

The Order of Friars Minor

Ratio Formationis Franciscanae

General Secretariate
for Formation and Studies
ROME 2003

BR. GIACOMO BINI, OFM
MINISTER GENERAL
OF THE WHOLE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR
AND HUMBLE SERVANT IN THE LORD

DECREE

In conformity with the directives of the *General Constitutions* and the documents of the Church, having obtained the deliberative vote of the General Definitorium in its session of the 7th March 2003, in accordance with the tenor of the *General Statutes* (cf. *GGSS* 62 §3) and exercising the faculties invested in us by reason of office, we, through this present decree

approve and promulgate the

RATIO FORMATIONIS FRANCISCANAE

and establish it to be valid for the whole Order.

We furthermore decree that all our Provinces and competent Entities should update their own *Ratio Formationis* in conformity with the new *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, with due adaptations for the different situations and requirements, so that a suitable initial and ongoing formation can be assured.

Given in Rome, at the General Curia of the Order, on the 19th day of March in the year two thousand and three, the solemnity of St. Joseph.

Prot. 093060

BR. GIACOMO BINI, OFM
Minister General

BR. JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ CARBALLO, OFM
Secretary General for Formation and Studies.

PRESENTATION

Twelve years have passed since the publication of the instruction “*Potissimum Institutioni*”. However, the principle that “the proper renewal of religious institutes depends chiefly on the formation of their members” (*DFRI* 1), expressed by that instruction remains operative. I believe that the conviction is sufficiently generalised that at the beginning and base of an authentic renewal or “re-foundation” of the consecrated life there is a decided option for ongoing and initial formation suitable to present-day demands. At the same time, such preoccupation for an updated formation that responds to the new demands of the consecrated and to the new situations lived by those that come to us asking to be accompanied in discerning their vocation has never been felt as much as it is today.

During the years since the celebration of the II Vatican Council, the consecrated life, guided by the many and wise directives of the Church, has passed through a long and very often tiring process in carrying out a profound and serious reflection on its identity and, consequently, on formation.

This process and reflection have brought about, among other things, the conception of the consecrated life in itself as a formative process that lasts as long as life itself and that, equally, “never ends” (*VC* 65). It cannot be any other way. If “the very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus in his *total self-giving*”, if all formation must be oriented towards this conformity and if this consists of a “gradual identification with the attitude of Christ towards the Father” (*VC* 65), it is evident that the very identity of the consecrated life is in play in formation. It also “seems evident that such a path (the formative process) must endure for a lifetime and involve the *whole* person, heart, mind and strength” (*SAFC* 15; cf. *VC* 65). The consecrated life can no longer be spoken about, therefore, without reference to an unending formation. In the same way, formation cannot be spoken about by simply referring, though not principally, to the first years of religious life, to initial formation, as if it were a matter of a purely pedagogical process of preparation for the vows. Neither can formation be spoken about as if it consisted simply of acquiring new concepts or of learning new behaviours. It is necessary to form the human heart to learn how to love as the divine heart does. It is necessary to form/be formed until “in your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus” (*Phil* 2, 5). And this, we repeat once again, embraces the whole of life and, therefore, formation is “an intrinsic requirement of religious consecration” (*VC* 69).

The Order of Friars Minor did not simply follow with interest this whole process of renewal of the consecrated life, but actively pushed it on many occasions, which lead it to give a real priority to the topic of formation. The International Congresses of Formation and Studies and especially the important documents published during this period are, among many other initiatives, a sign of this. They give clear directives on how to respond to the demands of our times and to increase the awareness of the urgency and need for greater fidelity to our vocation/mission. Among the documents it is possible to point out: *Formation in the Order of Friars Minor* (Medellín 1971), *The Document on Formation* (Rome 1981), “*They must desire to have the Spirit of the Lord and His holy manner of working within them*” (Chapter VI of the *GGCC* 1987), *Ratio formationis franciscanae* (Rome 1991), *Ongoing Formation in the Order of Friars Minor* (Rome 1995), *Orientalions for the Pastoral Care of Vocations* (Rome 2001) and *Ratio Studiorum OFM* (Rome 2002).

Ratio formationis franciscanae, elaborated by the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies with the participation of the Ministers and Formators of the whole Order and promulgated on the 11th March 1991, has the merit of having applied the *General Constitutions* and the *General Statutes* of the Order to the field of formation. It located the basis of Franciscan Formation in the following of Christ, just as the *General Constitutions* (cf. *GGCC* 126) had stated and, besides, identified this following with formation.

But nothing is definitive in formation. It is true that formation, up to very recently, kept very close to models of stability and constancy, far from the dynamic paradigms that a reality in continuous and rapid evolution demands. Today, however, though we feel the need to keep to the furrows already ploughed by the charismatic and formative tradition of our Order, we also feel the need to open up new paths and to rethink our formative models and processes so that they can respond to the needs of the times in which we live. Fidelity and creativity, faithful creativity, to which we are invited on all sides, have to go hand in hand as inseparable companions, even though this places us in a situation of constantly searching where there is no place for infallible recipes.

One result of this searching is the new *Ratio formationis franciscanae*, which we present today. It was requested by the General Definitory and elaborated by the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies from the contributions of formators gathered in the International Congress for Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Study (Assisi, 2002) and of the International Council for Formation and Studies (Mexico 2003). Considering that the contents of the 1991 *Ratio* are still valid today, the new *Ratio* keeps those contents, enriching them, in many cases, with new quotations from the Writings of St. Francis, from the most recent documents of the Church and from the documents of the Order. It also adds three new chapters: Franciscan Pedagogy, Formation to the gospel life of the Friar Minor and Accompanying a Vocation. The general structure of the *Ratio* undergoes some modifications as a result. The new *Ratio* is divided into four parts: I. The Gospel Vocation of the Friar Minor (nn. 3-35), Franciscan Formation (nn. 36-106), Formative Stages (nn. 107-216), Theological, Mystical and Technical Formation (nn. 217-204). Three new appendices have also been added: The Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies, The Provincial Secretary for Formation and Studies and The Director of Ongoing Formation.

For a greater understanding of the *Ratio*, it could be useful to underline some of the general traits that define it. The most notable and immediate are:

- ❖ *Globality*. The *Ratio* includes the whole formative range and is for all the Friars. In addition, following the layout of the *General Constitutions*, it places ongoing formation as the *humus* of initial formation (cf. n. 108 and all of Part III).
- ❖ *Specificity*. It deals with a Franciscan *Ratio*, thought up by Friars Minor and elaborated by them. For that reason, the principal characteristics of the life of the Friar Minor today are underlined in the first part and these must be taken into account at the time of forming the Friars (cf. Part II). Its character, markedly Franciscan, justifies the constant reference to St. Francis as the “model” throughout the whole formative process (cf. Part II, 1 especially) and explains the constant reference to the Franciscan Sources and the Documents of the Order.
- ❖ *Flexibility*. Rather than being a document of a typically juridical stamp, the *Ratio* identifies and includes “the essential elements of the Franciscan charism so that it may be incarnated in an ever more authentic way in our time” (n. 4). It is concerned with offering all Friars the “rationale” - that is to say the motive, the basis, the guiding principle and the final purpose - of the life and formation of every Friar Minor. It does this in order to give unity, coherence and gradual nature to the formative process” (n. 4), always preserving the right of each Province or competent Entity to adapt these directives and principles to its own reality through its own *Ratio Formationis* (cf. Decree of Promulgation).
- ❖ *Personal*. Faithful to the principles of Franciscan pedagogy (cf. nn. 55. 56), the *Ratio* considers the person of the Friars or candidates as something unique and unrepeatable that is called to “follow Christ continuously in the world of today under the influence of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the form of life and Rule of St. Francis” (GGCC 126) throughout their lives and as the subject of formation (cf. nn. 40.47.114.142). Formation itself is conceived as a process of personal unification (cf. nn. 45. 51. 52) carried out through a

network of relationships (cf. 55) by taking into account the rhythm of each Friar or candidate in formation (cf. n. 129). The *Ratio* clearly opts for personalising as a mode of formation (cf. nn. 56. 92-104)

- ❖ *Ecclesiality*. The Church is the “place” in which we Friars Minor wish to “observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Rb* 1, 1) and, for that reason, formation is carried out in full communion with the Church (cf. nn., 30-35). Quotations from the Magisterium, therefore, abound in the *Ratio*, principally those referring to the consecrated life.
- ❖ *Open to the present-day world*. The formation of the Friar Minor is inculturated, attentive to the conditions of life and environment in which it is developed (cf. n. 49). The *Ratio*, on various occasions, requests attention to the said conditions with the aim of making formation capable of responding to the needs of the Friars in formation and the requirements of the times in which we live.

We think and sincerely hope that, with the updating of the *Ratio*, we have given a great service to all Friars committed to “continuous conversion of heart” (*GGCC* 32 §2), the ultimate objective of the whole formative process, and especially to the formators that have the responsibility of accompanying the Friars and candidates in formation so that they may be able to “follow Christ continuously in the world of today in accordance with the form of life and Rule of St. Francis” (*GGCC* 126).

BR. JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ CARBALLO, OFM
*Secretary General
for Formation and Studies*

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Sacred Scripture

Acts	<i>Acts of the Apostles.</i>
Eph	<i>Letter to the Ephesians.</i>
Jn	<i>Gospel of John.</i>
Mk	<i>Gospel of Mark.</i>
Mt	<i>Gospel of Matthew.</i>
Phil	<i>Letter to the Philippians.</i>
1Cor	<i>1st Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.</i>

Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

Adm	<i>Admonitions.</i>
LtO	<i>Letter to the Entire Order.</i>
2LtF	<i>Letter to the Faithful, 2nd edition.</i>
OffP	<i>Office of the Passion.</i>
PrG	<i>Praises of God.</i>
Rb	<i>The approved Rule, 1223.</i>
RH	<i>Rule for Hermitages.</i>
Rnb	<i>The unapproved Rule, 1221.</i>
SBVM	<i>Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.</i>
Test	<i>Testament of St. Francis.</i>

Other Acronyms

Bahia	<i>"The Gospel challenges us", Message from the Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983.</i>
CIC	<i>Code of Canon Law.</i>
CPO 81	<i>The Document on Formation of the Plenary Council, Rome, 1981.</i>
DFRI	<i>Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), 1990.</i>
GGCC	<i>General Constitutions OFM.</i>
GGSS	<i>General Statutes OFM.</i>
3LA	<i>3rd Letter of St. Clare to Agnes.</i>
4LA	<i>4th Letter of St. Clare to Agnes.</i>
Mad	<i>"Vocation of the Order Today", Declaration of the General Chapter of Madrid, 1973.</i>
Med	<i>Document of the Extraordinary General Chapter of Medellin, 1971.</i>
MP	<i>The Mirror of Perfection, St. Bonaventure.</i>
MR	<i>"Mutuae Relationes", The Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for Religious, 1978.</i>
NMI	<i>Novo Millennio Ineunte, Apostolic Letter of John Paul II, 2001.</i>
OF	<i>Ongoing Formation in the Order of Friars Minor, SGFS OFM, Rome, 1995.</i>
OrPCV	<i>Orientations on the Pastoral Care of Vocations "Come and See", GSFS, Rome, 2002.</i>
PP	<i>Populorum Progressio, Encyclical Letter of Paul VI, 1967.</i>

- RS *Ratio Studiorum OFM, "In notitia veritatis proficere"* (LMj 11, 1), SGFS OFM, Rome, 2001.
- SAFC *Starting Afresh from Christ. A renewed commitment of the consecrated life for the 3rd Millennium*, CICLSAL, 2002.
- SPD *The Spirit of Prayer and Devotion, Topics for study and reflection*, SGFS OFM, Rome, 1997.
- VC *The Consecrated Life, Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II*, 1996.

INTRODUCTION

1. Franciscan formation is based upon a personal encounter with the Lord and begins with the call of God and the individual's decision to walk with Saint Francis in the footsteps of the poor and crucified Christ as His disciple under the action of the Holy Spirit.

2. Franciscan formation is a continuous process of growth and conversion involving the whole of a person's life (cf. VC 65), called to develop his own particular human, Christian and Franciscan dimensions, radically living the Holy Gospel, in the spirit of prayer and devotion, in fraternity and minority.

3. The following of Jesus Christ in the manner of St. Francis leads the Friar Minor to commit himself to the Church and with her to place himself at the service of the men and women of our time, as a messenger of reconciliation and peace.

4. The "Ratio" intends to expound the "rationale" - that is to say the motive, the basis, the guiding principle and the final purpose - of the life and formation of every Friar Minor, in order to give unity, coherence and a gradual nature to the formative process. Its aim is to identify and clarify the essential elements of the Franciscan charism so that it may be incarnated in an ever more authentic way in our time.

I. THE GOSPEL VOCATION OF THE FRIAR MINOR

1. The Following of Christ

5. The life of the Friars Minor is to “follow Jesus Christ more closely under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (*GGCC* 1 §1; 5 §2) by continuously walking along the road of conversion (cf. *GGCC* 32 §2) and being faithful to their vocation of Minors (cf. *GGCC* 64) in accordance with the form observed and proposed by St. Francis.

The Friar Minor, guided by the Spirit, makes himself a disciple of the Lord, whom he reveres as the one and only Master of his life of penance.

6. The Rule and Life of the Friars Minor is to observe the Holy Gospel (cf. *Rb* 1, 1) by following the poor and humble Christ (cf. *Rnb* 9, 1).

The Friar Minor bases his life and formation on the Gospel and on the Rule, meditated upon and welcomed into his heart in the light of the example and the writings of St. Francis and his followers (cf. *GGCC* 2 §2).

7. The form of the Gospel life of the Friars Minor, contained in the Rule of St. Francis, is interpreted and applied by the General Constitutions of the Order (cf. *GGCC* 10; 12 §1).

The Friar Minor, to live the Franciscan charism, must know the General Constitutions and the General and Particular Statutes and order his personal and fraternal life in conformity with them (cf. *GGCC* 12 §2).

2. A total gift to God

8. To follow more closely in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and faithfully observe the holy Gospel, the Friars Minor live the covenant with God by consecrating themselves totally to Him in the Church through their religious profession, for the good of all men and women (cf. *GGCC* 5 §§1-2).

The Friar Minor is called to observe the holy Gospel “living in obedience, with nothing of his own and in chastity” (*Rb* 1, 1), sustained by the grace of the Lord and by the vigour of fraternal love according to the spirit of St. Francis.

9. To follow Christ, “who put his will into the will of the Father” (cf. *2LtF* 10), the Friars Minor renounce their own will and enter into obedience (cf. *Rb* 2, 11; 10, 2). They promise to obey the Lord God, to serve and obey one another (cf. *Rnb* 5, 14) and to obey the Ministers and servants of the Fraternity (cf. *Rb* 10, 1-3; *GGCC* 7 §§1-2).

The Friar Minor is formed to mature and responsible obedience through listening to the Word of God, through dialogue with the brothers and the Ministers, through service and through fraternal communion.

10. To follow Christ, “who, for our sakes, made Himself poor in this world” (*Rb* 6,3), the friars divest themselves radically of themselves and everything else, and live as Minors “among the poor and the weak” (*Rnb* 9,2), announcing the beatitudes to all with joy (cf. *GGCC* 8 §3).

The Friar Minor progressively acquires the personal willingness to share “everything that he has” (Acts 3, 6), in so far as he is a servant and subject to every human creature for the love of God (cf. *2LtF* 47), living a humble, hardworking, simple life.

11. To follow Christ radically with undivided heart “for the Kingdom of Heaven” (*Mt* 19,12), the Friars Minor live their chastity as a gift of God “with pure heart and soul” (*Adm* 16: 2), and dedicate themselves totally to Him, living an evangelical and fraternal life (cf. *GGCC* 9 §3).

The Friar Minor sustains his life of chastity through generous dedication to the mission proper to the Order, by carefully developing a solid emotional maturity in his relationships with his brothers and with all other persons, and by a simple and serene regard for all creatures (cf. *GGCC* 9 §§3-4).

3. The spirit of prayer and devotion

12. The life of following Christ of the Friars Minor is sustained by an experience of faith, nourished by the Word of God and by a personal encounter with the mystery of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Friar Minor contemplates God’s infinite love for him and is led to search for and find Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, in history, in every aspect of life, in his brother and in all creation, in a continuous work of discernment to recognise the action of the Spirit.

13. The Friars Minor respond to the call of Jesus, “Repent and believe the Good News” (*Mk* 1, 15), by living the Gospel and meditating on the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord.

The Friar Minor through a continuous process of conversion becomes a new creature in Christ and, like Francis, his entire life gradually becomes a prayer of praise celebrating the loving presence and action of God.

14. Through community prayer, the Friars Minor deepen their desire to serve, love, honour and adore the Lord in simplicity, in fraternity and within the Church.

The Friar Minor puts prayer at the centre of fraternity life. He celebrates, in the name of the Church, the mystery of salvation realized in Christ above all through the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours.

15. The Friars Minor strive to hear and to welcome the Father’s will in daily prayer in order to understand and to respond to God’s holy operation in their own lives and in the world.

The Friar Minor places himself before the poor and crucified Christ, his Master, continually affirming his faithfulness to Him and to the Gospel, to the Church, to the Order and its mission, to mankind and to our time.

16. In following Christ, who took on the flesh of our fragile humanity in the womb of the Virgin Mary (cf. *2LtF* 4), the Friars Minor participate with mankind in the prayer and praise directed to the Father.

The Friar Minor cultivates particular devotion to the Virgin Mary, Patroness of the Order. He practices “the forms of devotion to Mary characteristic of the Franciscan tradition” (cf. *GGCC* 26 §2) and seeks to nourish his own vocation and the faith of the people of God in sound popular piety.

4. Fraternity

17. In the footsteps of the poor, humble and crucified Christ, who collected the disciples around him and washed their feet, the friars live in brotherhood, in service and in mutual giving (cf. *GGCC* 38).

The Friar Minor progresses in knowledge and acceptance of himself and others, intensively cultivating a family spirit (cf. *Rb* 6, 7) so that the entire fraternity becomes a privileged place of the encounter with God (cf. *GGCC* 39. 40).

18. The fraternity is made up of brothers that did not choose each other but are given by God to one another (cf. *Test* 14). It is the place in which the grace of the Holy Spirit makes visible the figure of the Christ, of whom every brother bears and expresses a feature (cf. *MP* 85). It is the environment of reconciliation and peace in which it is possible to encounter the living and true Christ.

The Friar Minor welcomes others as a gift of the Father. He lives full communion in prayer, rejoices in the good that God works in the life of each one (cf. *Adm* 17) and considers fraternity to be a constitutive and characteristic element of being a Minor and of his Gospel vocation.

19. The fraternity is the primary place in which the Gospel is lived and proclaimed, since each Friar is evangelised in it and receives the mission to evangelise from it.

The Friar Minor pursues the mission proper to the Order in agreement with and in the name of the fraternity and makes the other brothers participants in it (cf. *GGCC* 112 §2).

20. The Friars Minor, in their following of Christ, recognise that the Franciscan charism manifests itself in various ways in the lives of men and women that are inspired by St. Francis (cf. *GGCC* 55).

The Friar Minor lives in communion of life and action with the whole Franciscan Family by encouraging the various forms of the charism of St. Francis in a spirit of collaboration in the service of the Kingdom of God.

21. The experience of the fatherhood of God and of brotherhood with Christ leads the Friars Minor to make themselves the brothers of every person and of every creature in a spirit of minority, simplicity, joy and solidarity.

The Friar Minor welcomes everyone with kindness, without excluding anyone, and loves all people, especially the poor and the weak, whom he serves with motherly care. He rejects violence, works for justice and peace and respects creation.

5. Minority

22. To conform themselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, “who humbled himself, making himself obedient unto death” (*Phil* 2: 8), the Friars Minor hold minority as an essential element of their specific vocation and live it faithfully in poverty, humility and meekness among the least of people, without power or privilege (cf. *GGCC* 64; 66 §1; 85).

The Friar Minor discovers his own smallness and his total dependence on God, the source of every good, and lives like a pilgrim and stranger (cf. *Rb* 6: 2), reconciled and peaceful, hospitable, a brother and subject of every creature (cf. *2LtF* 47).

23. Minority defines the way in which the Friars Minor live in fraternity. They listen to one another and speak with one another, make known their needs, humbly serve one another in mutual obedience and seek to find out together how God is calling them to proclaim the Kingdom in word and deed.

The Friar Minor learns to know himself and to share his gifts with others, to the point of sacrificing himself totally for love of his brothers.

24. The Friars Minor witness before the world to the poor and humble Christ by living a life that is truly poor in its use of goods and they work “with fidelity and devotion” (*Rb* 5,1), with joy and gratitude, knowing that everything is a gift from God.

The Friar Minor, like St. Francis, is willing to work with his own hands (cf. *Test* 20) in order to build up the Kingdom of God, to support the fraternity and to share what he has with the poor and needy (cf. *Acts* 3, 6).

25. The Friars Minor follow the example of St. Francis, who was led by God among the lepers, by choosing the life and condition of the poor, identifying with them, serving the oppressed, the afflicted and the sick and by letting themselves be evangelised by them (cf. *GGCC* 66 §1; 96 §2; 97 §1).

The Friar Minor seeks to become aware of and work for the elimination of every form of injustice and dehumanising structures that exist in the world. He makes an explicit option for the poor, becoming a voice for those who have no voice, an instrument of justice and peace and the leaven of Christ in the world.

6. Evangelization

26. The Friars Minor, disciples of the Lord and heralds of his Word after the example of the Apostles, participate in the evangelising mission of the Church (cf. *GGCC* 83 §2) and bring “to everyone they meet the peace and good of the Lord” (*GGCC* 85).

The Friar Minor cultivates an attitude of good will and dialogue towards the different cultures and religions and is attentive to the signs of the times so as to live and faithfully announce the values of the Gospel to the men and women of today.

27. The Friars Minor are themselves involved by the demands of the Gospel, “knowing that no one can evangelise who has not first accepted evangelisation” (*GGCC* 86).

The Friar Minor, nourished by the Bread of life at the table of the Word of God and of the Body of Christ, grows in the assimilation of Gospel values before proclaiming them to others.

28. The Friars Minor celebrate the presence of Christ and make his voice heard among the people by the witness of their lives, being subject to all and confessing themselves to be Christians (cf. *Rnb* 16, 6; *GGCC* 89 §1).

The Friar Minor gives witness of life through fraternal communion, his life of penance and contemplation, his service in the fraternity and in human society, as a man of peace, in joy and simplicity of heart.

29. When it pleases the Lord, the Friars Minor explicitly proclaim the Gospel by the testimony of the word (cf. *Rnb* 16, 7), proclaiming above all the mystery of the poor and crucified Christ, preaching penance, reconciliation and peace to all people.

The Friar Minor is attentive to living the Gospel that he proclaims. He gives pride of place to words that are “well chosen and chaste” rather than to those that are rhetorical and academic, preferring “brevity of speech” and using “simple and concrete expressions, well aware that there is more need of virtue than of words” (*2Cel* 107).

7. In the Church and in the world

30. The following of Christ after the manner of St. Francis is realized in a full and authentic manner in the Church (cf. *GGCC* 1 §1), which is the Body of Christ and “the sacrament of salvation for our time” (cf. *GGCC* 87 §3).

The Friar Minor cultivates his faith in God within the Church. He lives in communion with the people of God (cf. *GGCC* 4 §1) and in obedience to and reverence for its Pastors (cf. *GGCC* 4 §2) and so fulfils the words of the Crucifix of San Damiano addressed to St. Francis: “Go, repair my house” (*2Cel* 10).

31. The local Church is the place in which the Friars Minor live their charism, contribute to the growth of the ecclesial community and render it their services (cf. *MR* 37; *GGCC* 105; 115).

The Friar Minor, animated by his loyalty to the Church (cf. *Med* 28), participates in its mission through the witness of his life and apostolic work according to the Franciscan charism.

32. Following the Christ who took up his abode in the world, the Friars Minor are called to live their charism among all men and women and to be attentive to the signs of the times, as instruments of justice and peace.

The Friar Minor acquires the Franciscan vision of the world and of man, develops a balanced and critical judgement regarding events (cf. *GGCC* 129 §2; 131 §1) and discovers in the world the good which God works there (cf. *Med* 52).

33. To be faithful to their own vocation, the Friars Minor incarnate themselves in the concrete situations of the people among whom they live. They discover in them the different faces of Christ and find in them the appropriate form of Franciscan life.

The Friar Minor cultivates his vocation in the concrete cultural environment in which his fraternity lives and in dialogue with the people of his own time (cf. *GGCC* 130).

34. The Friars Minor, faithful to the style of prophetic life inherited from St. Francis, strive to discover creatively new ways of promoting and defending gospel values.

The Friar Minor, as the herald of peace, carries peace in his heart and offers it to others (cf. *GGCC* 68 §2) and is prepared to denounce vigorously all that is contrary to human dignity and Christian values.

35. To follow Christ with greater perfection, the Friars Minor look with particular attention to Mary, the “Virgin made Church” (*SBVM* 1), “daughter and handmaid of the most high, supreme King” (*OffP* 2), who gave the Saviour to the world.

The Friar Minor, disciple of the Lord, after the example of Mary, tries to live his condition of discreet and faithful servant, always ready to welcome the wonders that God works in the Church and in today’s world.

II. FRANCISCAN FORMATION

1. After the example of St. Francis

36. The following of Christ was marked out for St. Francis by his encounters with the Crucifix of San Damiano, with the leper and by his listening to the Gospel. These experiences made St. Francis grow in his passionate love of the poor and crucified Christ, until his complete conformity with Him on La Verna.

37. The strong experience of God as Father and the Highest Good characterised the life of St. Francis. It led him to an attitude of gratitude and praise towards the Creator for His wonders and made him a brother to all people and creatures.

38. The gift granted to St. Francis was that of beginning to do penance. This involved a process of continual conversion that changed those things that had previously seemed bitter to sweetness. St. Francis was, in due course, led to forsake the mentality and attitudes of this world, to strip himself of self and of his possessions in order to pass from a life centred on self to a gradual conformity with Christ (cf. *Test* 1.3-4).

39. The journey of St. Francis is a model for the life and formation of the Friars of our time. They too are called to walk along the same path until they achieve the full stature of Christ (cf. *Eph* 4, 13), faithful to their mission of proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples (cf. *Rb* 12).

2. The principles of franciscan formation

2.1. General Principles

40. The Friar Minor, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is the chief protagonist of his own formation, responsible for accepting and making his own all the values of Franciscan life, capable of making his own decisions and exercising personal initiative (cf. *GGCC* 129 §§1-2).

41. Franciscan formation is a dynamic process of growth in which the Friar Minor opens his heart to the Gospel in his daily life and commits himself to being continually converted so as to follow Jesus Christ ever more faithfully in the spirit of St. Francis.

42. The formative process respects the unique individuality of each Friar and of the mystery that he bears in himself through his particular gifts (cf. *GGCC* 129 §1), encouraging him to grow through knowing himself and in seeking the will of God.

43. Franciscan formation takes place in the fraternity and in the real world, where the Friar experiences the power of grace, is renewed in mind and heart and develops his evangelising vocation.

44. Such Franciscan formation is ever alert to the human, Christian, and Franciscan growth of the Friar, in order that he may wholeheartedly follow Jesus Christ, after the manner of Francis.

2.2. Specific Principles

45. Franciscan formation is holistic, that is to say it takes into account the whole person, so that he may develop “harmoniously his physical, mental, moral, and intellectual gifts” (cf. *GGCC* 127 §2) and may integrate himself positively into social and community life (cf. *GGCC* 128).

46. Franciscan formation is a process during which the fundamental aspects of our consecrated life are cultivated and through which every initiative is aimed at growth in the spirit of prayer and devotion, in fraternity, minority, service and evangelisation.

47. Franciscan formation is experiential, which means it is attentive to the life and gifts of each person, encourages the concrete experience of the particular Franciscan style and values in the daily life of both the fraternity and the individual.

48. Franciscan formation is practical, inasmuch as it aims at transforming whatever is learned into action (cf. *Adm* 7), especially by means of a constant habit of poverty and work (cf. *GGCC* 77 §1; 127 §4) based on the example of St. Francis (cf. *Test* 24).

49. Franciscan formation is inculturated into the conditions of life, environment and time in which it is carried out, while remaining faithful to the Gospel and to the traditions of the Order (cf. *GGCC* 130).

50. Franciscan formation is open to new forms of life and service (cf. *GGCC* 131 §1), attentive to the renewed appeals of the world and the Church (cf. *CPO* 81 7-8).

51. Franciscan formation is organised in stages that involve the person from the beginning of the vocational process and throughout his whole life as a Friar Minor.

52. Franciscan formation is “organic, gradual and consistent” (GGCC 133) in its various stages, inasmuch as it promotes the development of each person in a harmonious and progressive way, while fully respecting each individual.

53. Franciscan ongoing and initial formation considers study to be one of its essential components (cf. *RS* 31). For that reason it dedicates adequate time to study in accordance with the special gifts of each one (cf. *GGCC* 162). It keeps “in line with the times, in dialogue with the research of the meaning of human life today” (*SAFC* 18) in response to the needs of the Province and the Order (cf. *RS* 98). It does so, “without forgetting that learning is not limited to the intellectual dimension of the person” (*DFRI* 91), in order to enable the Friar Minor to reach an ever fuller knowledge of God and to give a better service to mankind.

54. Franciscan formation promotes an authentic sense of discipline directed towards an honest self-knowledge and self-control, towards fraternal life and service (cf. *GGCC* 132).

3. Franciscan pedagogy

55. *Franciscan pedagogy* is characterised by:

- ❖ its aim, which is complete identification with the poor, crucified and resurrected Christ (cf. *2Cel* 105; *3LA* 3). Such an objective is attained through the acceptance of the same gift made to Francis: to begin to do penance (cf. *Test* 1), by living in a continuous process of conversion, which frees one from self in order to concentrate on the person of the Lord.
- ❖ encouragement of the integral growth of the person in “following the doctrine and footprints” of Jesus Christ (*Rnb* 1, 1) for the purpose of assimilating the way to live, feel and think in a unitary process that embraces all the dimensions of personal life until all good is restored to the Lord God (cf. *Rnb* 17, 17; *Adm* 18, 2).
- ❖ the attention to the individual Friar or candidate, always considered as *a person in relationship*, a member of a community of Friars that is the privileged place of his formation (cf. *GGCC* 137, 2) and in which the values of our life are lived and transmitted.
- ❖ the progressive integration between the gospel requirement of radicality and the respect for personal freedom and originality. Stimulation of growth and corrections are not carried out through authoritarian imposition, but through patient and trusting dialogue, the understanding of the needs of each one, spiritual nourishment and the constant evaluation of personal motivations in the light of gospel-spiritual motivations (cf. *Rb* 6, 8; *Rb* 10).

56. The formative process proposed to any that “wish to accept this life and come to our brothers” (*Rb* 2, 1) has, therefore, the acquisition of a new and profound gospel and Franciscan identity as its final objective. This process is carried out:

- ❖ through the *intellectual formation (cultural, theological and spiritual)* that has the task of proposing and clarifying the ideal values of our charism in their designated objectives;
- ❖ through *experiential formation*, which allows the Friar or candidate to measure himself personally against the reality of our fraternal, contemplative and missionary life;
- ❖ according to a *personalised* method, which helps the individual in formation to assimilate – in a knowledgeable and personal synthesis – the values and experiences gathered along the way (cf. *1Cel* 29-31).

57. This process must gradually lead to an internal transformation in the light of the Spirit and through the formative means indicated so that – both the person called and the fraternity – may recognise the progressive acquisition of a new life, which is seen in both the attitudes and the behaviour at important moments and in

ordinary situations, until it permits the Friar and candidate to face up to the difficulties of our times and evangelical mission (cf. *VC* 65).

58. The formation of this new identity requires time, serenity and great disposition of heart, because ‘the person is formed very slowly’ and, because of the great diversity of the new vocations, it needs ‘personal attention and suitable methodologies’ at the same time. In this way, the Friars and candidates will be able to succeed in ‘assuming their concrete human, spiritual and cultural situation’ (cf. *SAFC* 18).

59. The personal aids and suitable methodology cannot be limited to the candidates and Friars in initial formation. It must also be present in ongoing formation in order to support the Friar in facing up to the different phases of life, the particular situations lived in fraternity and in giving witness to gospel life in the Church and world.

60. Particular attention should be paid to the period of years immediately following solemn profession and priestly ordination, one among the various seasons of life. Methodologies and content suited to accompanying and encouraging the Friars to combine the ideals of the beginning with the reality of their new state of life (cf. *ICel* 103) should be sought. Indeed, this phase of vocational life is “a critical stage, marked by the passage from a supervised life to a situation of *full responsibility for one’s work*” (*VC* 70).

61. The main protagonist in this formative activity, in the light and power of the Spirit, is the Friar in ongoing or initial formation or the candidate. It is he that must assume responsibility for his personal growth, gazing on Christ as in a “mirror” in which he is reflected at all times (cf. *4LTA* 4) and by living in joy and availability to service “according to the form of the Holy Gospel” (*Test* 14).

4. Forming for the gospel life of the Friar Minor

62. Formation to the gospel life of the Friar Minor (*GGCC* 1 §2) – to the spirit of prayer and devotion, to the life of fraternal communion, to penance and minority, to poverty and solidarity, to evangelisation and mission, to action towards reconciliation, peace and justice – is an “organic, gradual and consistent” (*GGCC* 133) process that is developed on the personal and community levels during the whole of life.

63. Concrete experience of life in the different dimensions of the Franciscan ‘*forma vitae*’ is favoured in the said formation. These formative moments should be planned carefully, suitably accompanied and periodically evaluated. But care should be taken not to reduce these formative moments to occasional juxtaposed experiences. They should be interconnected and coordinated with a view to their radical establishment in the heart and life of the Friar.

64. Both the Friars and the candidates, aware that the gospel life they have embraced or wish to embrace tends towards the radical following of Christ (cf. *GGCC* 5 §2) “according to the form observed and proposed by St. Francis” (*GGCC* 1; cf. *Test* 14. 15), should assume the ascetic means that are typical of the spiritual tradition of the Church and Order as a great aid for an authentic process of configuration with the poor and crucified Lord Jesus, the ultimate end of our “*forma vitae*”, and as an indispensable element of Franciscan formation (cf. *GGCC* 132; *VC* 38; *SAFC* 18; *RFF* 1).

65. §1 A study programme that offers the Friars and candidates the acquisition of biblical and Franciscan foundations for the fundamental “priorities” of our charism should be assured in the *formative project* of the different Entities.

§2 The possibility to experience “the Rule and life of the Friars” directly should then permit every one to assimilate in depth the elements learned and to live their vocation to minority, fraternity and mission with joy and perseverance.

4.1. Forming to the spirit of prayer and devotion

66. §1 The “sequela Christi”, which is the life of the Friars Minor, is rooted in the experience of faith. This arises from the personal encounter with Jesus Our Lord, present in the poor, in the Church, in the Word and in the Eucharist (cf. *Test* 1-14).

§2 The experience of faith is especially fed and manifested in the spirit of prayer and devotion. It is nourished by both the prayerful reading of the Word of God (cf. *SAFC* 24) and the prayerful reading of the events and experiences of life, always with a deep sense of Church.

67. Formation to the spirit of prayer and devotion is, therefore, composed of:

- ❖ deepening one’s vocation through familiarisation with the Sacred Scriptures, the Sacraments and the Tradition of the Church;
- ❖ accepting the mystery of one’s self in relationship with the “other” so that one’s personal and social history are transformed into a living place in which the spirit of prayer and devotion take flesh and where the art of discernment is learned.;
- ❖ placing prayer at the centre of one’s life and that of the fraternity, especially the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours;
- ❖ accepting personal times of solitude and contemplation as a gift and a demand to grow in the experience of the living encounter with the Lord (cf. *RH*; *2Cel* 32. 94).

68. The process of formation to the spirit of prayer and devotion, which takes the context of the fraternity and the service to the lepers of our times into account, requires some special attention, among which we count:

- ❖ the formation of an authentic liturgical spirit;
- ❖ the introduction to the study and prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture;
- ❖ the authentic cultivation of Marian devotion and of other devotions characteristic of the Franciscan tradition;
- ❖ the encouragement of experiences in retreat, hermitage and spiritual exercises;
- ❖ the education to reading one’s life and history with the eyes of faith;
- ❖ education in relationships with others and to contemplation of Christ in the poor (cf. *SAFC* 27).

69. The Friars and candidates should be formed to appreciate silence, solitude and interiority (*SPD* 12) in order to encourage and guard the spirit of prayer and devotion. They should also be educated in an appropriate use of time, taking account of the demands of fraternal life and personal needs, in prioritising activities and in the “necessary discretion in the use of the communications media” (*GGCC* 28 §2; *RS* 139-140).

4.2. Formation to communion of life in fraternity

70. §1 Fraternal life is an essential element of our charism (cf. *Rnb* 22, 23) and is also the vital environment of Franciscan formation (cf. *GGCC* 130; 137 §2).

§2 Formation is necessarily carried out in a concrete fraternity, the main unifying principle of which resides in love (cf. *Rb* 6, 8), and should prepare the Friars and candidates to face up to the concrete problems of fraternal life in a suitable way. Formation should educate the Friars and candidates in a particular way “for community dialogue in the cordiality and charity of Christ”. They should be taught to “see diversity as richness and to integrate the various ways of seeing and feeling” (*SAFC* 18).

71. The Friars and candidates should be suitably formed in the appreciation of those experiences that lead to the construction of fraternity “as a family united in Christ” (*GGCC* 45 §1) and to a profound communion of fraternal life. Such experiences would be: the local Chapter, the elaboration of the fraternal life project, the times

of community discernment, meals, community recreations and the other experiences that help to achieve “full human, Christian and religious maturity” (GGCC 39) in real fraternity.

72. §1 The Friars should be stimulated to “have among themselves, to the highest degree, a family spirit and mutual friendship” and formed to “courtesy, cheerfulness and all other virtues” (GGCC 39) in order to grow in communion of life in fraternity.

§2 In addition, they should be stimulated towards reciprocal service (cf. GGCC 42 §1; 44. 50). This is made concrete in listening to one’s brother, in solicitude and real availability, in helping and accepting the other with all his weaknesses (cf. GGCC 40), in mutual forgiveness, in co-responsibility for the management of the house and in sharing life in simplicity and equality (cf. *Rnb* 6,3; GGCC 3.40.41) in order to grow into a “true, concrete and intimate” (GGCC 46) fraternity.

73. In order to assure that life in fraternity is our prime method of evangelising (cf. GGCC 87 §2), it is necessary to form the Friars and candidates so that they learn to share:

- ❖ their journey of faith and experience of the Gospel lived;
- ❖ the prayerful reading of the Word of God;
- ❖ confrontation through community dialogue and spiritual accompaniment;
- ❖ fraternal correction (GGCC 43);
- ❖ community celebration of forgiveness and review of life;
- ❖ the experience of dialogue with the world in which we live.

74. It is important for us Friars Minor to be formed and to form in an atmosphere of sharing charisms and in ecclesiastical communion with our Pastors (cf. *SAFC* 32), with other consecrated people as well as with all the faithful laity. It should also be done in communion with other Christian confessions and with all those that believe in God and in dialogue with present-day men and women (cf. *RS* 70-74).

75. Since we wish to see the face of Christ in all and to proclaim the worldwide fraternity, the Friars and candidates should be formed to the gratuitous gift of self and to the promotion of a culture of love in solidarity.

76. §1. Interchanges between the Friars of different Entities and the study and knowledge of a second language, “as an indispensable means to helping the fraternity on the international level” (*RS* 53), should be encouraged, especially through Order or interprovincial projects, in order to grow in the awareness of belonging to the Order.

§2. Common activities of formation, both ongoing and initial, with the other members of the Family should be encouraged in order to grow in the awareness of belonging to the Franciscan Family.

4.3. Forming to minority, poverty and solidarity

77. Minority determines our life as Friars (cf. *Rnb* 6, 3) in both our relations with God (cf. *Adm* 19, 2; GGCC 65) and within the fraternity (cf. GGCC 41) or in relations with others (GGCC 66 §1. 2). Ongoing and initial formation should form the Friars and candidates so that “they go throughout the world in joy and gladness” (*Adm* 20, 2), as servants subject to all, pacific and humble of heart (cf. *Rnb* 16, 6; GGCC 64).

78. The value of gospel poverty, living *without property*, is one of the essential elements of our spirituality and vocation. Formation – ongoing and initial – cannot be lacking in appreciation of the different aspects, in being careful to present what, for St. Francis, constituted “the portion that leads into the land of the living” (*Rb* 6, 5) in an objective, relevant and impassioned way.

79. Gospel poverty cannot be authentically understood outside a personal relationship with “the poor crucified Christ” (*2Cel* 105). He makes Himself one of the least and of sinners, who wished to strip Himself in

order to take on the condition of a slave. He comes down humbly into the midst of us each day in the Eucharist in order to join Himself to the poverty of each one (cf. *Adm* 1, 15-19), renewing us through His alliance. This experience alone will be capable of enabling in the Friar Minor that dynamism of joyful restitution of goods and freedom, of sharing in solidarity and friendship with the poor, which defines his Franciscan consecration.

80. §1. Material poverty without spiritual poverty can lead to an asceticism that leads to self-satisfaction (cf. *Adm* 14). Spiritual poverty without material poverty reduces poverty to an empty discourse (cf. *Rnb* 9 and *Rb* 6). There is a circular movement and reciprocity between the two dimensions.

§2. Every Friar and candidate, therefore, should be helped to understand the supreme value of sobriety and austerity in life as profound adhesion to Jesus Christ, to His style of life and to “that of his poor Mother” as an eschatological announcement of the coming Kingdom (*1Cor* 7, 30-31), as a seeking of what is essential in the journey of faith, as freedom before the idols of all times and as solidarity with those that do not have the necessities of life.

81. The Friars and candidates, besides, should form themselves to a *spirituality of communion* (cf. *VC* 46. 51; *SAFC* 28; *NMI* 43) that promotes in them the capacity to:

- ❖ live an effective sharing of the gifts that each one received from the Lord and to put all in common with the brothers (cf. *GGCC* 42 §2; *VC* 42);
- ❖ be in solidarity with “those that are in real necessity” and to “share what they have with the poor” (*GGCC* 53);
- ❖ educate themselves to the sense of manual and intellectual, assiduous and serious, work (cf. *Rb* 5, 1);
- ❖ live *without property*, feeling themselves responsible for the house without appropriating it;
- ❖ maintain transparency in the management of economic goods and to have real confidence in providence (cf. *Mt* 6, 26-33).

82. Solidarity with the least of men should be effectively experienced as a form of “restitution”, not only through active and responsible commitment in living the everyday – in work, study, positive availability to the services entrusted, fidelity to the commitments that involve sacrifice – but also through experiences of real sharing with the poor of our times, through active, prayerful, manifest, humble and joyful presence among them (*Rnb* 9, 2; *GGCC* 66).

83. The identification of concrete ways to live gospel and Franciscan poverty in fraternal life should be learned. The assumption of one’s own personal poverty and weakness, the value of faith sharing and dialogue, obedience as a special form of being *without property* (cf. *Adm* 3, 3), love of “those that strike him on the cheek” (*Adm* 14, 4) and pardon and peace as places of ever greater restitution are recalled from among these concrete ways.

4.4. Forming for evangelisation and mission

84. The missionary dimension is essential to our charism. We are an evangelising fraternity (cf. *GGCC* 83, §1.2) and our task within the Church is to give witness, as Friars, in order to make known “the good, all good, the highest good, Lord God living and true” (*PrG* 3). We have been sent into the whole world “to bear witness to His voice in word and deed and to bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all-powerful except Him” (*LtO* 9).

85. “Let all the brothers preach by their deeds” (*Rnb* 17, 3). Each Friar and candidate should, therefore, be helped to understand that the Franciscan mission is realised first of all through conformity to Christ the Lord, through faith in His word and in the internal and joyful acceptance of His project of gospel life. “The more we

allow ourselves to be conformed to Christ, the more Christ is made present and active in the world for the salvation of all” (VC 72).

86. All the Friars and candidates should be formed to preach peace and justice through their deeds and to overcome evil by doing good (cf. GGCC 68 §1). And they should show feelings of respect for Creation in so far as it is a sign of the Creator, inducing others to be constructors of peace and to safeguard creation (cf. GGCC 71).

87. This intimate adhesion to the Gospel of Jesus is then expressed – in the first place – through communion of life in fraternity. The Friars, therefore, should learn to give witness to fraternity living it first of all among themselves in the confidence that through this they will be recognised as disciples of the Lord (cf. Jn 13, 35). When they go through the world, let them “not engage in arguments or disputes, but be subject to every human creature for God’s sake” (Rnb 16, 6).

88. Minority is the primary mode of presence of the Friars among men that still do not believe (cf. Rnb 16, 10-21). Formation should teach each Friar and candidate to state the forms of this value in the different situations of life in which he may find himself and in concrete actions that respond more to the times in which we live.

89. The Friars should be gradually led, right from initial formation, to announce – when they will see what pleases the Lord (cf. Rnb 16, 7-8) – the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the *kerigma*, in catechesis, in preaching and in teaching. They should be accompanied in planning pastoral activity together, in working together, asking to be sent by the fraternity and sharing the fruits of the annunciation with their community. They should become accustomed, in the projects of fraternal life, to seek together the most effective methods, trajectories and contents for evangelisation.

90. With regard to the contents of the annunciation, every Friar should be made capable of providing for his own theological, catechetical and technical formation and also to grasp the questions present in the heart of contemporary man and in the lives of the people entrusted to him, even through study of the human, historical and philosophical sciences. Updating and cultural formation in general should be habitually inserted into the personal and community projects.

91. Experiences in the *ad gentes* missionary reality should be proposed to all, even if not all – for different reasons – can carry them out. These experiences should be lived and accompanied in a gradual manner and they should be supported – in the areas of mission – by an authentic life of fraternal communion.

5. Accompanying a vocation

5.1. General orientations

92. §1. The ministry of *spiritual care* (Rnb 4, 6) and of *fraternal care* (Rnb 5, 1) of the community and of the individual Friars and candidates should be exercised in a continuous fashion and not by the Ministers alone, but also by all Friars – especially by the guardians, formators and spiritual directors – to whom other Friars are entrusted.

§2. The Ministers, guardians, formators and spiritual directors should be trained to exercise their service as companions in a suitable manner.

93. In the exercise of accompaniment, the Ministers, guardians and formators, in addition to paying particular attention to the Friars in the first years after solemn profession or priestly ordination (cf. RFF 60 above), should accompany those Friars that are in difficulty with special solicitude. They should have recourse, if they see it

convenient or necessary, to joint action of psychological and spiritual accompaniment or even to the placing of the Friar in crisis into a fraternity of “assessment and recuperation”.

94. The Father, putting some Friars alongside those that “wish to accept this life” (*Rb* 2, 1) in order to share with them the path of following Christ, makes some human mediators into participants in His formative action. He moulds – by means of the Spirit – the sentiments of the Son in the hearts of His consecrated (cf. *VC* 66). This service of accompaniment does not substitute for the work of God, the first and only formator, or for the work of the one being accompanied, the primary agent responsible for his own formation.

95. Accompaniment, be it of the fraternity or of the individual Friar or candidate, requires a climate of confidence and familiarity (cf. *Rb* 6, 7) so that he who is accompanying, “as a mother”, can really ‘love and nourish his spiritual brother’ (*Rb* 6, 8). This climate is achieved by:

- ❖ promoting fraternal life in all its dimensions so that the Friar that accompanies is and is shown to be a brother to all;
- ❖ living in that simplicity of life that is born of listening to the Word and that leads to the essential;
- ❖ living as ‘Minors’ in relation to one another, accepting each Friar in his own reality and promoting positive attitudes (cf. *GGCC* 40);
- ❖ announcing the Good News of the love of God and embracing the world in Christ, in an attitude of critical and, at the same time, fruitful dialogue.

96. Through continuous gospel inculturation, capable of reading the presence of God in every situation, and through continuous conversion, activated through obedience to the Word and fraternal correction, accompaniment orients the whole person towards an encounter with Christ in real life. In this way the Friar and the candidate on the journey learn to integrate person and fraternity, freedom and responsibility, prayer and activity, past and present, study and work, masculine and feminine dimensions.

97. The Friar that accompanies the fraternity, or the individual Friar, should be aware that his ministry is a service in support of growth towards the human and vocational maturity of the Friars and candidates. He should have respect for and sensitivity to the mystery of the person of the Friar entrusted to him. He should be endowed with a suitable preparation – spiritual and pedagogical – to carry out such a task. He himself should have the possibility to be accompanied and to transmit – especially through his life – his joyful belonging to God as a *Friar Minor*.

5.2. Personal accompaniment

98. Among the different formative means, *personal accompaniment* is presented as one of the most useful and can lead – always given the freedom of the person and the action of grace – to a real and profound transformation, up to the acquisition of a new gospel and Franciscan identity.

99. During personal accompaniment, the Friar or candidate in the process, humbly entrusting himself to the brother companion and sharing with him the joy of the same vocation, is called on to “confidently make known his need to the other” (*Rb* 6, 7). In this way he is helped to walk in the light of the Spirit, to understand in truth *who he is* before God and *what God asks* of him and to integrate, making all the dimensions of his spiritual, charismatic, apostolic, projective, human and relational person progress in him.

100. On the part of the Friar accompanied, accompaniment is a journey of ‘expropriation’ and ‘restitution’ and, as such, must pass through an awareness of his own weakness and fragility. The discovery of self – as a being in need of salvation, pardon and light – constitutes the starting point of an authentic process of formation

that arrives at an ever clearer understanding of the demands made by following Christ in the style of Francis and by the contemporary world (cf. *GGCC* 16).

101. Personal accompaniment is carried out through a process that, normally, provides the following steps (cf. *Lk* 24, 13-35):

- ❖ a moment of acceptance of the mystery of the person, of trustful listening and empathic understanding of the situation of the one called on the part of the companion;
- ❖ a time of clarification and reflection on the events lived, on personal attitudes and in seeking underlying personal vocational motivations that are, more or less, mature;
- ❖ the call, on the part of the companion, for those Christian and Franciscan values that enlighten the situation presented and the interpretation, in the light of these, of the progress made;
- ❖ a believing synthesis that the Friar on the journey is called on to make until he reaches that practical wisdom that will permit him to accept the concrete will of God and to decide for this in real life.

102. Personal “dialogue, a practice of irreplaceable and commendable effectiveness” (*VC* 66) is the main instrument within the very dynamic of personalised formation and has, as its foundation, reciprocal trust. The companion should know how to win such trust through patient listening, absence of judgement, sufficient time given to the encounter, frequency of dialogue, capacity to assume the tensions of the other, sincerity and humility in offering his own interpretations of what the Friar is living, confidentiality in regard to all entrusted to him and his own personal consistency of life.

103. Personal encounter does not only consist of instruction given by the companion, or of an experiential account made by the accompanied Friar. It should be a time of evaluation and discernment that would help the Friar to make the obstacles present in his journey more objective, including the less obvious ones (*VC* 66). It should also help him to free himself from possible spiritual delusions, to discover the will of God about his own life and the value of the Franciscan charism. It should help in the progressive taking on of the feelings of Christ towards the Father (cf. *VC* 65) and in making the gospel project of St. Francis his own.

104. The dialogue “should take place regularly and with a certain frequency” (*VC* 66), at least once a month and be of a suitable duration. The content of the dialogue should be “my vocation”, or the life of the accompanied Friar in its human, Christian and Franciscan totality (cf. *RFF* 55.56.91). Here lies its specific character in respect to other forms of personal dialogue such as confession, which has the moral life as its objective, a psychological encounter, where the object is the psychic world and the academic encounter, which is occupied with a topic of study.

6. Concrete Aspects of Human, Christian and Franciscan Growth

105. The human, Christian, and Franciscan aspects of growth, while they may be distinct in theory, are developed together as one in practical life.

106. Among the more important aspects of human, Christian, and Franciscan growth, formation is attentive to the following:

1. Aspects of human Growth

a) In relation to the individual:

- self-knowledge and self-acceptance;
- freedom and responsibility;

- effort to grow physically, psychologically, morally, spiritually, and socially;
- emotional and affective balance;
- sexual growth and integration;
- honesty and loyalty;
- joyfulness and cheerfulness.

b) In relation to the community:

- ability to relate well with others;
- ability to communicate and face up to conflicts;
- spirit of co-operation;
- openness and flexibility.

c) In relation to the world:

- ability to read the “signs of the times”;
- solidarity with the poor and marginalised.

2. Aspects of Christian Growth

a) In relation to God:

- a sense of gratitude;
- ongoing conversion;
- a life of faith and hope;
- growth in unconditional love;
- seeking the will of God in all things.

b) In relation to the Church-World:

- a sense of God’s presence in the world;
- a knowledge of the Catholic faith;
- a love for the Catholic Church;
- a missionary and ecumenical spirit;
- a pursuit of justice and peace.

3. Aspects of Franciscan Growth

a) In relation to God:

- following the poor and humble Christ;
- radical gospel life;
- a life of penance;
- the spirit of prayer and devotion.

b) In relation to Fraternity:

- love for the brotherhood;
- love and comprehension for each brother;
- fraternal service, especially to the old and sick friars;
- loving obedience to one another;
- overcoming egoism, one’s own will, and the forces that block the building up of fraternity;
- willingness to work with one’s own hands;
- participation in community prayer and liturgy.

c) In relation to Church-World:

- love for the Church;
- loving obedience to her Pastors;
- evangelisation and mission;
- a prophetic spirit;
- an option for the poor;
- commitment to reconciliation and forgiveness;
- respect for nature and the environment.

NOTE. A more detailed listing of the aspects of human, Christian and Franciscan growth is found in the Appendices IV, V and VI.

III. FORMATIVE STAGES

1. Ongoing formation

1.1. Description

107. Ongoing formation, both personal and communal, is a life-long process of discovering the poor and crucified Christ in oneself, in one's brothers, in one's service, in one's particular culture and in the whole of contemporary reality. It is, therefore, a process of conversion, of personal, spiritual, professional and ministerial growth, so that the Friar Minor is always ready to begin to do good in accordance with the exhortation of St. Francis (cf. *GGCC* 135).

108. Ongoing Formation, considered as a process of "constant conversion of their heart" (cf. *GGCC* 32 §2), "is an intrinsic requirement of religious consecration" (*VC* 69), demands creative fidelity to our vocation (cf. *OF* 40. 41) and is the humus of initial formation.

109. Ongoing formation takes place in the context of the daily life of the Friar Minor, in prayer and in work, in his relationships both within and outside the fraternity and in his contact with the cultural, social and political world in which he moves.

1.2. Objectives

110. The fundamental aim of Franciscan ongoing formation is to animate, nourish and sustain the fidelity of the individual and of the fraternity to their particular vocation in all the dimensions of human, Christian and Franciscan life, in the spirit of the Order and in its mission in order to build the Kingdom of God in times and conditions of continuous change.

111. Ongoing formation enables the Friar Minor to acquire an attitude of contemplation that is capable of listening to God, who asks each one to be evangelised and to evangelise, and of remaining firm in the midst of difficulties, challenges and changes provoked by the context of his life.

112. Ongoing formation develops the spiritual, doctrinal and professional abilities of the Friar Minor, keeps him up to date and makes him mature so that he can carry out his service to the Order, to the Church and to the world in an ever more adequate way.

113. Ongoing formation promotes the renewal of every friar and of the local and provincial fraternities in their relationship with God's people by respecting, serving and learning from them.

1.3. Means

114. Each friar is encouraged to take responsibility for his own human, Christian and Franciscan development through his personal life project and in dialogue with the friars, the Guardian and the Provincial Minister (cf. *GGCC* 137 §1).

115. The friars of each individual fraternity have the responsibility of creating an environment of trust in which all can freely express their needs, thoughts and feelings. It is important that the friars promote the skills of communication, of conflict resolution and of community building. If considered opportune, the use of experts is to be encouraged.

116. Each Entity should elaborate a systematic and integral ongoing formation programme that, taking into account the document *Ongoing Formation in the Order of Friars Minor*, embraces the total existence of the person (cf. *VC* 69).

117. Ongoing formation should be structured, taking into account the different “seasons” of life (cf. *VC* 70) and the different ministries exercised by the Friars, particularly by the guardians and formators.

118. The provincial and local fraternities, sensitive to the needs of human growth and to the problems related to it, have the responsibility of creating and organising specific formation programmes to meet the particular needs arising from the natural stages of development or transition in life, such as first assignment, mid-life crisis, old age, serious illness, professional changes, retirement age, death, alcohol or drug dependency, etc.

119. The fraternity should put the necessary means for their ongoing formation at the disposal of the friars, whether it be from the point of view of theory or from that of concrete experience, so that the Gospel may be alive in the concrete reality of our time. Sabbatical years, retreats, hermitage experiences, spiritual direction, prayer groups, support or therapy groups, reading (periodicals, books, etc.), keeping friary libraries up-to-date, theological, Franciscan and professional updating, educational visits, etc. are suggested.

120. The Guardian should promote the ongoing formation of the local fraternity and of each friar by means of the local Chapter, days of recollection, annual retreats, sharing of the Word of God, periodic reviews of life, common recreation, fraternal gatherings, study days, personal dialogue with each friar, etc. (cf. *GGCC* 137 §2).

121. The Minister Provincial and his Definitory should take care to appoint as Guardians those Friars that would encourage and facilitate the human, Christian and Franciscan formation of each friar.

122. The Minister Provincial has the duty of promoting and organising ongoing formation in the Province by means of Chapters, the formation council, the director of ongoing formation, regular communication and personal visits to the fraternities (cf. *GGCC* 137 §3).

123. The provincial director of ongoing formation has the duty of organising, coordinating and publicising available programmes in the Province, the dioceses, the state or country, and of encouraging the friars to participate in, organise, and initiate other activities of ongoing formation in accordance with the specific professional and ministerial needs.

2. The agents of formation

2.1. Formative fraternities

124. Every individual fraternity and the whole fraternity of the Province have the responsibility of welcoming new members and forming them to our style of life. Some houses, however, are specifically designated as fraternities responsible for initial formation.

125. Since initial formation is the primary task in a house of formation, all the friars in such a formation fraternity, should be oriented towards welcoming and helping those in formation to grow in their Franciscan vocation, even if not all of them are expressly designated as formators or members of the “coetus formatorum”.

126. A fundamental element of Franciscan formation consists in the fact that a new member learns how to be and to become a Friar Minor in and through daily participation in the life of a particular fraternity.

127. This requires that the Houses of Formation should joyfully assume their formative task and bring about the necessary conditions to be truly such by having:

- ❖ a good quality of fraternal life and prayer,
- ❖ the disposition to grow together and to take on a formative relationship with the Friars and candidates in formation,
- ❖ a fraternal life project, the result of community discernment,
- ❖ the will to face up to conflicts and to seek a solution by taking advantage, if the case should require it, of the help of experts.

128. The formation fraternity is a single whole, composed of those in formation, of those expressly designated as formators and of the other solemnly professed friars that live together in making the fraternity the privileged place of continuous conversion, of sharing a common life and of mutual responsibility.

129. Each member comes to the fraternity with his own personality, history, gifts and limitations. Each one carries within himself the signs of his social and family background as well as the good will to grow in his own vocation. It is important that there be respect for diversity, collaboration between the young and the older members and understanding for those who make mistakes or who have not yet learned.

130. An atmosphere of confidence, dialogue and courtesy should be cultivated in a house of formation. This would facilitate personal and community prayer, listening to the Word of God, study and work.

131. Those solemnly professed friars in formation houses that are not expressly designated as formators should collaborate in the process of initial formation, principally through:

- ❖ good example,
- ❖ friendly and courteous relationships,
- ❖ participation in the daily prayer and Eucharistic celebration of the fraternity,
- ❖ constructive feedback to the formators about the formation programme,
- ❖ periodic evaluation of the candidates together with the Master and the formators.

132. The formation fraternity should participate in the life of the local and universal Church, of the Order and of the provincial fraternity.

133. The fraternity of a formation house should be attentive to the world and its history, of its present social context and be especially open to the poor and marginalised in harmony with our identity as minors.

134. It is essential that, in small formation fraternities inserted among the poor, the formators live with those in formation in order to guarantee the formative process of an authentic growth in minority and evangelical poverty in accordance with the spirit of St. Francis.

2.2. The formators

135. The friars charged with a specific responsibility for formation should take up this ministry willingly and in a spirit of joyful service to their brothers. They should show happiness in their vocation and enthusiasm for their ministry.

136. The formators should have an experiential knowledge of God through prayer, wisdom derived from prolonged and attentive listening to the Word of God and love for things spiritual and Franciscan so that they may

be able, in this way, to accompany others on this same journey (cf. *VC* 66).

137. As St. Francis was sensitive to the need of his brothers, so also the formators should be attentive to those they serve. They should have the human qualities of discernment, balance, serenity, patience, understanding, a spirit of joy and true affection for those entrusted to them.

138. The formators ought to possess the ability to work together, to dialogue and to listen to the other friars in the house of formation and the formators of other fraternities.

139. The formators should have the necessary time available to them to give priority to their service. Their other activities should be compatible with their primary task.

140. The formators should rely more on example than on words in carrying out the task of helping the candidates to conform themselves more and more to the image of Christ, the only Master.

141. The formators, conscious of the fact that the Spirit of the Lord is the true formator of the Friars Minor, have a special role in accompanying the candidates in discerning the authenticity of their call from God to the Franciscan life and in helping the fraternity, especially in the person of the Minister Provincial, to evaluate the capacities of the candidates.

142. The formators should set themselves the goal of making the young men entrusted to them ever more responsible for their own life and formation, mindful that personal dialogue constitutes the principal way of accompanying those in formation.

143. The formators should be conscious of the fact that a serene acceptance of themselves, a healthy knowledge of their own possibilities and limitations and a great confidence in the activity of God, who works in and through the brothers entrusted to them, will help them to live their formative ministry with serenity and responsibility.

2.3. Some practical consequences

144. The Master in a house of formation, together with the “coetus formatorum”, is the person directly responsible for formation within the fraternity and, as such, answers to the Minister Provincial.

145. The Master acts in coordination with the formators of the other houses of formation and in collaboration with the Secretary for Formation, the Formation Council, the Director of Ongoing Formation and the Friar responsible for the pastoral care of vocations.

146. The Master should personally concern himself with the complete and integral (human, Christian, Franciscan) formation of those in formation and have regular meetings on a personal and a communal level with them.

147. For the purpose of paying adequate attention to each person in formation, it is important that the number of those in formation entrusted to a Master should be not too great.

148. Each formator should carry out his service by educating and accompanying those in formation. This requires the capacity for:

- ❖ transparency and consistency of life;
- ❖ the expression and appreciation of simple and deeply meaningful human gestures;
- ❖ living and constructing relationships of familiarity, trust, freedom and truth with and in the one accompanied;

- ❖ sharing life, faith, suffering and the struggle of searching with the one accompanied as happiness in his vocation;
- ❖ being demanding and, at the same time, understanding and patient, without rigidity, and capable of maternal and paternal attitudes;
- ❖ spiritual discernment, even in cases of conflict and immaturity;
- ❖ making an objective evaluation of the suitability of the Friar in formation;
- ❖ awareness of only being a “mediator” between God, the one true formator, and the one in formation, who is primarily responsible for his own formation:
- ❖ helping those in formation to know themselves in their possibilities and limitations, to make the passage from sincerity to truth and to resolve their difficulties in a suitable manner;
- ❖ involving those in formation in the process of evaluation through his own capacity at introspection.

149. §1. It is essential that formators be properly prepared for undertaking this service, especially through specific courses or other suitable means. Moreover, the updating of those that are already engaged in this work is a matter of priority for the whole Order.

§2. To assure the formation of new formators and the updating of those that are working in formation, the Order, through the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies, should organise courses in which ample space is given to Franciscan anthropological, spiritual and pedagogical principles. The Conferences should organise and support similar initiatives in view of the formation of their own formators.

§3. The formators in each provincial Fraternity should pay special attention to their own ongoing formation and hold regular meetings between themselves and with the formators of the Conference of Ministers Provincial.

150. The formators should be aware that they do not have all the necessary requisites for formation and, therefore, they should solicit the assistance of specialists in this field whenever it is appropriate or necessary.

151. In order to have formators that correspond to the Franciscan characteristics and to present-day needs, the following attitudes should be taken into particular consideration:

- ❖ The capacity for listening, dialogue and donation to others;
- ❖ Serene and objective knowledge of self, of one’s limitations and possibilities;
- ❖ Emotional stability, the capacity to overcome frustrations and to express, with a certain sureness, one’s own feelings and convictions;
- ❖ Experience of faith founded on the Word of God;
- ❖ Consciousness of belonging to God, to the Church and to the Order;
- ❖ The capacity to maintain oneself in continuous formation, conversion and discernment by allowing oneself be guided by the Spirit;
- ❖ Knowledge of and relationship with history and the reality in which one lives and works;
- ❖ The capacity to establish authentic and deep interpersonal relationships, particularly with one’s confreres;
- ❖ The capacity to work in a team;
- ❖ The capacity for critical attention towards oneself and the reality in which one lives (Order – Church – world) and especially that of the poor;
- ❖ Clarity in assimilating and restoring the founding values of human, Christian and Franciscan life.

152. The selection of the Guardian and of the members of the fraternity in houses of formation (and especially for the “coetus formatorum”) is of the greatest importance. The “coetus formatorum” should include, as far as possible, both clerical and lay, young and old friars, in order to draw the maximum advantage from all the gifts represented in the fraternity (cf. *PCO* 81 71).

153. The Guardian, who is responsible for the right ordering of the house (cf. *GGCC* 140 §3), carries out his duty in close collaboration with the Master, respecting both the specific nature of a house of formation and the specific responsibility of the Master.

154. In particular, the Guardian in a house of formation, in addition to his duty of fostering the welfare of the fraternity and of the friars, of caring for the life and religious discipline of the house and directing its activities (cf. *GGCC* 237), should:

- ❖ ensure that the Master is free from offices or duties that would prevent him from dedicating himself to the formation programme;
- ❖ support by word and example the formation responsibilities of the Master;
- ❖ carry out his role as a member of the “coetus formatorum”, if he is a part of it (cf. *GGCC* 140 §2), under the direction of the Master;
- ❖ promote ways for those in formation to participate in the local Chapter as a means of formation.

155. In large houses, where formation is only one activity among others, it would be appropriate to draw up special Regulations to define the various duties of the Guardian, Master, Treasurer, Formators and of the other solemnly professed friars in the house.

156. The formators should do their best to integrate their work into the cultural context of the places in which they are called to serve (cf. *PCO* 81 66).

157. In every province provision should be made for letting the provincial fraternity know the details of the formation programme, any changes to it, and for helping the friars to take part in it:

- ❖ by encouraging the friars to visit those in formation;
- ❖ by inviting them to share their particular expertise and experience with those in formation;
- ❖ by involving them in offering apostolic experiences to those in formation, with due consultation with the Master.

3. The Pastoral Care of Vocations

3.1. Description

158. The pastoral care of vocations springs from the individual and communal witness to Franciscan life. It consists of the totality of pastoral activities carried out by the friars and by the fraternities so that each Christian may follow his own specific vocation in the Church. It springs, in particular, from the proposal of the charism of St. Francis as a comprehensive project of life (cf. *GGCC* 144; 145 §2).

3.2. Objectives

159. The pastoral work of promoting vocations sets itself the goal of making the whole people of God conscious of its responsibility for the vocation of every person (cf. *GGCC* 144) and of “arousing, welcoming and supporting new vocations” (*PCO* 81 24) to the Order of Friars Minor.

160. The pastoral work of vocation promotion makes each provincial fraternity conscious that it is the witness of life given by the friars that is the main power of attraction for Christians seeking to determine their vocation (cf. *GGCC* 145 §1; *OrPCV* 19, 1; 21, 1).

161. The pastoral work of vocation promotion helps the fraternities to project and present, by word and example, a clear, complete and realistic image of the life of the Friar Minor today (cf. *OrPCV* 19, 16).

162. The pastoral care of vocations prepares the fraternities to welcome those who show an interest in the Franciscan charism, so that they may find a concrete proposal of life, according to the invitation of Jesus: “Come and see” (*Jn* 1, 39).

163. The pastoral care of vocations supports and accompanies the aspirants on their journey of faith so that they may come to know themselves, get to know ever better the figures of Jesus Christ and St. Francis and can then discern their own vocation and arrive at a definite choice of life.

164. The pastoral care of vocations attentively nurtures the Catholic faith of candidates for the Order (cf. *Rb* 2: 3), mindful of the fact that the environment from which they come does not always offer the possibility of knowing and practising an authentic life of faith.

3.3. Means

165. Every provincial fraternity should work out an organic plan for the pastoral care of vocations in communion with the local Church and with the whole Franciscan family. This plan should take into account the methodological indications and objectives of the pastoral care of vocations as they are presented in the document *Orientations for the Pastoral Care of Vocations*. “Come and see”.

166. The provincial fraternity should see to it that each friar feels himself responsible for vocations. It should promote the formation of some friars for pastoral work with youth, the promotion of vocations (cf. *OrPCV* 16, 5) and assign the responsibility for this work to the friars or communities that are most suitable for such activities.

167. Each provincial fraternity should have the necessary structures for encouraging and welcoming vocations to the Franciscan life, as, for example, houses of welcome, vocation centres, etc. (cf. *OrPCV* 16, 2; 21, 9).

168. Every local fraternity, in order to nurture vocations, should identify the most suitable means for entering into contact and initiating dialogue with its surrounding culture and especially with the present situation of today’s young people (cf. *OrPCV* 19, 13. 16.17).

169. The Provincial Animator of Vocations coordinates the pastoral care of vocations. It is up to him to promote and direct the provincial plan for the pastoral care of vocations, to make the friars aware of vocational issues, to encourage the participation of local collaborators and to work together with the Provincial Secretary for Formation and Studies in accordance with the directives of the GGSS.

170. The pastoral care of vocations finds its principal and natural environment in youth movements, in local activities, in provincial initiatives, in other ecclesial contexts. It recognises that its best collaboration lies in the presence and activity of the Second Order, of the Secular Franciscan Order and of other Institutes belonging to the Franciscan Family (cf. *OrPCV* 21, 6).

171. Vocational accompaniment should follow a precisely planned formative process that promotes human, Christian and vocational maturity. It is comprised of the following phases at least, adapted for differences of places and cultures:

- ❖ the necessary initiation into the life of faith and the first vocational experience;
- ❖ the deepening of the vocation project through knowledge of the religious life, of Franciscan spirituality and of the characteristics and activities of the Order;
- ❖ the decision of the aspirants to begin the journey of initial formation and to experience the Franciscan life.

172. The progress of the aspirant should be carefully weighed up in order to verify the authenticity of his vocation and his personal suitability. Taking into account the criteria for discernment offered by the *Orientations for the Pastoral Care of Vocation*, “Come and see” (cf. *OrPCV* 17), each Province or Conference should establish some fundamental criteria for discernment, such as, for example:

- ❖ reasonable psycho-physical health;
- ❖ the required degree of affective and emotional maturity;
- ❖ the surmounting of self-centredness;
- ❖ psychological freedom;
- ❖ autonomy and capacity for personal initiative;
- ❖ a sense of responsibility and self-control;
- ❖ stability in the choices made;
- ❖ acceptance of self and others;
- ❖ a spirit of collaboration;
- ❖ an aptitude for community life;
- ❖ practice of the Catholic faith;
- ❖ a spirit of prayer and devotion;
- ❖ an interest in the Franciscan charism.

4. Initial formation

4.1. Introduction

173. Initial formation is a privileged time in which the candidates, with the special accompaniment of the Master and the formation fraternity, are initiated into the following of Christ according to the way of St. Francis and the sound tradition of the Order. They gradually accept and integrate their own particular personal gifts with the authentic and characteristic values of the gospel vocation of the Friar Minor.

174. Initial formation is structured in three consecutive stages: postulancy, novitiate, and the time of temporary profession. In these stages the candidate grows and matures until he finally takes on the life and the Rule of the Friars Minor through solemn profession.

175. During initial formation the characteristic values of the gospel vocation of the Friar Minor (cf. nn. 5-35 above), the principles of formation (cf. nn. 36-56 above) and all that is said about formation to the gospel life of the Friar Minor (cf. 62-100 above) are applied in a manner appropriate to each stage of formation and with respect for the progress made by each candidate.

176. Initial formation offers the same Franciscan formation to all candidates so that there may be equal opportunity for all, according to the capacities of each and the tasks which each one is called to carry out in the Order, in the Church and in the world.

177. §1. In initial formation it is of great importance that there be harmony between the various stages and collaboration between the formators and that there be a gradual progression in the contents and methods of formation.

§2. It is equally important that there be continuity and consistency between initial and ongoing formation. To achieve this, each Entity should make sure that initial formation is harmonised with ongoing formation through its own formation project, “creating a readiness on everyone’s part to let themselves be formed every day of their lives” (*VC* 69; *SAFC* 15).

178. Keeping in mind that the person is formed very slowly and that formation should be careful to root human, Christian and Franciscan values in the heart of the Friars and candidates, “sufficient time should be reserved for initial formation” (*VC* 65). During this time “a peaceful discernment, freed from the temptations of numbers or efficiency” (*SAFC* 18), should be set in motion.

4.2. The Postulancy

4.2.1. Description

179. The postulancy is a necessary stage for an adequate preparation for the novitiate (cf. *CIC* 597 §2), during which the postulant confirms his determination to convert himself through a progressive passing from a secular life to the Franciscan form of life.

180. The postulant, as a candidate to the Franciscan Order, participates in the life of the fraternity without being bound by the obligations of religious life.

4.2.2. Objectives

181. The Franciscan postulancy allows the postulant to verify his decision to begin to follow Jesus Christ according to the way of life of St. Francis and to prepare himself adequately for the novitiate (cf. *GGCC* 126; 149).

182. The postulant, aided by the formators, dedicates himself especially to his human formation and to deepening his baptismal commitment.

183. The postulant gradually gets to know and to experience the Franciscan life in the local and provincial fraternity (cf. *GGCC* 149).

184. The postulant and the formation fraternity reach a responsible decision regarding his entrance into the novitiate by verifying the motivations of his vocation and testing his fitness for the Franciscan life (cf. *GGCC* 149-150).

4.2.3. Means

185. Every Province should work out and put into effect its own programme that will lead the postulant to:

a.

- a degree of human development that guarantees sufficient psychological and physical stability;
- a personal maturity in the knowledge and acceptance of himself;
- a social maturity in being able to integrate himself into a community, balanced by a proper self-determination;
- a sufficient level of general education;

b.

- a personal relationship with Christ, with the desire for conversion and consecration to God and of giving himself to his brothers;
- an adequate knowledge of the Christian faith and a basic spiritual, Biblical and liturgical formation;
- an active participation in the life of the Church;

c.

- an initial knowledge of the Franciscan charism and Franciscan life, by sharing the life of the friars;

- an experience of service and work in different kinds of poverty.

186. The postulant is accompanied by a Master in a fraternity where he can find a concrete model of Franciscan life that should help him to discover his own capacities, to overcome any resistance to this way of life and to discern his own vocation.

187. The postulant should be initiated into the skills of analysis and critical assessment of the situation in which he is called to live the Franciscan charism.

188. In evaluating the fitness of the postulant, account should be taken of the following criteria of discernment mainly:

- ❖ psychological and physical balance;
- ❖ absence of obvious conditioning;
- ❖ capacity for initiative and for shared responsibility;
- ❖ proper use of freedom and time;
- ❖ willingness to serve and to work;
- ❖ the ability to make free and responsible decisions;
- ❖ knowledge and practice of the Christian faith;
- ❖ sufficient clarity of intention and motivation;
- ❖ acceptance of the guidance of the formators;
- ❖ an aptitude for living in community;
- ❖ the willingness to follow Christ in poverty, obedience and chastity.

189. Account should be taken of all that the *Ration Studiorum OFM* (cf. *RS* 146) prescribes in regard to specific Franciscan formation during the Postulancy.

4.3. The Novitiate

4.3.1. Description

190. The novitiate is the time in which the novice begins his life in the Order. He continues the discernment and the deepening of his decision to follow Jesus Christ in the Church and in the world of today according to the spirit of St. Francis and comes to know and to experience more profoundly the Franciscan form of life (cf. *GGCC* 152).

4.3.2. Objectives

191. The novice is introduced to a deeper and more living knowledge of Jesus Christ, of the radical demands made by following Him and by the divine call to Franciscan life.

192. The novice experiences the life peculiar to the Order by participating in the local fraternity and by gradually integrating himself into the provincial fraternity (cf. *GGCC* 130; 139).

193. The novice continues his human and Christian formation and conforms his heart and his mind to Jesus Christ in the spirit of St. Francis (cf. *GGCC* 152; 127).

194. The novice purifies and deepens his motives, examines his intentions and discerns his suitability for the Franciscan life (cf. *GGCC* 152).

195. The novice prepares himself to live intellectually and practically, within the Church and the Order, in a deeper communion with the men and women of today in their historical, social, political, cultural and religious reality (cf. *GGCC* 127 §3; 130).

196. The novice cultivates the dimension of work and the spirit of evangelisation through a personal plan of life and a knowledge of the national and ecclesial reality in which, as a Friar Minor, he must seek the lowest place in society.

4.3.3. Means

197. Every province should have its own well-articulated programme so that the novices can understand and begin to live religious life in following Jesus after the manner of St. Francis (in accordance with articles 152-154 of the *GGCC* and the directives of article 81 of the *GGSS*), so that:

1. the novice is introduced to the theology of religious life, especially the theology of the Rule, the *GGCC* and the spirituality of the Order, based principally on the writings of St. Francis and the sound tradition of the Order. At the same time he should be formed in the practice of the gospel life through the exercise of fraternal communion and through participation in the activities of the friars;
2. the novice dedicates himself to reading and meditating daily on the sacred Scriptures, especially the Holy Gospel, allowing his mind and heart to be transformed by the power of God's Word;
3. the novice is guided in developing the contemplative dimension, in fidelity to personal and community prayer and in living more profoundly the Paschal Mystery through an active celebration of the liturgy after the example of Mary, "the Virgin made Church" (*SBVM* 1) and by the exercises of piety recommended by the sound tradition of the Order.

198. The formation of the novice is animated and guided by the Master, who should be qualified and mature in his Franciscan life (cf. *GGCC* 139 §2) and capable of accompanying and understanding the novice, supported by the collaboration of the "coetus formatorum" and by the local fraternity.

199. The novice should make himself constantly available for frequent reviews with the other novices and with the formators in order to evaluate his progress in the following of Christ and in acquiring the attitudes peculiar to the life of the Order.

200. The novice should participate in some pastoral activities, especially with the least and the poor, to complete his formation and so learn to unite action and contemplation (cf. *GGCC* 154 §2).

201. The novice should develop the capacity to know, judge critically and participate in the realities of life in a Franciscan perspective.

202. The evaluation of the novice's fitness for first profession should principally take into account the following criteria of discernment:

- ❖ an adequate level of human and affective maturity and a capacity for good interpersonal relationships;
- ❖ an interior discipline in the form of self-control and self-denial (cf. *GGCC* 132);
- ❖ a spirit of initiative and an active and responsible participation in his own formation;
- ❖ a capacity for accepting the differences in others and for living in fraternity (cf. *GGCC* 45);
- ❖ an evident responsibility for co-operating with the grace of work;
- ❖ a capacity for questioning and evaluating himself in the light of God's Word;
- ❖ a capacity for leading a life of prayer and contemplation;
- ❖ a capacity for moving from a personal to a community project;
- ❖ flexibility and dialogue with the formators (cf. *GGCC* 129);
- ❖ respect and care for the elderly, sick and frail friars (cf. *GGCC* 44);

- ❖ a sense of belonging to the Fraternity, to the Province and to the Order;
- ❖ a capacity for serving the least and the marginalised of society;
- ❖ an understanding of the vows and a serious desire to live them with joy and serenity;
- ❖ a sufficient knowledge of the contents of formation, especially of the Franciscan charism and Sacred Scripture.

203. Account should be taken of all that the *Ratione Studiorum OFM* (cf. *RS* 147) prescribes in regard to the specific Franciscan formation during the Novitiate.

4.4. The time of temporary profession

4.4.1. Description

204. The time of temporary profession completes initial Franciscan formation in its various theoretical and practical aspects. During it the friar is made more apt to live more completely the life and mission peculiar to the Order in the world of today and to prepare himself for making his solemn profession (cf. *GGCC* 157; 158 §1).

4.4.2. Objectives

205. The friar should continue to mature as a human, Christian and Franciscan person, deepening, internalising and living out the Franciscan charism in his life.

206. The Friar Minor is called to grow in active participation in, corresponsibility for and identification with the life and work of the local and provincial fraternity.

207. The Friar Minor gradually assumes ever more responsibility for his mission in the Church and in the world in harmony with the Franciscan charism, with his own gifts and aspirations and with the needs of the people of God.

208. The Friar Minor continues his discernment and preparation to assume a definitive commitment through solemn profession in the Order of Friars Minor.

4.4.3. Means

209. Every province must have its own programme, which should be the same for all, so that Friars in temporary profession can acquire a general but systematic formation (spiritual and apostolic, doctrinal and practical). It should conform to the gifts received by each from God so that they can give a service to the fraternity, to the Church and to all people, which corresponds to the longings and needs of the world today.

210. The formation programme must contain a deepening of the Franciscan charism and, along with other formation experiences and activities, must offer to all the friars in temporary formation, regardless of their option, studies in the following areas:

1. Franciscan:

- Study of the Rule and of the writings of St. Francis;
- Study of the other Franciscan sources;
- History of the Order and of the Province;
- Introduction to the spirituality of the Second and Third Orders;
- Introduction to Franciscan philosophical and theological thought;
- Introduction to Franciscan evangelisation;
- Study of the *GGCC* and *GGSS* and other documents of the Order.

2. Theological:

- Introduction to Sacred Scripture;
- Introduction to the theology of religious life;
- Introduction to Christology and Ecclesiology;
- Introduction to the liturgical life;
- Introduction to Moral Theology;
- Introduction to the Sacraments.

3. Humanistic:

- Introduction to the understanding of the world today and of the human person;
- Introduction to the understanding of their own culture and of popular piety;
- Study of languages and of the arts.

211. The Friar in temporary profession must be accompanied by a Master and by a “coetus formatorum.”

212. The Friar in temporary profession should take part in the life of the local and provincial fraternity so that he may understand the importance of fraternal life, accept its reality and feel responsible for it, while respecting others in all their diversity.

213. The Friar in temporary profession should take part in the various activities of the provincial fraternity, especially among the poorest people and evaluate his work together with his formators in order to discern more clearly the needs of the Church, the Order and the world as well as his own abilities and charisms.

214. The Friar in temporary profession should become a part of and be in solidarity with the real situation of the world and the problems of the country in which he is called to live out his vocation.

215. In evaluating the suitability of the Friar for solemn profession, some of the criteria that should be taken into account are:

- ❖ emotional maturity;
- ❖ manifest signs of an adequate and mature personal relationship with God in prayer;
- ❖ personal initiative and responsibility for his own religious life;
- ❖ ability to live and work with the fraternity;
- ❖ ability to be active in and inclined to the service of others, especially the poorest people;
- ❖ a sense of justice, peace and respect for creation;
- ❖ a spirit of compassion and reconciliation;
- ❖ ability to assume a definitive commitment to observe the evangelical counsels;
- ❖ willingness to witness to and proclaim the Holy Gospel;
- ❖ sufficient interior freedom and practice of poverty;
- ❖ sense of belonging to the fraternity, the Province, the Order and the Church.

216. Account should be taken of all that the *Ration Studiorum OFM* (cf. *RS* 148) prescribes with regard to the specific Franciscan formation during the time of temporary profession.

IV. GENERAL, THEOLOGICAL, PROFESSIONAL AND MINISTERIAL FORMATION IN THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT

1. Introduction

217. The Friar Minor needs to have his initial and ongoing Franciscan formation realised and completed by an adequate and solid preparation in order to be an effective witness to and proclaimer of the Word of God and to collaborate in the service of the Church and the building of the Kingdom. This must be:

- ❖ general, in order that he may be open to the person, the whole person and all people (cf. *PP*, 14);
- ❖ theological, in order that his activity be rooted in the Word of God and the Faith of the Church, lived and proclaimed;
- ❖ professional, in order that his activity among men be that of a competent servant;
- ❖ ministerial, if God calls him through the Church to a ministerial service.

218. This formation allows the Friar Minor to carry out his work as a gift from the Lord (cf. *Rb* 5: 1) by which he earns his daily bread (cf. *Rnb* 7: 4-7; Test 20-21) and takes his place in society.

219. It should be made clear in this formation that the Friar Minor, in faithfulness to his choice of poverty, chooses and takes up his work in a spirit:

- ❖ of prayer and devotion (cf. *RS* 21-22),
- ❖ of fraternity and solidarity with his brothers and with the people he serves (cf. *RS* 23-24),
- ❖ of minority, simplicity and sharing, especially with the little ones and the poor people of this world (cf. *RS* 25-27),
- ❖ of liberty and detachment, rejecting the worldly spirit of consumerism and activism.

2. General Formation

2.1. Description

220. General formation aims at the acquisition of a level of culture and education “in keeping with the times” (cf. *SAFC* 18). This will allow the Friar to take his place as someone acting in his own time and in his own milieu (cf. *Med* 41-48). It is also called “human formation” (*Med* 61-64).

221. This formation, in its different aspects, offers various possibilities and is promoted in order to respond to the needs of both ongoing and initial formation.

2.2. Objectives

222. General formation promotes personal growth and furnishes the tools of understanding and analysis that permit the friar:

- ❖ to have a critical attitude to society and to the world;
- ❖ to know himself, to know and understand human nature, the stages of human development, human psychology;
- ❖ to communicate within the fraternity and within the cultural environment;
- ❖ to communicate with persons and groups who speak another language;
- ❖ to have the necessary level of education for access to professional and technical training;

- ❖ to be efficient in the work of evangelisation, in service to the fraternity and Order and in the commitment to transform society through a sense of justice, peace and respect for creation.

2.3. Means

223. General formation is attentive to:

- The study of the human sciences, among which are included:
 - psychology and psycho-sociology, for knowledge of oneself and of others, training to active listening (cf. *Med* 35) and growth of sensitivity to human relationships (cf. *Med* 47) and to group phenomena;
 - initiation into sociology (cf. *Med* 53), politics, economics and ecology (cf. *RS* 54);
- Updating knowledge of literature, history and philosophy; the learning and perfecting of languages (cf. *RS* 53-61);
- Training in the techniques of communication, expressing oneself in writing, orally and with audio-visual means (cf. *RS* 139-140; *Med* 72);
- The development of personal talents, especially creative ones and those of artistic expression, in order to direct them to contemplation and to the service of others (cf. *RS* 10.19.20)..

3. Theological formation

3.1. Description

224. Theological formation tries to deepen and complete the Christian and Franciscan formation of the Friar Minor in accordance with his capacities and options in order to fully live the mystery of Christ and become more useful in building up the Kingdom of God (cf. *GGCC* 160 §1).

3.2. Objectives

225. Theological formation permits the Friar Minor:

- ❖ to nourish his faith and to support it by the tradition of the Church and of the Order (cf. *RS* 67);
- ❖ to confront his faith with the problems of today's world (cf. *RS* 68; *Med* 60);
- ❖ to engage in dialogue with other Christians, religions and agnostics (cf. *RS* 70-74; *Med* 59-60);
- ❖ to give witness to his faith and to share it with the men and women of today;
- ❖ to exercise the ministry of evangelisation with greater effectiveness;
- ❖ to clarify and promote a personal and social "practice" of the faith.

226. Theological formation wishes to propose a Franciscan way of doing theology:

- ❖ a theology practised in a spirit of minority and of service;
- ❖ a theology associated with prayer;
- ❖ a theology close to real life, directed towards concrete action.

227. This formation wishes to propose a Franciscan theology that responds to the challenges of our time:

- ❖ a theology of Creation that nourishes the praise of the Creator, teaches men respect for created things and brings the light of faith to bear on the ecological problems of our time;
- ❖ a theology and a Christology that present the salvation and the liberation offered by God in response to the appeals and the needs of the poor of today;
- ❖ a theology that leads to respect for the human person and his rights;
- ❖ a theology that aims at the construction of a fraternal world (justice, peace, ecumenism) (cf. *Med* 59);
- ❖ a theology that is firmly tied to an eschatological vision in which it finds the strength for a daily self-commitment.

3.3. Means

228. The Order and the Provinces should promote theological formation through their own suitable means, in union with the whole Franciscan Family and through other institutions. In particular, they should do it through:

- ❖ the creation or improvement of Centres of Theological and Biblical Studies (cf. *RS* 118-123; *Med* 71);
- ❖ the maintenance and improvement of at least one Research Centre (cf. *RS* 124);
- ❖ the organisation of updating courses;
- ❖ the support of publications (books, reviews, articles);
- ❖ the setting up and updating of libraries;
- ❖ the activation of programmes of ongoing formation on the level of Provinces and fraternities;
- ❖ the preparation of Friars for theological teaching and research.
- ❖ participation in local centres of study or in other methods of theological formation, with preference for those that are more in harmony with the orientations of the Order.

4. Professional formation

4.1. Description

229. Professional formation aims at the acquisition, during the time of initial and ongoing formation, of such competence in a manual, technical, artistic or scientific field that would permit the Friar Minor to live his mission in exercising a qualified trade, profession or activity in society, the Church and the Order (cf. *RS* 85-89).

4.2. Objectives

230. Professional formation allows the Friar Minor:

- ❖ to fulfil himself and to develop his gifts in order to put them at the service of the Order, the Church and the world;
- ❖ to be in solidarity with workers by sharing their life (cf. *GGCC* 78);
- ❖ to respond in a suitable and qualified manner to the needs of his time (cf. *GGCC* 162) and, in this way, to accomplish his specific mission in the world.

4.3. Means

231. In making a choice for professional formation, account should be taken at the same time of the aptitudes and aspirations of each individual and of the needs and priorities of the fraternity, the Province, the Order (cf. *GGCC* 79), places and persons.

232. This professional formation should be carried out in such a way that:

- a. it is in harmony with the cultural context;
- b. use is made of local, regional and international formation possibilities;
- c. it is done in a Franciscan spirit, even when the formation is received outside the institutes of the Order;
- d. it encourages interprovincial and Franciscan Family collaboration.

5. Formation for Ministries and Sacred Orders

5.1. Description

233. Formation for Ministries and Sacred Orders consists of the theoretical and practical preparation of the Friar Minor in accordance with the requirements of the Church, the specific Franciscan vocation, the needs of men and the work of building up the Kingdom of God (cf. *RS* 80-84).

5.2. Objectives

234. Formation for Ministries and Sacred Orders helps the Friar, as a Minor, to deepen and bring to maturity his call to the various services in the Church under the action of the Holy Spirit and with the guidance of the formators.

235. This formation pushes the Friar Minor to experience more directly life with the people in order to know better their problems and their expectations and to bring them the proclamation of the Gospel.

236. This formation leads the Friar Minor to a Franciscan understanding of the Ministries and Sacred Orders in order to live and exercise them with competence and in faithfulness to the Franciscan spirit (cf. *GGCC* 164).

5.3. Means

237. Practical formation for any ministerial service takes place, above all, in the daily experience of life in the fraternity, in the ecclesial community, in society and especially among the poor.

238. In order to help the Friar Minor in the discernment of a call to the Ministries and Sacred Orders, the following should be kept in mind:

- ❖ personal charisms;
- ❖ the needs of the Church and of the world;
- ❖ the profound willingness for service;
- ❖ the ability to carry out a ministry;
- ❖ the willingness to work in collaboration with others.

239. The preparation of the Friar Minor for the service of evangelisation requires:

- ❖ commitment to ongoing formation;
- ❖ openness to inculturation and to a positive evaluation of popular piety;
- ❖ appreciation of Franciscan spirituality and Franciscan forms of piety;
- ❖ ability to work in ecclesial groups with respect for and promotion of the specific vocation of lay people;
- ❖ closeness to the life and language of the people;
- ❖ knowledge of and dialogue with other religions and cultures.

240. The Friar Minor, faithful to the example and words of St. Francis, should especially have the ministries of Charity, of the Word, of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation at heart.

a. In exercising the ministry of Charity, the Friar Minor should:

- be a servant and poor like Christ was;
- know how to serve without recompense;
- know how to share and practise solidarity;
- develop his sensitivity for the real state of things so as to see the problems and understand their causes;
- possess the ability to adapt himself continually to the needs of the Church and of the historic moment;
- be a herald of justice, peace and reconciliation;
- care for the recipients of charity so that they may become protagonists in their own human promotion and liberation.

b. In exercising the ministry of the Word, the Friar Minor should:

- have respect and reverence for the Word of God;
 - study and meditate continuously the Sacred Scriptures;
 - recognise the presence and the action of God in history and in creation;
 - announce the Gospel while promoting the genuinely human values of every culture.
- c. In exercising the ministry of the Eucharist, the Friar Minor should:
- nourish a lively faith in the sacrament of the Eucharist;
 - honour the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord with great reverence;
 - deepen the mystery of the Incarnation and of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus also present in his brothers, especially in the little ones, the poor and the sick in whom He is received and served.
- d. In exercising the ministry of Reconciliation, the Friar Minor should:
- acknowledge himself to be a sinner and in need of the mercy of God;
 - be well prepared for the pastoral care of penitents, mindful of its ecclesial and social dimension;
 - cultivate an attitude of profound respect and benevolence towards those who approach the sacrament of Reconciliation;
 - have great care and solicitude for the administration of this sacrament.

APPENDICES

I. Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies

1. The Secretariat is a permanent institution of the Province for the animation, promotion and coordination, in dependence on the Minister Provincial and the presidency of the Secretariat for Formation and Studies, of all that refers to Formation and Studies in the Province in accordance with the *General Constitutions* and *Statutes*, the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* and the *Ratio Studiorum OFM*.

2. Its purpose is to assure that Formation is organic, gradual and consistent for all the Friars of the Province and for all the candidates (cf. *GGCC* 133; *RFF* 52).

3. The main duties are:

- a. to elaborate the *Ratio Formationis of the Province*, in accordance with the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, to present it for approval to the Minister and his Definitory and then to make it known to the whole Province;
- b. to elaborate the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Province (cf. *RS* 7 §1) in accordance with the *Ratio Studiorum OFM*, to present it for approval to the Minister and his Definitory and then to make it known to the whole Province;
- c. to collaborate in the elaboration of the *Ratio Studiorum of the Conference* to be presented for approval to the Conference of Ministers Provincial;
- d. to promote, coordinate and articulate the formative efforts of the different Houses of Formation through suitable means and opportune initiatives;
- e. to work together with the other Secretariats and Commissions of the Province;
- f. to take care of reports on information, on the exchange of formation experiences and on the inspiring lines of Franciscan formation in a spirit of service and collaboration with the other Secretariats of the Conference, Order and with other academic, scientific, cultural and religious Entities, especially with those of the Franciscan Family;
- g. to see to it that the formators, professors and experts in the sciences prepare and renew themselves constantly;
- h. to suggest those Friars that should specialise in the different areas of knowledge to the Provincial Government (cf. *RS* II) in accordance with the needs of the Provincial Fraternity and the Order while keeping the gifts of each one in mind (cf. *RS* 97.98);
- i. to propose the names of those Friars suitable for the service of formators and the names of the Friars suitable for integration into the formative fraternities to the Provincial Government, always bearing in mind what the General Constitutions and the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* say in this regard (cf. *GGCC* 140 §1.2.3; *RFF* 71-88);
- j. to organise activities of ongoing formation for formators;
- k. to offer information about the different theological, pastoral and spiritual proficiency courses.

II. The Provincial Secretary for Formation and Studies

1. The Secretary should carry out the functions of animation, coordination and general representative of the Secretariat.

2. His main duties are:

- a. to help the Minister Provincial, through advice and proposals, in those subjects that refer to formation and study by promoting and coordinating all the formative activities of the Province (cf. *GGSS* 73 §2) in strict collaboration with the Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies, looking out for and assuring continuity between ongoing and initial formation (*OF* 69);
- b. to preside over the Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies (cf. *GGSS* 71 §1);
- c. to improve dialogue and cooperation between the formators through periodical meetings of all those that are dedicated to ongoing and initial formation “so that they might study their own experiences, foster mutual cooperation and promote unity of orientation by means of common criteria” (*GGCC* 143);
- d. to make fraternal visits to the Houses of Formation and the Study Centres of the Province;
- e. promote and execute the decisions of the Secretariat that have been approved by the Minister Provincial and his Definitory;
- f. to send the proposals agreed on by the Secretariat to the Minister Provincial and his Definitory;
- g. to take care of the archives and to pass them on in good order to his successor;
- h. to present a Report on the state of formation and studies in the Province to the Provincial Chapter;
- i. to represent the Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies before the Secretariat for Formation and Studies of the Conference.

III. The Director of Ongoing Formation

1. The Director of ongoing formation is the co-ordinator and animator of the Council for ongoing formation.
2. He is a member of the Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies and works in conjunction with it.
3. His main duties are (cf. *OF* 70):
 - a. to elaborate a three-year plan of ongoing formation in accordance with the *Ratio Formationis* of the Province and to present it to the Provincial Chapter for its approval, having received approval from the Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies;
 - b. to make sure that the ongoing formation programmes decided on by the Provincial Chapter are put into practice;
 - c. to visit fraternally and animate the local fraternities in order to help them in a practical way in carrying out the ongoing formation programmes;
 - d. to inform both the Provincial Government and the Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies about the work being carried out;
 - e. to present a report on ongoing formation in the Province to the Provincial Chapter;
 - f. to inform all the Friars about Courses, activities, literature, material, etc. of ongoing formation that other stimulation, emanating from the Order, Diocese and other Religious Families, is offering and “to encourage the Friars to participate, organise and participate in other activities for ongoing formation in accordance with their specific professional and ministerial needs” (*OF* 70);
 - g. to meet with the other Directors of his Conference in order to share ideas, experiences, resources and means for ongoing formation (cf. *OF* 71e).

IV. Aspects of human growth

1. The sense of identity and acceptance of self (cf. *Med* 16).

2. The sense of personal freedom, initiative and responsibility for one's own life (cf. *Med* 16; 22; 33; *GGCC* 129 §2; 141 §2).

3. The capacity to discern, to decide and to assume responsibility (cf. *Med* 16).

4. The ability to transcend and overcome self-centredness (cf. *GGCC* 67; 132; *Med* 16).

5. The awareness and acceptance of the gift of one's own sexuality and the desire to live and grow in celibacy and chastity (cf. *GGCC* 9 §§1-2).

6. The will to develop oneself physically, psychologically, intellectually, socially, morally and spiritually (cf. *GGCC* 127 §2).

7. The willingness to do manual work (cf. *GGCC* 76; 80).

8. The openness and willingness to accept new values, attitudes, perspectives and experiences (cf. *Med* 16).

9. The ability to accept, live, dialogue and work with others, including those from different cultures (cf. *GGCC* 40; 93; 129 §1; *Med* 16; 22; 34-36).

10. The ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships with men and women (cf. *Med* 22; 35-36; 51).

11. The sense of justice and peace (cf. *Med* 36; *GGCC* 1 §2; 68).

12. The capacity to be in solidarity with the poor (cf. *GGCC* 97 §§1-2; 78 §1; 8 §3; *Bahia* 31,1).

V. Aspects of christian growth

1. The willingness to seek and do the will of God (cf. *GGCC* 7 §1; *Med* 15-16; *Mad* 5).

2. The willingness to pray and become a person centred in God (cf. *Med* 44; *GGCC* 1 §2; 19).

3. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ nurtured by regular celebration of the Sacraments and by reflection on His Word (cf. *GGCC* 21-22; 33 §§2-3; 35 §2; *Mad* 5; *PCO* 81 36b) and by a serious commitment to follow Him;

4. A living faith translated into words and actions (cf. *GGCC* 89 §1; 84; 1 §2).

5. Knowledge of the Catholic faith and love for the Church (cf. *PCO* 81 39c; *GGCC* 4 §1).

6. Awareness of the presence of God and His saving action in one's own life, in the Church and in the world (cf. *GGCC* 4 §1; 20 §2; *Med* 44).

7. The willingness to be evangelised and to evangelise (cf. *GGCC* 83 §2; 86; *Med* 27; *Bahia* 11; 15; 18a; 28-29).

8. A prophetic, missionary and ecumenical spirit (cf. *GGCC* 4 §1; 116 §1; 127 §3; 95; *Med* 28; 59).

V. Aspects of franciscan growth

1. A life of penance expressed in a continuous conversion to Christ and the gospel life in accordance with the spirit of St. Francis (cf. *GGCC* 1 §2; 6; 7 §1; 8 §1; 9 §1; 32-34; 92 §1; 153 §2).
2. Living the life of a Friar Minor characterised by a peaceful and humble heart and by a joyful and gracious spirit (cf. *GGCC* 8 §2-3; 64; 66 §1; 97; *Med* 26; *Bahia* 22; *PCO* 81 26).
3. A fraternal life expressed through the ability to live with others as brothers, to embrace the great Franciscan Family and to be in brotherhood with all people (cf. *GGCC* 1; 38-44; 50-63; 87; *Med* 25; *Mad* 15a, 17; *PCO* 81 26).
4. The spirit of prayer and devotion (cf. *GGCC* 19-20; 24; 28-31; *Med* 43; *Mad* 29).
5. A life of a disposition and good will towards service and work (cf. *GGCC* 76-81; *Med* 54; *Mad* 28).
6. A life of poverty and simplicity and a willingness to be with and for the poor (cf. *GGCC* 8 §3; 34 §2; 53; 72 §3; 78 §1; 82 §1; 87 §3; 97; *Med* 54; *Mad* 28).
7. A life of justice and of peace (cf. *GGCC* 1 §2; 68-69; 96 §2; *Med* 56; *Mad* 16; 34; *Bahia* 16; 35; 37-38).
8. A love of and reverential respect for creation and the environment as a reflection of the presence of God (cf. *GGCC* 9 §4; 71; *Bahia* 16).
9. A contemplative attitude in one's personal, community and professional life (cf. *GGCC* 29; 153 §2).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Decree of Promulgation	» 3
Presentation	» 5
Acronyms and Abbreviations	» 11
INTRODUCTION (1-4)	» 13
I. THE GOSPEL VOCATION OF THE FRIAR MINOR	
1. The following of Christ (5-7)	» 15
2. A total gift to God (8-11)	» 15
3. The Spirit of prayer and devotion (12-16)	» 17
4. Fraternity (17-21)	» 18
5. Minority (22-25)	» 19
6. Evangelization (26-29)	» 21
7. In the Church and in the world (30-35)	» 22
II. FRANCISCAN FORMATION	
1. After the example of St. Francis (36-39)	» 25
2. The principles of franciscan formation (40-54)	» 26
2.1. <i>General Principles</i> (40-44)	» 26
2.2. <i>Specific Principles</i> (45-54)	» 26
3. Franciscan Pedagogy (55-61)	» 28
4. Forming for the gospel life of the Friar Minor (62-91)	» 30
4.1. <i>Forming to the spirit of prayer and devotion</i> (66-69)	» 32
4.2. <i>Formation to communion of life in fraternity</i> (70-76)	» 33
4.3. <i>Forming to minority, poverty and solidarity</i> (77-83)	» 35
4.4. <i>Forming for evangelisation and mission</i> (84-91)	» 37
5. Accompanying a vocation (92-104)	» 39
5.1. <i>General orientations</i> (92-97)	» 39
5.2. <i>Personal accompaniment</i> (98-104)	» 41
6. Concrete Aspects of Human, Christian and Franciscan Growth (105-106)	» 43
III. FORMATIVE STAGES	
1. On going formation (107-123)	» 47
1.1. <i>Description</i> (107-109)	» 47
1.2. <i>Objectives</i> (110-103)	» 47
1.3. <i>Means</i> (114-123)	» 48

2. The agents of formation (124-157)	» 50
2.1. <i>Formative fraternities</i> (124-134)	» 50
2.2. <i>The formators</i> (135-143)	» 52
2.3. <i>Some practical consequences</i> (144-157)	» 53
3. The Pastoral Care of Vocations (158-172)	» 58
3.1. <i>Description</i> (158)	» 58
3.2. <i>Objectives</i> (159-164)	» 58
3.3. <i>Means</i> (165-172)	» 59
4. Initial formation (173-216)	» 61
4.1. <i>Introduction</i> (173-178)	» 61
4.2. <i>The Postulancy</i> (179-189)	» 62
4.2.1. <i>Description</i> (179-180)	» 62
4.2.2. <i>Objectives</i> (181-184)	» 63
4.2.3. <i>Means</i> (185-189)	» 63
4.3. <i>The Novitiate</i> (190-203)	» 65
4.3.1. <i>Description</i> (190)	» 65
4.3.2. <i>Objectives</i> (191-196)	» 65
4.3.3. <i>Means</i> (197-203)	» 66
4.4. <i>Time of temporary profession</i> (204-216)	» 68
4.4.1. <i>Description</i> (204)	» 68
4.4.2. <i>Objectives</i> (205-208)	» 68
4.4.3. <i>Means</i> (209-216)	» 69

**IV. GENERAL, THEOLOGICAL, PROFESSIONAL AND
IV. MINISTERIAL FORMATION IN THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT**

1. Introduction (217- 219)	» 73
2. General formation (220-223)	» 74
2.1. <i>Description</i> (220-221)	» 74
2.2. <i>Objectives</i> (222)	» 74
2.3. <i>Means</i> (223)	» 75
3. Theological formation (224-228)	» 75
3.1. <i>Description</i> (224)	» 75
3.2. <i>Objectives</i> (225-227)	» 75
3.3. <i>Means</i> (228)	» 77
4. Professional formation (229-230)	» 77
4.1. <i>Description</i> (229)	» 77
4.2. <i>Objectives</i> (230)	» 77
4.3. <i>Means</i> (231- 230)	» 78
5. Formation for Ministries and Sacred Orders (233-240)	» 78
5.1. <i>Description</i> (233)	» 78
5.2. <i>Objectives</i> (234-236)	» 79
5.3. <i>Means</i> (237-240)	» 79

Apendices

I. Provincial Secretariat for Formation and Studies	» 83
II. The Provincial Secretary for Formation and Studies	» 84
III. The Director of Ongoing Formation	» 85
IV. Aspects of human growth	» 86
V. Aspects of Christian growth	» 87
VI. Aspects of Franciscan growth	» 88