

## **FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY OF RECONCILIATION**

### **A Franciscan Religious Order of the Catholic Apostolic Church In North America**

The Franciscan Community of Reconciliation is a professed religious community that embraces commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit of St.'s Francis and Clare of Assisi and Charles of Brazil. These holy saints, in answering God's call, recognized the need to initiate reform in the Church, seek social justice, embrace the poor, and reconcile to the Church those who were no longer welcome. We see their mission as being at one with the prophetic mission of Christ.

### **OUR MISSION**

As a community, we share the vision of St.'s Francis, Claire, and Charles of Brazil by

preaching and living the Gospel message in word and deed;  
reaching out to God's people without discrimination;  
recognizing we are called to be servants of the servants;  
allowing the Holy Spirit to make us instruments of peace;  
helping others find and experience the love of God in all things;  
seeking social justice for all;  
recognizing and embracing the poverty of God's children;  
protecting the dignity of all creation; and  
joining the whole Church in daily prayer, worship, and devotion

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Community is open to all baptized persons who have been chosen by God to follow in the footsteps of Francis, Clare, and Charles of Brazil. Though we may identify with different faith communities, we are free to worship and, when possible, live together in peace. Members who have not already been formed in the Franciscan way of life are required to participate in a formation program which begins with the Novitiate. This phase of formation will last at least one year, and possibly longer if deemed necessary by the formation team. All members are expected to continue studying the Gospels (with special application to social issues), the life of St. Charles, and the Franciscan way of life. Each Friar and Sister must be involved in an active ministry outside their normal responsibilities to their faith communities. Ministries should be in keeping within the Community's mission and selected in consultation with the Minister General and the member's respective superior(s).

## **FORMATION PROGRAM**

**This program provides novices with a list of study materials necessary to understand the spirit and way of life of the Franciscan Community of Reconciliation. As it becomes necessary, this list may be amended.**

**Each novice will communicate with the Minister General of the Community as prescribed and/or otherwise necessary.**

**Novices are under the direction of the Director of Novices.**

**Novices are expected to select and communicate with a spiritual director of their choice.**

**With a professed member of the community, each novice will study the Rule and Constitution of the Community.**

**Each novice will study the meaning of the professed vows of Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience.**

**From a list provided, each novice's reading materials will cover the lives of Francis, Clare, and Charles of Brazil.**

**In consultation with the Minister General, each novice will select and prepare for their chosen ministry.**

**All novices are to begin a daily prayer life that will continue throughout their professed life.**

**All novices are expected to help promote community by joining, when possible, with the Community in prayer, ministry, and celebration.**

## **RELIGIOUS HABIT**

**The religious habit worn by the members of the Community is an outward sign of commitment to the Gospels and the Community's way of life. The habit should be gender appropriate and in keeping with the spirit of the design. The habit will consist of a tunic scapular with attached head gear/hood, gray in color.**

**The Franciscan habit is gray in color to represent the cassock worn by St. Charles and the original color of habit worn by St.'s Francis and Clare.**

**The traditional Franciscan white cord will be worn with three knots to represent the vows of Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience.**

Professed Friars and Sisters will wear a silver cross of San Damiano suspended on a red cord around their necks. The cross represents St.'s Francis and Clare, and the red cord is symbolic of the Episcopacy of St. Charles.

Sisters and Friars are permitted to wear a rosary on their habit if they so choose. The rosary may be worn from the first day of clothing/novitiate. In order to have uniformity in our habits, those wearing rosaries should wear the same style, suspended from their cord on their left side.

## **CONSTITUTION OF THE FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY OF RECONCILIATION**

This Constitution is established to implement provisions of the Holy Rule of the Society. Ever mindful of our sacred calling to live the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in the manner of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Clare of Assisi and St. Charles of Brazil, let each member of the community adhere to that model in all that they do.

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### ***General Norms***

1. The Franciscan Community of Reconciliation (F.C.R.) was canonically established as a religious order of the Catholic Apostolic Church in North America (CACINA) on April 20, 2004, by "Letters Canonical" granted by the Presiding Bishop, Raymond Kelly, and the College of Bishops. The Community consist of a First Order of brothers, deacons, and priests, a Second Order of nuns and sisters, and a Third Order of lay persons and secular clergy. Each has been canonically established in accordance with the Constitution of CACINA.

2. The First and Second Orders of the FCR are stable forms of living by which members of the faithful, following Christ more closely and under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God, Who is loved most of all, so that, having dedicated themselves to His Honor, the upbuilding of the church, and the salvation of the world by a new and special life, and having become an outstanding sign of God's grace in the Church, they may foretell the Heavenly Glory.

Christian faithful who profess the vows of Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience by sacred bonds according to the proper laws of the First and Second orders of the FCR and CACINA freely assume this form of living. The life of the First and Second Orders of the FCR is a consecrated life. Canonically established by competent Church authority and through the charity to which these counsels lead, they are joined to the Church and its mystery in a special way.

The Third Order of the FCR is a society of lay members and secular clergy who seek to more closely model their lives after the teachings of Christ by following the example of St.'s Francis and Clare of Assisi and St. Charles of Brazil. In this they are supported by

spiritual advisors from the First Order. Christian Faithful who profess the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by simple promises according to the proper laws of the third Order of the FCR and CACINA freely assume this form of living. The life of the Third Order of the FCR is a dedicated life canonically by established by competent Church authority and, through the charity to which their promises lead, they are joined to the Church and its mystery in a special way while remaining members of the laity or secular clergy.

**3. Any Baptized person who has validly received the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, who has been suitably prepared by competent authority, is endowed with a right intention, who has the qualities required by universal and proper law, who possesses the characteristics and motivations described in the Holy Rule of the Community, and who is not prevented by impediment can be admitted to the FCR.**

**4. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of CACINA and the documents of its establishment, the FCR enjoys a rightful autonomy of life, especially of internal governance, by which the Community enjoys its own discipline in the Church and has the power to preserve their patrimony. Grant for the General Convention of CACINA and the College of Bishops the right to intervene in matters of discipline and governance of Religious Orders is provided iwithin strictly defined limitation. Bishops, whether Presiding or diocesan may not intervene in the internal governance of the Society.**

**All persons having Ordinary jurisdiction, as defined in the Constitution of CACINA, in a specific locale where Community members exercise public ministry, have absolute control and governance of the conduct of that public ministry. FCR clergy serve in a diocese with the specific permission of the Ordinary of that diocese, and continue their clerical ministry at the bishop's pleasure and discretion.**

**5. Members of the FCR, inasmuch as they are dedicated in a special way to the service of God and the entire Church, are subject to the authority of the Church in matters canonical. In addition to the authority of the church, individual members are bound in canonical obedience to the lawful superiors of the Community, and the lawful superiors of the diocese in which they minister.**

## ***CHAPTER 2***

### ***Admission and Initial Formation***

**6. The right of admitting candidates to the FCR pertains to the Minister General and the Formation Team for the First and Second Orders, and the Spiritual Assistants for the Third Order. Superiors with right of admitting candidates will ascertain due diligence in discerning the call of each candidate. Superiors with right of admitting candidates will ascertain that each prospective candidate for admission has attained at least the minimum age specified herein and/or in the Code of Canons of CACINA, is of suitable character, possesses normally good health of body and mind, possesses right disposition,**

and possesses the character and maturity required for the FCR. If necessary, the testimony of experts as to these qualities may be warranted and obtained.

**7. Only those persons who have attained their 18<sup>th</sup>. year, have validly received the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, are of good character and proven fidelity to their Christian faith, and embody respect for the Catholic Apostolic Church In North America (CACINA) may be received as members of the FCR.**

**It pertains solely to the Minister General and the Formation Team to discern the acceptability of candidates to the First Order.**

**It pertains solely to the Minister General and the Formation Team to discern the acceptability of candidates to the Second Order.**

**It pertains solely to the assigned Spiritual Assistant to discern the acceptability of candidates for the Third Order.**

**8. Married candidates shall present evidence of spousal consent to their membership in the FCR. Married candidates without spousal consent may be admitted with the consent of the Minister General.**

**Persons in Holy Orders shall present written evidence attesting to the consent of their diocesan bishop to their admission to the first Order of the Society.**

**9. All who enter the FCR who have not been formerly formed as a Franciscan will enter the Novitiate. During the Novitiate, the Candidate shall be the responsibility of the Director of Novices or, in their absence, the Minister General, or other appointed member of the Formation Team.**

**10. During the Novitiate period, the candidate shall learn all that is required of them as a member of the FCR, with emphasis on the manner of life in imitation of Francis, Clare, and Charles of Brazil. They shall especially study the Holy Gospels and the lives of Francis, Clare, and Charles. Candidates will study the Constitutions and Rules of the Community. Special emphasis on Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience shall be given.**

**11. Upon entering the Novitiate, novices shall be clothed in the FCR habit without the cross of San Damiano, which is a sign of profession.**

**12. After successful completion of at least one year in the Novitiate, novices in the First, Second, and Third orders will profess their temporary vows for a period of two years. At that time the professed member may wear the cross of San Damiano as a sign of their commitment by vows.**

**13.. The period of the Novitiate may be extended for a term of an additional year upon request by the novice or at the discretion of the Minister General and the Formation Team for the first and Second Orders, or the Spiritual Assistant for the Third Order. At the conclusion of the additional period of Novitiate, the novice must make profession or be dismissed from the FCR.**

**At the conclusion of the period of Temporary vows, the professed member shall make profession for life or request an additional two years of temporary vows. After the extension of two years, the member must make final profession or be dismissed from the FCR.**

**14. Members of the First and Second Orders shall profess the vows of Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience as interpreted by CACINA. Members of the Third order shall make simple promises to live the Gospel Life according to the example of St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Charles of Brazil.**

**15. The Minister General May waive or modify these regulations to address individual needs.**

**16. Persons who have professed in any Franciscan Order in another community may be admitted to professed status in the FCR on the initiative of the Minister General after a probationary period which the minister General shall determine on an individual basis.**

**Those so admitted shall renew their profession of obedience to the Superiors of the FCR.**

### ***CHAPTER 3***

#### ***Conduct of Members***

**17. In all things let the members of the FCR avoid extremes of cost and style, seeking always to be shining examples of the simplicity of spirit and detachment from material goods which marked the life of Christ, Francis, Clare, and Charles of Brazil.**

**18. Let members, with utmost caution, refrain from participation in activities that would bring disrepute upon themselves or on the FCR.**

**19. Let members be temperate in eating and drinking, and devoutly give thanks to God before and after meals.**

**20. Let members undertake individual acts of penance and charity, which may include fasting and abstinence. In acts of penance, let members seek moderation, remembering that the goal of penance is not abnegation, but a positive discipline of the body and the turning of the soul to God in love.**

**21. Members are encouraged to pay special devotion to all Franciscan and CACINA saints and blessed on the days of their memorials and feasts as set forth in the Order of Prayer (ORDO) adopted for use by their diocese.**

**22. Members whose faith communities receive the Most Holy Eucharist shall do so on a daily basis when possible. The Sunday Liturgy/Services shall be obligatory for all members of the FCR, except when circumstances prevent attendance.**

**23. Members are to have a daily prayer life. This may include the Divine Office or other suitable devotion.**

**24. The habit of the FCR is an outward sign of commitment to the Gospel Life. As such, its wear is encouraged when appropriate. Members shall wear their habit at all liturgical church functions. Members in the Holy Order of Bishop may wear the habit or they may wear Episcopal Vesture appropriate to their Order, at their sole discretion.**

**Members in the Holy Order of Deacon and/or Presbyter shall wear the habit of the Community in lieu of cassock.**

**25. The habit of the FCR for members of the First Order shall consist of a tunic extended to the ankles with a detached scapular and hood. The material should be made of modest but sturdy material and be gray in color. Sandals are the appropriate footwear with the habit, but shoes maybe worn in winter and when necessary. The Habit shall have a cord of white as a belt worn around the waist with the ends hanging to the hem of the tunic. One of the hanging ends of the cord shall have three (and only three) knots, recalling the vows of Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience. The loose ends shall hang on the wearer's right side. All members are permitted to wear a habit rosary of the same kind, suspended on the cord on their left side. All professed members shall wear a San Damiano Cross suspended on a red cord around their necks on the outside of the habit.**

**25a. Members of the Second Order of the FCR shall wear a habit similar to that of the First Order, adapted, as necessary, to their gender. In particular, a veil shall replace the hood for female members. If a female member chooses not to wear a veil, the habit will consist of the tunic, scapular without the hood, cord, and San Damiano cross. The material and color is to be the same as the First Order.**

**25b. Members are excused from wearing the habit at times when extremes of climate make its wear impractical.**

**25c. Members of the Third Order, in recognition of their secular state, shall wear habits only during liturgical and official functions of the Community. At other times, they shall wear usual garb, together with some outward sign of their commitment, preferably the cross of San Damiano. The habit of the Third Order shall have five knots, recalling the five wounds of Christ, and they may wear a rosary at their waist. Members of the Third Order hold the absolute right to be buried in their habit.**

**26. In their daily lives, let members strive to inspire others by good example and to promote practices of piety and good works, especially towards those experiencing injustice or discrimination.**

**27. Let members avoid taking an oath, except when required by civil law. Let them avoid the use of profanity or indecent speech. Let them nightly examine their consciences on these matters and resolve to correct the use of such speech.**

**28. Let all members contribute, according to their means, to a common fund from which the FCR may support its ministry and render aid to those in need.**

**29. Let each member keep in touch with their brothers and sisters, that they might foster community. This may be done in person, by telephone, or email. Let the Minister General keep in touch with each member at least once a year. Let him offer council and guidance as may be needed. Let him listen to the voice of the members, that he may learn of his journey and his needs.**

**30. If a member becomes sick, let us offer our brother or sister assistance, that they might know our charity.**

**31. Let all members assemble at the funeral of a deceased member, there to pray for the departed.**

**32. Let each member attend the Community's chapter meetings.**

#### **CHAPTER IV**

##### **Officers and Discipline**

**33. The FCR shall be headed by a Minister General, who shall be superior to the entire FCR and who shall be a finally professed member of the First Order in the Holy Order of Bishop, Priest or Deacon. The Minister General shall be elected by simple vote of the professed members of the First and Second Orders for a three year term. There is no limit to the times a Minister General may serve. The founding Minister General will serve for life in order to offer the Community stability.**

**As the Community grows, provinces may be formed. Each province shall be headed by a Provincial Minister, who shall be under obedience to the Minister General. The Provincial Minister shall be the superior of their province. He/She shall be a professed member of the First Order in the Holy Order of Bishop, Priest or Deacon. The Provincial Minister shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the provincial members of the First Order of the Community residing within his/her province, or he/she may, when necessary, be appointed by the Minister General.**

**The Second Order shall be headed by a Mother General who shall be under obedience to the Minister General. The Mother General shall be elected by the professed members of the Second Order.**

**The Second Order shall have Mother(s) Provincial who shall be under obedience to the Minister General, the Provincial Minister, and the Mother General of the Second Order. They shall be the superiors of the Second Order in their Province. The Mother Provincial shall be elected by simple majority vote of the Professed members of the Second Order residing within her province or she may be appointed, when necessary, by the minister General, the Provincial minister, or the Mother General of the Second Order.**



**Other Officers of the FCR shall be**

**Vicar General who shall be voted in by the Community**

**Secretary/Treasurer General who shall be voted in by the Community**

**Director of Novices/Formation who shall be appointed by the Minister General**

**Guardians who shall be voted in by the Community**

**The term of all offices shall be three years. All offices except Minister General and Vicar General are optional at the discretion of competent authority.**

**Let no one decline an office without good cause. Let officers never discharge their duties negligently, maliciously, or venally. Let no one seek to obtain or retain an office as a matter of personal right, but let each surrender their office willingly when their time is completed.**

**34. Provinces will be determined in name and geographic areas when deemed necessary by the community.**

**35. Provincial Guardians for the First Order shall be of the First Order. Provincial Guardians for the Second Order shall be of the Second Order.**

**36. If a member is privately admonished or reprimanded by a superior, let the member submit in all humility if it is just. The member may be admonished or reprimanded three times. If the behavior persists, the member may be dismissed from the FCR. A member who is admonished should experience charity and respect.**

**37. Those who transgress against the provisions of the Holy Rule and this Constitution do not incur sin, unless, in so doing, they also transgress the Law of God.**

**38. If, for just and serious cause, a member is prevented from observing some part of the Rule and this Constitution for a period of up to one month in duration, they may do so in their own judgement. They shall, however, inform their superior at the earliest possible moment of their actions in this regard. Furthermore, the Minister General or immediate superior may dispense any member from the observation of any portion of the Holy Rule and this Constitution for just or serious cause.**

**39. Professed members of FCR may be dismissed from the FCR by the Minister General if, after three admonitions to conform their conduct to that required by the Holy Rule and this Constitution or to the Code of Canons of CACINA, the member fails to conduct themselves as prescribed by those documents. Professed members may also be dismissed by the Minister General if they commit offenses against the unity of CACINA, to include apostasy, heresy, or schism, are found to have committed fraud or coercion in their admission to the FCR, are found in violation of the Constitution of CACINA., or are found to be mentally ill. Professed members may also be dismissed if they are adjudicated or plead guilty to any criminal charge which is either a felony or which is a misdemeanor punishable by more than one year incarceration.**

40. Novices may be dismissed from the FCR at any time in the sole judgment of their respective superiors.

41. If it is deemed that the Minister General is not conducting him/herself in an appropriate manner, contrary to the Rule and Constitution of the Order, the three most senior members of the Community by day of entrance may notify the College of Bishops.

42. Any portion of the Holy Rule and this Constitution which is not in conformance with the Constitution of CACINA shall defer to the Constitution as to be interpreted as if it were in conformance with the Constitution.

## **THE RULE AND THE LIFE OF THE**

### **FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY OF RECONCILIATION**

#### **PROLOGUE**

*(From the Letters to all Faithful 1, 1-19 of & Francis of Assisi)*

“All who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole souls and mind, and with all their strength, (cf. Mk 12:30) and love their neighbors as themselves, (cf. Matthew 22:39) and who despise the tendency in their humanity to sin, receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and bring forth from within themselves fruits worthy of true penance, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things, and preserve in doing them because ‘the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them’ (cf. Is. 11:12) and the Lord will make His home and ‘dwelling place with them’ (cf. John 14:23). They are the children of the heavenly Father (cf. Matthew 5:45) whose work they do. They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ. (cf. 12:50).

We are His spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy spirit with Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers (and sister) when we do the ‘will of the Father who is in heaven’ (cf. Matthew 12:50). We are mothers who bear him in our hearts and bodies (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:20) with divine love and with pure and sincere consciences; and will give birth to him through a holy life which should enlighten others because of our example. (Matthew 5:16).

How glorious is to have so holy and great a Father in heaven; and to have such a beautiful and admirable Spouse, the Holy Paraclete; and to have a Brother and a Son, so holy, beloved and Blessed, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable over all things: Our Lord Jesus Christ who gave up his life for his sheep (cf. John 10:15) and prayed to the Father, saying: ‘Holy Father, keep in your name (John 17:11) those whom You gave Me in the world; they are Yours and You gave them to Me’ (John 17:6. And ‘the word which You gave Me I gave to them, and they accepted it and truly believed that it came forth from You. And they have accepted that You sent Me’ (John 17:8). I pray for them and ‘not for the world’ (John 17:9). Bless them and ‘sanctify them’ (John 17:17). I

‘sanctify Myself for their sakes’ (John 17:19). ‘I do not pray for these but also for those who, through their word, will believe in Me’ (John 17:20), may they be holy ‘in oneness as We are’ (John 17:11). Father, I wish that ‘where I am they too may be and that they may see My glory (John 17:24) in Your Kingdom’ (Matthew 20:21).

### Chapter I

1. The rule and the life of the Friars and Sisters of the Franciscan Community of Reconciliation is this: that they shall live the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit of St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Charles of Brazil. They shall live a life of Simplicity, Charity, and Obedience within the state in life and according to the norms and Constitution of the Catholic Apostolic Church in North America (CACINA) and the Constitution of this Community. Since they have been chosen by God, Who has given them this new life, they shall live lives that reflect all that is good and holy.

2. As a community of baptized men and women from various Christian traditions, we recognize that we worship the one and the same God, who is Father of us all. As an inclusive community, we will not practice discrimination in any form. We will love as Christ loved, we will teach as He taught, we will seek justice as He did for all God's children. Ours is to be a life where we can grow spiritually, nourished in the richness of our faith.

3. Where we find alienation, we will offer acceptance. Where we see poverty, we will offer the abundance of our Father's love. Where we find those made to feel shame, we will help restore their dignity. With the stones others cast away, we will rebuild the Church.

4. With all in the Holy and Catholic Apostolic Church who wish to serve the Lord, the Friars and Sisters of this Order are to persevere in true faith. In the Spirit of Francis, Clare, and Charles of Brazil, we will run towards them from whom others run away. As Francis once found the lepers repulsive and later embraced them, we will reach out to those who society attempts to hide.

5. In response to Christ's prayer "that they all may be one", we will seek ways to foster understanding among the different religions. We will call for respect for all traditions in the spirit of ecumenism, recognizing that there are many wells but one river.

6. The Friars and Sisters promise obedience and reverence to the Constitution of the Community. As obedience calls us to listen, we should show diligence, respect and honor to one another. We should also foster unity and communion with all the members of the Franciscan Family. Our obedience is to Jesus Christ and the message of the Gospel.

### Chapter II

7. Those who, through the Lord's inspiration, come to us desiring to accept this way of life are to be received kindly. At the appropriate time, they are to be presented to the ministers of the fraternity who hold responsibility to admit them.

**8. The ministers shall ascertain that the aspirants truly adhere to their faith and their church's sacramental life. If they are found to have a vocation, they are to be initiated into the life of the fraternity. Let everything pertaining to this Gospel Way of Life be explained to them, especially these words of the Lord: "If you wish to be perfect (cf. Matthew 19:21), go and sell all your possessions (cf. Luke 18:22) and give to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me." And "if anyone wishes to follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me" (cf. Matthew 16:24).**

**9. Led by the Lord, let them begin a life of conversion of spirit, conscious that all of us must be continuously and totally converted to the Lord. As a sign of their conversion and consecration to the Gospel Life, they are to clothe themselves plainly and to live in simplicity.**

**10. When their initial formation is completed, they are to be received into obedience, promising to observe this Life and Rule always. Let them put aside all attachment as well as every care and worry, let them only be concerned to serve, love, adore, and honor the Lord God, as best they can, with singleheartedness and purity of intention.**

### **Chapter III**

**11. Everywhere and in each place, and in every season and each day, the brothers and sisters are to have a true and humble faith. From the depths of their inner life, let them love, honor, adore, serve, praise, bless, and glorify our most high and eternal God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With all that they are let them adore Him "because we should pray always and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1); this is what the Father desires. In the same spirit, let them also celebrate a daily prayer life. The sisters and brothers whom the Lord has called to the life of contemplation (Mk 6:31), with a daily renewed joy, should manifest their special dedication to God and celebrate the Father's love for the world. It was He who created and redeemed us, and by His mercy alone shall save us.**

**12. Whenever they commit sin, the brothers and sisters, without delay, are to do penance interiorly by sincere sorrow and exteriorly by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They should also do worthy deeds that manifest their repentance. They should always strive to be simple and humble, especially before God. They should desire nothing else but our Savior, who offered Himself in His own Blood as a sacrifice on the altar of the Cross for us, giving example so that we might follow in His footsteps.**

**13. Professing Charity, let the brothers and sisters know that they are called to find the love of God in themselves and in others. May they minister with the utmost care to all those seeking to find the presence of God's love in their lives. Let them teach others and themselves the joy of loving our God.**

**14. Let the brothers and sisters seek ways of offering charity to others both spiritually and materially. Let the burdens of others be for us a reason to touch and heal.**

#### Chapter IV

15. As poor people, living a life of simplicity, the brothers and sisters to whom the Lord has given the grace of serving with their hands, should do so faithfully and conscientiously. Let them avoid that idleness which is the enemy of the soul. But they should not be so busy that the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, which all earthly goods should foster, is extinguished.

16. In exchange for their service or work, they may accept anything necessary for their own temporal needs and for that of their families, or their sisters or brothers in the community. Let them accept it humbly, as is expected of those who are servants of God and seekers of a life of simplicity. Whatever they may have over and above their needs, let them offer the poor. And let them never want to be over others. Instead, they should be servants and subjects to every human creature for the Lord's sake. (1 P 2-13).

17. Let the sisters and brothers be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, mild and humble, speaking respectfully to all in accord with their vocation. Wherever they are or wherever they go throughout the world, they should not be quarrelsome, contentious, or judgmental towards others. Rather, it should be obvious that they are "joyful, good-humored," and happy "in the Lord" as they ought to be (cf. Philippians 4:4). And in greeting others, let them say, "The Lord give you peace."

#### Chapter V

18. Because God loves us, the brothers and sisters should love each other, for the Lord says, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Let them manifest their love in deeds (cf. 1 John 3:18 ). Also, whenever they meet each other, they should show that they are members of the same family. Let them make known their needs to one another. Blessed are they who love another who is sick and seemingly useless, as much as their brother or sister who is well and of service to them. Whether in sickness or in health, they should only want what God wishes for them. For all that happens to them, give thanks to our Creator.

19. If discord caused by word or deed should occur among them, they should immediately (Matthew 18:35) and humbly ask forgiveness of one another before offering their gift of prayer before the Lord (cf. Matthew 5:24). And if anyone seriously neglects the form of life all profess, the minister, or others who may know of it, are to admonish that person. Those giving the admonition should neither embarrass nor speak evil of the other, but show great kindness. Let all be careful of self righteousness, which causes anger and annoyances because of another's sin. These in oneself or in another hinder living lovingly.

## Chapter VI

20. Following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has made His own will one with the Father's, the sisters and brothers are to remember that for God they should give up their own wills. Therefore, in every kind of chapter they have let them "seek first the kingdom of God and His justice", (Matthew 6.33) and exhort one another to observe with greater dedication the rule they have professed and to follow faithfully in the footprints of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them neither dominate nor seek power over one another, but let them willingly serve and obey "one another with that genuine love which comes from each one's heart" (cf. Galatians 5:13). This is the true and holy obedience of Our lord Jesus Christ.

21. They are always to have one of their members as minister and servant of the community whom they are strictly obliged to obey, according to the norms of CACINA, in all that they have promised the Lord to observe, and which is not contrary to conscience or rule.

22. Those who are ministers and servants of the other shall visit, admonish, and encourage them with humility and love. Should there be brothers or sisters anywhere who know and acknowledge that they cannot observe the Rule according to its spirit, it is their right and duty to have recourse to their ministers. The ministers are to receive them with such love, kindness, and sympathy that the sisters or brothers can speak and act toward them freely. This is how it should be. The ministers are to be servants of all.

23. No one is to appropriate any office whatsoever as if it were a personal right; rather, each should willingly relinquish it when the time comes.

24. Any changes or additions to our Constitution or Rule will be considered for review at our chapters. A democratic vote will be taken among the professed members and a majority rules. Prayer must always be a part of the process.

## Chapter VII

25. The brothers and sisters are to live with peace in their hearts. They are to love as Christ loved, loving their neighbor as themselves. They are to heal the wounded, bind up those who are bruised, and to reclaim the erring. Wherever they are, they should recall that they have given themselves up completely and handed themselves over totally to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy, visible and invisible, for the love of Him, because the Lord says, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).

26. The brothers and sisters should not seek glory, or be self-satisfied or interiorly proud because of a good work or word God does or speaks in or through them. Let them always acknowledge that it is God who works in their hearts, and to Him all glory be given.

**27. Let the brothers and sisters always live according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Brothers and Sisters, offer yourselves as living witnesses, holy and acceptable to God. Be transformed into instruments of peace. Walk with those who are lonely, feed those who hunger, heal those who have been injured, pardon those who seek forgiveness, reconcile those who have been alienated. Live your lives in imitation of Christ in the spirit of Francis, Clare, and Charles of Brazil. Bless one another, love one another, and care for one another in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Friar Francisco Betancourt FCR, Minister General**

**Note: The Rule and Constitution is an adaptation of the rule of the SSF, CACINA, which was taken from the rule of the Third Order Regular of the Roman Catholic Church. It has been adapted for use in CACINA by the Community with the approval of the College of Bishops of CACINA.**

**Prepared and submitted to the CACINA College of Bishops by Father Francisco Betancourt, March 7, 2004. Approved by the College of Bishops on April 20, 2004.**