

Presider:

"May the God of Hope bring you such joy and peace in your faith that the power of the Holy Spirit will remove all bounds to hope." (Rom 15:13)

All: Blessed be God forever.

Ecclesiastical Witness:

"Let us pray for those who have been elected. Through their service of animating and guiding the fraternity, may we all live our faith more deeply, witness to Christ more bravely, and work to prepare the Kingdom of God more enthusiastically."

All: "Most generous Father, grant that through the dedicated efforts of our new leaders who have been called to serve our fraternity, all of us may know you better, and make you known to all. May we live more vigorously the Gospel way of life that you inspired through Francis of Assisi. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Ecclesiastical Witness:

**(non-clerics: substitute "us" for you)
May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

All: Amen

May his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

All: Amen

May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace.

All: Amen

May the Lord bless you, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

If time and circumstances permit, the newly elected minister and council may stand in front of the community, and members may come forward to offer congratulations.

After the Elections are finished:

1) The election's secretary completes the Newly Elected Council form and the Election Teller's Report.

2) The Fraternal Presider, Ecclesiastical Witness, Secretary, and the two Tellers sign the Election Teller's Report verifying that the elections were done correctly and those elected to office now assume the role of the fraternity council.

3) The newly elected fraternity secretary sends the original signed documents to the Regional Secretary with copies to the Regional Minister, Ecclesiastical Witness, and fraternity.

****Preparation for Chapter of Elections
Study the sources listed below:**

- **OFS Ritual** (pages 41-43)
- **Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the OFS – 2012** (Pages 55-57)
- **General Constitutions – 2000** (Articles 76-82)
- **NAFRA Statutes** (Articles 7-15)
- **BSSF Regional Guidelines** (Article 9:12)
- **BSSF Chapter of Election forms** (1, 1a, 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5)

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**CELEBRATION OF
THE FRATERNITY'S
CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS**

Fraternity Minister:

Welcomes all to the Chapter of Elections. Introduces Ecclesiastical Witness, Fraternal Presider, and any Observers.

Ecclesiastical Witness: Opens the elections with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit followed by a short reading from the OFS Ritual or the witness can develop a prayer form (see page 56 - Handbook for Spiritual Assistants...)

Ecclesiastical Witness: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful.

All: Kindle in us the fire of your love.

Ecclesiastical Witness: Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

All: You will renew the face of the earth.

All: Prayer for Selection of a New Council

"Oh my dear GOD, we pray for the guidance of your Most Holy Spirit as we review in our minds the personal attributes required by the various Council positions.

Illuminate for us our own strengths, and those of our fellow members, that YOU may inspire us to recognize who it is YOU desire to serve YOUR fraternity.

Dear Francis, we also ask for your guidance as we seek a new Council. Lead us to those who will help us to grow in your virtues – humble, polite, peacemakers and ardent lovers of our Crucified Lord. Help each of us to discover "what is ours to do."

**Not our will LORD, but THY will be done.
Amen."**

DURING THE ELECTION

Presider: Thanks the out-going Council in the name of the Region.

1. Confirms the number of voters, separates those who are non-voting from voters.
(NB: A quorum must be present.)
2. Beginning with nomination for Minister, asks three times for additional nominations from the floor and then declares all nominations closed for that office. Repeats process for each office.
3. Oversees the **two tellers**.
4. Instructs the voters to mark only one name on the ballot.

Tellers:

5. Count **out loud** the same number of blank ballots as voters.
6. Distribute ballots to voters.
7. Collect ballots and facing assembly, count **out loud** the total number of ballots.
8. Tally the votes **out loud**, (create separate piles) while the **presider** (or designee) records the tallies on a board visible to all. The **ecclesiastical witness** stands behind the Tellers and confirms the tallies as the votes are read.

Secretary of Elections:

9. The **secretary** records the tallies on the Election Tellers' Report form.

After the election of **each** office, the **secretary** announces: "**In the name of Christ, Amen. I announce that the new** (Minister, etc.) **of the** (Fraternity Name) **is** (Name of elected)."

The **newly elected** stands in place to accept the election.

The **Presider** asks: "(Name) do you accept this election?"

The **newly elected** responds: "Yes, I do."

The Presider: "In the name of the Church and the Franciscan family, I confirm the election of (Name) as (Minister, etc.) **of the** (Fraternity Name) **of the Secular Franciscan Order.**"

Repeats above after the election of each office, i.e., Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, any Councilors

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE ELECTION PROCESS

The **newly elected council members** come forward to give witness to their Franciscan vocation and to their readiness to be of service by praying the Nicene Creed together and the prayer following the Creed:

The Nicene Creed

"I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen."

The Prayer Following the Creed

"We, the council members of the (Fraternity Name), **accept this responsibility and service of leadership. Before almighty God, we promise to live daily the Gospel life in the spirit of our Seraphic Father, Saint Francis, and to exercise our new ministry to the best of our ability. We ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the cooperation of this fraternity, so that together as the family of Francis we may witness to the Gospel, may be instruments of peace, and may build a more fraternal and evangelical world, so that the Kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively."**