

**Secular Franciscan Order
National Fraternity of Canada**

Restructuring of OFS National Fraternity

Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

The last twenty-five years have seen significant changes in the composition of Canada's Secular Franciscan family.

Census data from 1991 indicate that the Secular Franciscan family consisted of 18,114 members spread out across 357 local fraternities. At that time, local fraternities were structured around the Provincial boundaries of the friars and included six provincial areas. In March 1992, a project was initiated to regionalize Canada's National Fraternity by grouping all of the local fraternities in a particular geographic area together, regardless of the Obediences of the friars who assisted these fraternities. Over the next few years, the regionalization process was implemented with a total of 14 regional fraternities constituted. During the next twenty-five years, the National Fraternity continued to change and experienced an overall decrease in the number of Secular Franciscans as well as the number of local fraternities. In 2019, the majority of members in many regions are elderly and there are few new members in formation. Many of the sisters and brothers are dealing with illnesses and find it difficult to engage in leadership within the Order. In other regions, like Western Canada, there is significant growth; however, this region experiences challenges in serving the needs of local fraternities that are present across four civil provinces. There are currently 12 regional fraternities in Canada, three in the Anglophone sector and nine in the francophone sector.

The most striking change over the past 25 years is the overall decrease in membership from 18,114 to 1723, a decrease of more than 90 percent. This is also reflected in the decrease in the number of fraternities from 357 to 115, a decrease of more than 68 percent. It is worth noting that the francophone sector of the National Fraternity now has half the number of members found in the Anglophone sector but has three times the number of regions. Even though the composition of the National Fraternity has changed significantly during the past 25 years, there have been few structural changes during that time period. Several regional fraternities have merged while others are currently experiencing difficulties maintaining a regional council. It is now time to explore other options that will better serve our Secular Franciscan family into the future.

It is important to recognize that Article 61.2 of the General Constitutions specify that "it is for the National Council to compose the regional fraternity according to the Constitutions and to the national statutes". It is therefore the National Council's responsibility to address the changes that have occurred in the composition of the National Fraternity since its original regionalization in the early 90's.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine options for updating the regional structures of the National Fraternity;
2. To present options to the National Chapter and to choose an option to pursue;
3. To develop a process for implementing the selected option.

SCOPE

This project will include both anglophone and francophone sectors of the National Fraternity; that is, all regions of the National Fraternity.

All options for restructuring will be considered providing that they are in conformity with the OFS General Constitutions.

METHODOLOGY

Assemble a project team to conduct the initiative.

Identify the needs of local fraternities from a regional structure.

Conduct a situational analysis of the services provided by Regional Councils.

Meet with Secular Franciscans from all regional fraternities to discuss options that could be implemented to support them in living their Franciscan lives. These consultations should include Secular Franciscans who have been involved or are currently involved in leadership. Consultations associated with this project should form part of the discussion during fraternal and pastoral visits to Regional Councils.

Develop a paper that would present options for updating the regional structure of the National Fraternity. All options must be in conformity with the provisions of the OFS General Constitutions. This paper would then be circulated across the National Fraternity for comments and discussion.

A proposed course of action will be formulated by the project team for discussion with the National Council. The proposal should include a timeline for its implementation.

The National Council's proposal will be presented as part of the 2021 National Elective Chapter.

DELIVERABLES

Terms of Reference

Local Fraternity Needs

Situational Analysis of Services Provided by Regions

Template for Discussion

Options Paper

Proposal to National Chapter

SCHEDULE

October 2019 – March 2021

Inventory of local fraternity needs
Situational Analysis of Regional Services
National Consultations
Options Paper

April 2021

Options Paper circulated to regional fraternities

May 2021 (National Elective Chapter)

Presentation of Options Paper and Proposal
Presentation and approval of Implementation Process

BUDGET

\$5000 – travel ??

TEAM / ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The project will be lead by the Commission to Restructure the National Fraternity of Canada.

The Commission will consist of six members: the National Minister, the two National Vice-Ministers, a representative from the anglophone sector, a representative from the francophone sector, and a National Spiritual Assistant.

The Commission's primary role will be to ensure that the project progresses in line with its Terms of Reference. The Commission will be the primary point of contact for the restructuring of the National Fraternity of Canada.