



Guideline: 2024-01

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Revision Date:

Subject: Virtual Participation in Meetings or Gatherings

The use of virtual meeting technology has offered the opportunity for virtual meetings, which can replace face-to-face meetings in some instances. Article 24 of the OFS Rule states: “To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community...”. Thus for Secular Franciscans, in-person gatherings or meetings are always preferred.

The following guidelines are offered to clarify the situations where in-person participation is required and virtual participation is allowed.

Regional and local guidelines may require in-person participation, and thus should be consulted. See also OFS General Constitutions Articles 40 and 53.

In-Person Required The only acceptable means of participation	Ceremonies and Rites
	Elections
	Visitations
Virtual Participation Acceptable with Exceptions	Meetings of Fraternity Councils – virtual participation is acceptable except in the cases where secret ballot voting is required.
Virtual Participation Acceptable In-Person is preferred	Fraternity gatherings with a virtual or *hybrid option, if available, for hardship situations. *Some members attend in-person, and some participate virtually.
	Initial formation sessions, with the understanding those in formation participate in-person in monthly fraternity gatherings.