



## The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order – USA

### Guidelines for Regional Fraternity Visitations

While the schedule and form of a Visitation may vary among Regional Fraternities, it is important that both Fraternal and Pastoral Visitors accomplish the purpose assigned to their particular type of visit. Prayerful consideration and implementation of these guidelines will result in gaining the full value a Visitation.

**1. Preparation:** Well before a visit the Regional Minister together with the Council should thoughtfully and prayerfully conduct a regional self-evaluation. We enclose a Pre-Visitation Questionnaire for this purpose. The completion of this Questionnaire is meant to be a collaborative effort accomplished by the Regional Fraternity Executive Council, and is not intended to be the work by one person. Ideally the Council comes together to discuss the questions and reflect upon the answers to be submitted. Please make additional copies of this questionnaire available to each member of the Regional Fraternity Executive Council, *as each Council member is welcome to fill out a questionnaire on their own and send it directly to the Visitors*. Please send the copy prepared by the Council to the Visitors at least **two weeks** before the actual Visitation. One copy should be retained in the records of the Regional Fraternity.

**2. Visitation Schedule:** It is important to allow adequate time for the Visitation. The Visitors need several hours to meet and dialogue with the Regional Executive Council and review files and records. The Visitors will attend the Regional Fraternity Gathering and address the Regional Fraternity as a whole. Time also needs to be allotted for the Visitors to meet with the assembled Local Fraternity Ministers and the Spiritual Assistants of the Region. A one-day Visitation is not enough time. Please review your schedule with the Visitors in advance.

**3. Evaluation:** The Visitors will look at the following areas and methods:

Spirituality: Spiritual growth, prayer, and liturgy

Service to local fraternities: How needs are communicated and met

Communication: with Local and National Fraternities, as well as public relations

Formation: Description of formation programs both initial and ongoing including text(s) used

Vocation Promotion: Methods and frequency

Financial Stewardship: Proper recording and accounting for the Region's common funds.

**4. The Report:** After the Visitation the Region will receive a written report from the Visitors.

What happens *before* and *after* the visits themselves are in many ways as important as the visit. The Regional Council needs to review the Visitation report and do their best to carry out the recommendations given. The Visitors will welcome the opportunity to dialogue with you regarding the report and the recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations will be a great benefit to your Region and is a sign of true cooperation.

We highly recommend that the Region undertakes a review of the Visitation Report a year or so after the Visitation in order to evaluate your Region's progress.