At some suitable time before the end of the meeting, the alms offered by the members, for distribution among the poor and other pious uses, shall be collected.

Article 64.

In the absence of the Director or another priest, the monthly meeting shall be conducted as follows: the Minister Prefect or his substitute shall recite with the members the ritual prayers and any others suited to the time and place; he shall then read a part of the

Rule or of these Constitutions or of the life of our Seraphic Father or of some other Franciscan saint; he shall make whatever announcements are necessary, indicate the date and time of the next meeting, collect the alms, and recite the final prayers.

Article 65.

A most effective means of renewing one's zeal for perfection is the monthly recollection day. Tertiaries shall do their utmost to make one either with the fraternity or privately.

Article 66.

It is strongly recommended that in every fraternity an open retreat of a Franciscan nature be held annually. But each member shall take care to make a closed retreat at least every three years.

Article 67.

Those who organize congresses of more than usual importance shall not fail to send expressions of their devoted homage to the Roman Pontiff and to the ministers general of the order (Saint Pius X, *Tertium Franciscalium Ordinem*, 8 September 1912, *Acta Ap. Sedis*, 1912, p. 585 f.).

Article 68.

Every year in the month of January or of June, each fraternity shall publicly make or renew its solemn consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in the month of May or December, its consecration to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, using the approved prayers.

Article 69.

Tertiaries shall love the most Blessed Virgin Mother of Jesus with a tender and filial affection, and honor her as Queen and Patron of the Order with special devotion and reverence.

Article 70.

Similarly, they shall venerate with particular devotion and imitate Saint Joseph, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, also our holy Father Francis, holy Mother Clare, and the patrons of the Third Order, namely, Saint Louis the King and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. They shall celebrate their feasts with solemn ceremonies.

SECTION III Family and Social Life

Article 71.

The Franciscan spirit is particularly suited to the good ordering and safeguarding of family and social life. Tertiaries, in the first place, shall promote with loving care the Christian family; for upon it, in great measure, depends the welfare of the Church and of human society. So, in imitation of the Holy Family of Nazareth, they shall strive to uphold the particular aim and the sanctity of marriage and of the Christian family, to practice the home virtues, to accept out of love for God the burden even of a large family, and to excel all others in uprightness of life and in the spirit of sacrifice.

Article 72.

They shall take the greatest care to make life within the family pleasant and happy, even when means are limited. The furnishings of the house shall mirror the Franciscan spirit as far as

possible. The crucifix, so dear to our holy Father Francis, shall occupy the principal place in the living rooms and bedrooms. Home life shall be sanctified each day by morning and evening prayers, and by grace before and after meals. The following practices are strongly recommended: the reading of the New Testament or of the life of some saint; the recitation of the rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the Franciscan Crown; and the consecration of the family to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, annually renewed.

Article 73.

In accordance with the Rule, they shall not permit in their homes books, newspapers, images or pictures, radio or television programs, from which harm to virtue may be feared; and they shall also prudently restrain those subject to them from using such things. Rather, they shall foster by all means in their power everything that makes family life holy and happy.

Article 74.

Tertiaries shall carefully observe and uphold the virtue of justice, both commutative and distributive, both legal and social, prudently tempering it with charity. With great sincerity they shall show themselves to be true Christians and Franciscans by paying their debts, by giving and taking a just price for goods on sale and for work done, by cultivating a spirit of thrift, by promoting peace among members of the different social classes, by bettering the conditions of the poorer class, by giving particular support and encouragement to the middle class, and by honoring agricultural and manual work as well.

Article 75.

Consequently, tertiaries shall be thoroughly familiar with the encyclical letters *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* and with the other papal documents dealing with social and political matters; and they shall make every effort to put into practice in their own lives the principles found therein. Yet fraternities of the Third Order as such shall abstain from engaging in civil or purely economic and political affairs. In carrying out social action they shall observe to the letter the instructions and regulations of the Holy See and of the local ordinaries (Pope Saint Pius X, *Tertium Franciscalum Ordinem*, 8 September 1912, *Acta Ap. Sedis*, p. 585).

Article 76.

Nevertheless, it is clearly the mind of the Church that tertiaries as individuals shall, in virtue of their own spiritual formation, by their example and activity, strive to better the social and political world in which they live. For, the Third Order is well fitted to the task of adjusting the relations between rich and poor, “since it bases itself on this firm conviction, the poverty is not without a dignity of its own: that, while the rich man is bound to be compassionate and generous, the poor man should be content with his lot and with the fruits of his labor: and that, since neither was born to live for such passing things, the one by patience, the other by liberality must make his way to Heaven” (Pope Leo XIII, *Auspiato*, 17 September 1882).

Section IV Works of the Apostolate

Article 77.

“The Third Order is a chosen company in the peace loving army of laypeople, drawn up in constant readiness for the defense of the kingdom of Christ and its spread throughout the world. Hence, following in the footsteps of their Seraphic Father, tertiaries shall, more than others, defend and support the Church, and give it new life” (Pope Pius XII, *Address to Tertiaries*, 1 July 1956, *Acta Ap. Sedis*, p. 577).

Article 78.

Tertiaries, as heralds of the Great King, shall therefore spend themselves for the salvation of their neighbor in works of charity and of the apostolate. They shall work energetically in promoting the Catholic Faith, and in defending the Church and the Roman Pontiff. They shall devote themselves principally to the works and duties that are especially proper to the Franciscan Order, as for instance, the missions, the promoting of religious vocations, etc., or to the projects passed over by others.

Article 79.

All superiors, as well as subjects, shall make a point of settling differences with great zeal and equal prudence, thus modeling themselves on their Seraphic Father, who always proclaimed the message of peace with great fervor to those he met on his travels and to those who came to visit him. They shall give the closest attention to upholding fraternal harmony and charity between the members of each Franciscan Family. As far as possible, they shall work together in planning and carrying out public

celebrations, such as pilgrimages, congresses and more important festivities, and works of piety and of the apostolate.

Article 80.

In order to ensure that they do not develop into associations of a purely devotional character, the fraternities of the Third Order are encouraged to promote individually as far as circumstances permit, a particular work of the apostolate. This should be done with the individual provinces also.

Article 81.

In keeping with the mind of the Supreme Pontiffs, the directors and the members of the Seraphic Order shall readily support and carry out, in full co-operation with the ecclesiastical superiors, the projects proposed by them in their respective nations, regions, dioceses, or parishes, and in particular the work of Catholic Action. They shall always maintain peaceful and harmonious relations with other pious associations, especially parochial.

Article 82.

In gratitude to God and to the Church for their Franciscan vocation, members shall do their utmost to advance the interests of the Order. One or more shall be appointed in each fraternity whose duty it will be to promote and spread it with prudent zeal, especially among men and young people. Furthermore, let commissaries and directors see to it that boys and girls, from their earliest years, are enrolled in ever-increasing numbers in some Franciscan association adapted to their needs, which will be a nursery for aspirants to the Order.

Article 83.

It is strongly recommended that books and periodicals dealing with the life and spirit of the Third Order be published and widely propagated among the members. If conditions are favorable, the four Regular Families shall undertake this in common, according to regulations approved by the superiors. The members, for their part, shall not only buy and read Franciscan literature themselves, but shall also be zealous in spreading it as much as possible among those outside the Order. In this way they will nourish continually the Franciscan spirit in their own hearts, make the Third Order known to others, and exercise the praiseworthy apostolate of good literature.

Article 84.

For the rest, all shall bear in mind the very solemn appeal made by the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Pius XII, in an address to the tertiaries: "To work, you too, beloved children! Jesus Himself asks this of you through me, His Vicar. Press forward, all! Bring aid to a world in jeopardy! Uphold the Church!" (Pope Pius XII, *Address to Tertiaries*, 1 July 1956, *Acta Ap. Sedis*, p. 577).

Section V

Sick and Deceased Members

Article 85.

Tertiaries who are sick, disabled, old, or afflicted with any infirmity, shall bear their trials patiently, nay more, with Franciscan joy, as companions of the suffering Christ. In union with the whole Mystical Body of Christ they shall offer the hardships of their lives to the heavenly Father in expiation of their own sins and the sins of the world. They shall give thanks to God for all the blessings he has bestowed on them.

Article 86.

After the splendid example of their Seraphic Father, and in accordance with the Rule, the members shall show deep sympathy towards the sick and infirm, and great concern for their needs. Where possible, persons qualified in the care of the sick shall be appointed infirmarians in the fraternities, in conformity with the Article 145. Moreover, in the spirit of fraternal charity, the tertiaries, but especially the Minister Prefect and Councilors, shall visit and encourage the sick; and if these are poor, provide for their needs insofar as their means allow.

Article 87.

As the Rule directs, they shall also advise and gently urge those who are dangerously ill to receive the last sacraments in good time. The tertiaries shall perform this salutary service for the rest of the faithful as well.

Article 88.

The regulations which the Rule lays down concerning the obsequies of the members and concerning the prayers to be said for their eternal happiness shall be observed carefully, as determined by local customs. In addition to the usual prayers enjoined for deceased tertiaries, each fraternity shall have the sacrifice of the Mass applied in the month of November for its deceased members.

Article 89.

It is highly commendable for tertiaries to direct that they be buried in the full habit of the Order.