Brothers and Sisters of Penance—Brief History—Fr Christopher, T.O.R.

TOR/OFS are guided by the Holy Spirit in search of God in the world. Our Rule is a form of life for a more perfect observance of the Gospel by reason of our condition of life. The 1221 *Letter to All the Faithful* is an inspirational text.

1221 Form of Life

1978 Pauline Rule

* Spiritual and evangelical
* A return to the spiritual experience of St Francis
* Attention to the Spirit in the “signs of the times”

The Rule invites us

* to creativity, and
* the exercise of co-responsibility

Essentials for mission effectiveness:

* autonomy
* unity, recognizing its centralized system
* vital reciprocity

7 Popes were Secular Franciscans

* Gregory IX: *Memoriale Propositi* 1221 to 1228—canonical establishment of the Third Order; detailed daily life of penance; need for a more organized structure for penitential groups
* Nicholas IV: *Supra Montem* 1289—new rule given to the Third Order by papal bull; closer juridical relationship with 1st Order friars over dependence upon the 1st Order
* 13th century: tensions between Holy See and the State
* Privileges enjoyed by the Order of Penance with immunity from laws of the State
* Lesser involvement of the friars
* Elias takes interest in the fraternities; new changes in assistance to them
* Difficult to bring peace when divisions are present
* Urban VIII 1628 Observants (Conventuals) are guardians of the Rule
* 1883: *Misericor Dei Filius*—to protect the Third Order
* Leo XIII from Perugia, established fraternities everywhere; entrusted the Third Order to be the fundamental stone of the great Christian Social Doctrine
* 1893: national/international congresses of studies in the social actions of the Third Order; social reforms to the Church and Third Order apostolates
* 19th – 20th century: first steps of unity for OFS; approval of statutes of international council of the Third Order by the General Minister of the Franciscan Family
* *Approval of the Pauline Rule of 1978:*
* Unity of the Order
* Centralized form of government
* Autonomy
* Vital reciprocal communion between 1st Order/TOR