



**FIVE FRANCIS MARTYRS REGION**

**PASTORAL and FRATERNAL VISITATION REPORT**
**St Bonaventure Fraternity ~ Fleming Island, FL ~ Sept 21, 2024**

**Part 1: *Fraternal Visitor***

**Visitation**

Name of the Fraternal and/or Pastoral Visitors, and the date and place of the visitation

**Statistics and Composition**

 Date the fraternity was established, and Province bonded to and does the region have documentation?

 Membership numbers: professed, candidates, inquirers, orientees and affiliates.

 Growth in the last 3 years

 Date council elected

 Name of the Spiritual Assistant. Does the region have the SA’s official appointment on file? (*Pastoral Visitor will fill this out*)

**Preparatory Information**

Were the questionnaires completed and received by the visitors in a timely manner?

**Records**

Comment about overall status of the record keeping (poor, incomplete, good, very good, or excellent) Check the following:

 Roster of Members

 Official Profession Register

 NAFRA data base information and who in the fraternity updates the database

 Copies of essential documents including Rule, Constitution, Statutes, Regional Guidelines
 Minutes – Fraternity and council meetings

 Attendance records

 Treasury Reports –

o Are reports issued to fraternity – how often?

o Is a yearly budget prepared and presented to membership for approval?
o Do they have a copy of Fraternity Internal Controls and Guidelines?

 (*located at the end of the National USA Statutes)* The *Fraternal visitor should have soft copies available for distribution or emailing prior to arrival or after the visitation.*

o Are records kept of donations? Is Fair Share made annually?

 o Is a ledger maintained?

 Year-End Report to the Region sent in a timely manner?

 History- is documentation of past events and history of the fraternity being kept?

 Publications – do they publish a newsletter, a web site (other than the FFMR Regional Website), or Facebook? *Make note of the website address for the region*

**Participation in local, regional, and national activities**

Does the fraternity participate in the Annual Regional Meeting?

Are there any fraternity members serving on the regional or national level?

Do they receive and read the TAU-USA National newsletter and theRegional Newsletter - Joyful Messenger?

**Council**

What is the experience level?

Do they work well together as a team to guide and animate the fraternity? Comment on the participation of the Spiritual Assistant.

**Gathering Observations**

Describe format. Was the agenda presented to the visitors and was the business kept to a minimum? Did all the members participate and were all encouraged to share?

Is enough time given to the social to give members a chance to bond?

***PART 2: Pastoral Visitor***

**The Four Pillars**

*“As you journey with other Secular Franciscans in the Five Franciscan Martyrs Region (FFMR), you will experience a Trinitarian approach as we embrace Him as mentor and His way as model. It is God’s inspiration; it is Francis’ life as model and mentor. Francis of Assisi is the conduit of God’s grace for us.*

**Spirituality**

*Whenever a fraternity gathers, the topic is always Franciscan in nature. Prayer and contemplation must anchor the spirituality, Pillar. It is the means to being attentive and pursuing the application of our Franciscan spirituality daily. Our quest is to nourish and make strong the Spirit of God within us.*

This fraternity expresses the spirituality of the fraternity by doing the Liturgy of the Hour together in community in monthly gatherings. Deacon Rich Hay shares a meditation or reflection. I would like to encourage that all members also lead prayers whenever possible this is also a good way to develop leadership skills.

The fraternity also explores the lives and examples of Franciscan saints monthly.

They currently don’t have an official Spiritual Assistant but has requested one. Deacon Rich is currently taking the online SA course but not sure when he can complete the course due to his other responsibility as a deacon.

**Formation**

*is intended to mold and shape the individual progressively throughout Orientation, Initial Formation, and Ongoing Formation…Information serves to give insight, to understand, and to practice an authentic Franciscan way of life. This gives way to an internalized and integrated facet of the Franciscan way of life. Ultimately, with time and application, there is a transformation.*

The fraternity conducts initial and On-Going formation separately. Initial formation is done via zoom and ongoing formation is conducted during the monthly gathering.

The fraternity currently has a Formation Team of seven profess members which includes two members from the council. Five of the seven team members do the Candidacy Phase while the other two are part of the Aspirant\Inquiry Phase and one of the five does both phases as needed. The Formation director has developed an excellent Ongoing Formation Plan that covers three years. In 2023 – Rule & Greccio, 2024 – Stigmata, 2025 – Canticle and in 2026 – Francis “Easter”.

 We observed Ongoing the formation class, the formation director did a reflection on the Stigmata, and dialogue on the topic with members present. The fraternity uses The Journey, the Constitution and the Catechism for Initial formation. The Formation Friday is shared with the whole fraternity as well.

**Fraternity**

It was evident to me that the fraternity supports each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and demonstrate a true Franciscan family of caring and loving for each other. Even though we did not observe the council meeting it was apparent that the council works well together.

**Apostolate**

Apostolate is a clerical term used to denote an association of persons dedicated to the advancement of a particular ministry, mission, or activity. An Apostolate is normally action oriented. In the case of the Secular Franciscan Order, each Fraternity may have one or more Apostolates where its members gather, plan and actively support a continuing activity approved by the Fraternity. In the case of the St Bonaventure Fraternity there are three group Apostolates: "Servant of Servants" Food Bank/Soup Kitchen" to the homeless. These apostolates are great in that it allows all members to participate in one way or another but also supports the local community.

**Commendations**

You are to be commended on developing a well thought off Ongoing formation Plan from 2023 thru 2026 that should be well executed. I was very pleased to see that since Formation is the number 1 priority of the Order.

 **Recommendations**

Recommend the fraternity stays connected with other fraternities whenever possible by attending regional workshops or events. The “gathering of friends” (like minded Franciscans – not necessarily local fraternity members) is one way to stay connected.

 Appoint a Youth and Young and Adult (YouFra) and also a Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committees to disseminate information to the fraternity from the National and International fraternities.

Please review this Visitation report periodically. Highlight the recommendations made and in six to nine months, as a council, prepare a response to the Regional Minister of actions taken.

Please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Regional Council for assistance or advice. We are here to serve you.

Again, thank you for your time and hospitality and the lunch provided during our visit.

A very special “thank you” to James Foxwell, OFS, Minister, for coordinating the schedule and providing all pre visitation documents required for this visitation. Also, the fraternity as whole for their participation and willingness to serve.

Please give each member of the fraternity a copy of this Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation Report and, as a community, dialogue about the contents.

Peace and all Good!

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