

CNSA has some concerns concern about the canonical establishment of a new fraternity without a spiritual assistant. It seems that in certain instances the process is missing some key appropriate steps which are required before an *emerging fraternity* can be canonically established. A SA should be appointed at the beginning of the process.

- 1) Both the Regional Spiritual Assistant and the Provincial Spiritual Assistant must take measures to assure that **a newly forming** group will have a spiritual assistant (during the process) before agreeing to the canonical establishment of the new fraternity
2. *It is the specific competence of the major superiors, in the name of their jurisdiction:*
  - a. *To establish, canonically, new local fraternities and guarantee them spiritual assistance.*
  - b. *To animate spiritually and visit the local fraternities assisted by their own jurisdiction.*
  - c. *To keep themselves informed on the spiritual assistance given to the SFO.*
3. *The major superiors are responsible for the spiritual assistance to the local fraternities they have established.*

*Cf. SFO General Constitutions – article 88.2, .3*

When a **newly forming** group begins the process to become canonically established, the Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the SFO (2005) states quite clearly:

- \* *A newly forming group is attached to a sponsoring fraternity by the Regional Executive Council. A member of the new group is selected to be a non-voting liaison to meetings of the sponsoring fraternity council.*
- \* *Contact is made with the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the 1<sup>st</sup> Order or TOR province to which the fraternity will be bonded. Upon the Province’s acceptance of the *altius moderamen* for the **newly forming** group, the PSA appoints a spiritual assistant to the **newly forming** group.*

Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the SFO – 2005 – Page B9.

2) In order that the *altius moderamen* be preserved, everyone should have a clear understanding of the concept of the *altius moderamen*. (cf. SFO General Constitutions – article 1.4 / See footnote on Page 1 of the GC in the book: *Essential Documents of the SFO*)

3) The process of requesting a local spiritual assistant, according to the SFO Rule (Article 26) and the General Constitutions, must be carefully observed. The new fraternity must take an active role in this process. It is part of their training to understand the role of the *altius moderamen* of which the SA is a part.

26. *As a concrete sign of communion and co-responsibility, the councils on various levels, in keeping with the constitutions, shall ask for a suitable and well-prepared religious for spiritual assistance. They should make this request to the superiors of the four religious Franciscan families, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries.*

SFO Rule #26

*When it is not possible to give such a spiritual assistant to the fraternity, the competent major superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to:*

- a. *Religious brothers and sisters of other Franciscan institutes;*
- b. *Diocesan clerics or other persons, specially prepared for such service, who are members of the SFO;*
- c. *Other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious*

SFO General Constitutions – article 89.4