

Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order

Process to appoint a local spiritual assistant

The local spiritual assistant is appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the council of the fraternity concerned.

The process to appoint a local spiritual assistant is outlined below with references from:

- * 2026 Handbook for the Spiritual Assistant to the Secular Franciscan Order (Chapter 3)
 - * 2002 Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order, (article 23)
 - *Franciscan Family Connections (Chapter 1)
 - *Guidelines of the Regional Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis of the Secular Franciscan Order (Section III, article 9).
- *It is strongly recommended that the fraternity council acquire a copy of these documents for both the council and the spiritual assistant.*

STEP 1: Council and fraternity pray together to find the right person to serve as spiritual assistant. Someone who is “knowledgeable about Franciscan spirituality as well as understanding the Franciscan way of life.” Someone who understands “how the OFS fraternity fits into the Franciscan family, the people of God – called Church – and how it serves the world.” Council asks the person if they have “the time and ability to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans” and is willing to assist.

Council contacts the Regional Spiritual Assistant for concurrence per regional guidelines. Send his/her name and a brief biography (qualifying information) with copy to Regional Minister. Regional Spiritual Assistant will notify REC and local fraternity council of his/her concurrence or need for additional information.

STEP 2: REC will contact local fraternity to proceed when accepted by Regional Spiritual Assistant.

STEP 3: The local fraternity council then makes the request of the Provincial Spiritual Assistant or Minister Provincial of the province to which the fraternity is bonded. The local council recommends an individual to be local spiritual assistant. They send his/her name and a brief biography (qualifying information) to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant and request the appointment. The PSA may accept a nominee and appoint him/her...and or request additional information.

When the PSA appoints an individual as spiritual assistant to a particular fraternity, the nominee receives a letter of appointment from the PSA or minister provincial of the Province to which the local fraternity is bonded. The appointment is for no more than 12 years.

STEP 4: Fraternity council notifies REC of appointment.

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There is a liturgical ritual which a local fraternity can use to install the spiritual assistant. It is recommended that such a ritual be used. (Found in 2005 Handbook for the Spiritual Assistant to the Secular Franciscan Order, Segment B – Page b3ff.)

2026 Handbook for the Spiritual Assistant to Secular Franciscan Order

Chapter 3 – Appointing Spiritual Assistant

2002 Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order.

Art. 13

1. The principal task of the assistant is to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans [30]

Art. 15

1. The Assistant is appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the council of the fraternity concerned [37] .

2. Where more than one major Superior is involved in the appointment of an Assistant, the norms established jointly by the Superiors with jurisdiction in the territory should be followed [38] . (Applies mainly to regional spiritual assistants)

3. The appointment of the Assistant is made in writing and for a limited time, which accumulated cannot be more than twelve years.

4. When it is not possible to give the fraternity a spiritual Assistant who is a member of the First Order or the TOR, the competent major Superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to:

- religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes;
- secular Franciscans, cleric or lay, specially prepared for such service;
- other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious [39] .

Guidelines of the Regional Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis of the Secular Franciscan Order

Section II Fraternal Life

Article 9. Local Fraternity and Group Responsibilities

11. To seek concurrence of the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) prior to request for appointment of spiritual assistant.

Franciscan Family Connections

OFS members not be appointed to serve their own fraternity.