

THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

RATIO STUDIORUM

«IN NOTITIA VERITATIS PROFICERE»  
(LMj 11, 1)

ROME  
General Secretariate OFM  
for Formation and Studies  
2001

“I want my brothers to be Gospel disciples and  
so progress in knowledge of the truth  
that they increase in pure simplicity”  
(LMj 11, 1)

Br. GIACOMO BINI, OFM

MINISTER GENERAL  
OF THE ENTIRE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR  
AND HUMBLE SERVANT IN THE LORD

DECREE

In conformity with all that the General Constitutions (cf. GGCC 166, §1) and documents of the Church on the promotion of studies prescribe, having obtained the deliberative vote of the General Definitory in the meeting held on the 19th of March 2001 in accordance with the General Statutes (cf. art 67 §§1-3) and exercising the authority invested in us by office, with the present decree:

we approve and promulgate the

RATIO STUDIORUM OFM  
«IN NOTITIA VERITATIS PROFICERE»  
(LMj 11, 1)

and we declare it to be valid for the whole of our Order.

In addition, we declare that all of our Provinces and Entities concerned are obliged to elaborate their own Ratio Studiorum according to the orientations and directives of this Ratio, with the necessary adjustments for the different needs and situations, so that an adequate intellectual formation, especially in the specifically Franciscan elements, may be assured for all friars, independently of their vocational option, during both initial and on-going formation.

Given in Rome, at the Seat of the General Curia of the Order on the 25th of March 2001, the solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Prot. 090596(77)

BR. GIACOMO BINI, OFM  
Minister General

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

## PRESENTATION

The topic of studies in the Order, although it may never have been a central subject in the self-consciousness of Franciscanism, constitutes, nevertheless, a very wide and complex problematical sphere that frequently appears in the history of the Friars Minor when the tangled question of our identity is dealt with. This problem has provoked disputes and divisions among the friars on many occasions.

For some, studies were a betrayal of the *intentio Francisci*, for others they were a requirement of the mission received from the Church right from the beginning of the Fraternity: the mission to announce the Gospel. The current of the “spirituals” defended minority and simplicity as the particular and specific form of evangelisation of the friars minor; the current of the “intellectuals”, in contrast, defended studies as a requirement for preaching and necessary for carrying out their mission in the world.

Dialogue between the two positions was not easy. Suspicions and accusations were not lacking, besides the exaggerations from one side and from the other. At any rate, the “question of studies” forced the Order into a very wide and radical debate on its identity, debated right down to our days. Today, thanks to the profound and serene reflection carried out on our *forma vitae*, especially after the Council and the promulgation of the new General Constitutions, it can be said that the response to the *intentio Francisci* does not lie in an *aut-aut* but in an *et-et*. Francis, reaffirming the essential, i.e. the Spirit of the Lord, and putting it as the criterion of all else, not only does not condemn or prohibit studies but declares himself to be “pleased” that they are taught and, as a consequence, that they are studied (cf. *LtAnt* 2).

It is in this context that the *Ratio Studiorum OFM*, “*In notitia veritatis proficere*” is situated. Apart from recognising that with study we put ourselves in communion with the great tradition of the Order (cf. n. 29), making our own the thought of St. Bonaventure so masterly expressed in the *Itinerario* (prol 4; cf. n. 19), the *Ratio Studiorum OFM* strongly underlines the deep union that there must be between the priorities of the Franciscan charism and intellectual formation, between the *forma vitae* and studies (cf. nn. 19-30). The latter are at the service of the quality of the former, as they are to the mission to which the Friar Minor has been called (cf. n. 90). The *Ratio Studiorum OFM* has explicitly made its own the statement of Thomas of Eccleston, according to which the Order of Friars Minor is built on sanctity of life and study (cf. Eccleston 90; n. 28), and has fully accepted the declaration of John Paul II to the General Chapter of 1991 that study is a fundamental requirement of evangelisation (cf. *MGCh* n. 28). The *Ratio Studiorum OFM* not only does not see any contradiction between the vocation and life of the Friar Minor and studies, but sees that the latter are fully integrated into the former. The Franciscan Masters are proposed as a wonderful example of this fruitful dialogue between knowledge and sanctity (cf. nn. 15, 100, 110).

The *Ratio Studiorum OFM* greatly highlights another aspect: the importance to be given to Franciscan philosophical and theological studies. Nothing that leads to the Creator and reveals him, nothing that helps us to know the problems of present-day man and of creation better, could be considered foreign to the interest and, therefore, to the study of the Friar Minor (cf. nn. 44ss). In any case, the knowledge of Francis, of Clare and of the Franciscan Masters should be considered as a priority (cf. nn. 41, 57, 67, 69, 75-77) not so much in order to repeat what they said but to focus attention on it and to make their voices heard in the world of today, so that there may be a constant dialogue between the values of the Franciscan charism and heritage and the problems and hopes of present-day man (cf. n. 121 a). In this way the *Ratio Studiorum OFM*, making its own all that is declared by the General Constitutions (art 166 §1), recognises the complete topicality of the cultural heritage that the Order has accumulated down through the centuries (cf. 17).

Another principle that is stated many times in the Ratio Studiorum OFM and is of the utmost importance to the friars called to form a Fraternity of equals (cf. GGCC 3 §1) is that the same possibilities must be given to clerics and to lay in regard to intellectual formation (cf. nn. 36, 39, 142). Vocational choice can no longer be a motive for discrimination, much less in reference to intellectual formation. If study is in view of research, of knowledge and of the appreciation of truth (cf. n. 9) in order to allow oneself to be possessed by it (cf. n. 4), and thus to be able to be witnesses, announcers and servants of truth itself (cf. n. 13); if intellectual formation looks to “progress in the knowledge of the truth” (LMj 11, 1), to grow in faith (cf. nn. 3, 12, 14a.e) and to prove one’s hope (cf. n. 14g); if study responds to the need of the development of the human being in its totality (cf. n. 13c) and is a gift that must be put at the service of others (cf. nn. 10,11), then it will be easily understood that study is “fundamental in the life and formation” of all Friars Minor (cf. n. 3) and that it cannot be considered a “privilege” of the few but a right of all, of which its only limits are the gifts of each person and the needs of the Fraternity (cf. nn. 34,84, and 88,92). It will be understood also why Ratio Studiorum OFM exhorts all the friars to take up study with renewed love (cf. n. 29).

It is necessary to point out another important aspect that is present in Ratio Studiorum OFM: the attention that must be given to the study of the problem of contemporary man and to the conditions in which each friar lives and develops his mission (cf. nn. 6a, 36,47,52,54,60,74,88). Taking account of these conditions, as well as of the questioning and challenges that come to us from the world in which we live and, in a particular way, from present-day thought (cf. n. 52), study seems to be necessary so that the friars can establish a critical and, at the same time, fruitful dialogue with the pre-sent culture, offering it, contemporarily, the possibility of giving a human, Christian and Franciscan answer (cf. n. 16) to the challenges that the said culture puts to the Friars Minor. Conscious of this possibility, the Ratio Studiorum OFM “In notitia veritatis proficere” encourages the friars to become inserted in the new “areopagi” of modern culture and to have an active presence in the circles in which this culture is made (cf. n. 19). The Friar Minor must cease to be a simple spectator and consumer of culture: he is called “to place himself as an actor in his time and environment” and to actively co-operate in the creation of culture. Only in this way will he be able to exercise “a qualified trade, profession or activity in society, in the Church and in the Order” (RFF 160, 169). The new “areopagi”, dialogue in the Church, with other religions and cultures, often remarked on in the Ratio Studiorum OFM (cf. nn. 70-74), require well prepared spokesmen (cf. FE 131).

Ratio Studiorum OFM “In notitia veritatis proficere” comes at a delicate and important moment for the Order. Because of the rapid changes that have come about in recent years in the world, in the Church and in our Fraternity, the friars must undertake to “re-situate and re-create the identity of the friar minor in the new context of history” (OF 2). To respond adequately to this challenge it is necessary to promote intellectual formation, among other means, in our Order today more than ever (cf. OEv 10).

The Ratio Studiorum OFM pushes, evidently, for the promotion of studies. In its six chapter, preceded by an introductory statement of an historical nature and an introduction in which the nature of the Ratio Studiorum OFM is defined, it seeks to respond to the questions: why and for what should we study (cf. nn. 9-18)? How should we study (cf. nn. 19-30)? When should we study (cf. nn 31-43)? What should we study (cf. nn. 44-98.141-147)? Who should study (cf. nn. 99-117)? Where should we study (cf. nn. 118-129)? What means should we use (cf. nn. 130-140)?

The Ratio Studiorum OFM that we present today – requested by the General Chapter of San Diego (1991) and again by that of Assisi (1997), approved by the Definitory General (19th March 2001) and promulgated by the Minister General (25th March 2001) – far from being a juridical document only, offers orienting principles, the significance and the purpose of studies in the life of the Friars Minor. At the same time it presents a programme of specifically Franciscan studies for those friars who attend Centres of Higher Studies, within the Order and elsewhere, and the studies to be carried out during on-going formation and in the course of initial formation for all the friars, independently of their vocational choice.

The ultimate meaning of intellectual formation and of studies will always be the life and integral formation of the Friar Minor: with this conviction the Order offers the Ratio Studiorum OFM to all the friars so that, without extinguishing “the spirit of prayer and devotion” (LtAnt2), they may, through study, “so progress in knowledge of the truth – in notitia veritatis proficere – that they increase in pure simplicity” (LMj XI, 1).

Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, ofm  
Secretary General  
for Formation and Studies

## INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### SACRED SCRIPTURE

Jn	The Gospel according to John
Mt	The Gospel according to Matthew
1P	The 1st Letter of Peter
Rm	The Letter of Paul to the Romans
Ph	The Letter of Paul to the Philippians

### THE WRITINGS OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI

2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
Adm	The Admonitions
CtC	The Canticle of the Creatures
ER	Earlier Rule (Regula non Bullata)
LR	Later Rule (Regula Bullata)
LtAnt	A letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
LtCl	Letter to the Clergy
LtOrd	Letter to the entire Order
LtR	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples
PrCr	Prayer before the Crucifix
PrsG	The Praise of God
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	Testament

### BIOGRAPHIES OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI

1Cel	The Life of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano
2Cel	The Remembrances of the Desire of a Soul, Thomas of Celano
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure

### OTHER INITIALS

AG	Ad Gentes, Decree of the II Vatican Council, 1965.
CIC	The Code of Canon Law, 1983.
CSent	Commentary on the Book of Sentences, St. Bonaventure.
DV	Dei Verbum, Dogmatic Constitution of the II Vatican Council, 1965.
DPAA	Discourse on the inauguration of the Academic Year of PAA, Br. John Vaughn, 1986.
Eccleston	The Arrival of the Friars Minor in England, Thomas Eccleston.
ELMC	Ecclesiastical Libraries in the Mission of the Church, Document of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 1994.
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi, Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, 1975.
FE	Fill the Whole Earth with the Gospel of Christ, Pentecost Letter of Hermann Schalück, 1996.
FFM	Formation in the Order of Friars Minor, Document of the General Chapter OFM in Medellin, 1971.
FR	Fides et Ratio, Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, 1998.
GGCC	General Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor, 1987.
GGSS	General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor, 1991.
GS	Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution of II Vatican Council, 1965.
IICF	Inter-Institutional Collaboration for Formation, Instruction of CICLSAL, 1999.
Itin	Itinerario mentis in Deo, St. Bonaventure.
4LAg	4th Letter to Agnes, St. Clare of Assisi.
LG	Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution of II Vatican Council, 1964.
MGCh	Message to General Chapter OFM, John Paul II, 1991.
MP	Memory and Prophecy, Document of General Chapter OFM, 1997.

MuR	Mutuae Relationes, Directive note of Congregation for Bishops and CRIS, 1978.
NMI	Novo Millenio Ineunte, Apostolic Letter of John Paul II, 2001.
OEv	The Order and Evangelisation today, Document of the General Chapter OFM, 1991.
OF	On-going Formation in the Order of Friars Minor, Document of the General Secretariate for Formation and Studies, 1995.
Ord	Ordinatio, Blessed John Dun Scotus.
OT	Optatam Totius, Decree of II Vatican Council, 1965
PCO	Plenary Council of the Order of Friars Minor.
PDV	Pastores Dabo Vobis, Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, 1992.
PI	Potissimum Institutioni, Instruction of “Formation in Religious Institutes”, CICLSAL, 1990.
PAC	Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture, Document of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 1999.
PrS	Priorities for the Six Years 1997-2003, Programme Document of the General Definitory OFM, 1997.
RaFIS	Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis, Fundamental notes for Priestly Formation of the Congregation for Catholic Education, 1970.
ReM	Redemptoris Missio, Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, 1990
RFF	Ratio Formationis Franciscanae, 1991.
SapC	Sapientia Christiana, Apostolic Constitution of John Paul II, 1979.
SD	“Service of Dialogue”, Guidelines of the Definitory General on ecumenical, inter-religious and cultural Dialogue, 1988.
StFE	Statutes of the Association of Franciscan Editors, 200.
VC	Vita Consecrata, Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, 1996.

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

For St. Francis, who presents himself to the rulers of the peoples as “your little and looked-down-upon” one (LtR 1), the “Lord God” is the absolute, “all our riches” (cf. PrsG 1. 5). For this reason his great preoccupation is that we should “let nothing hinder us, nothing separate us, nothing come between us” (ER 23, 10) and the first and fundamental obligation of the friar minor: “to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its Holy activity” (LR 10, 8), “the heart turned to the Lord” (cf. ER 22, 19-25).

Standing before “the only thing necessary”, any other activity whatsoever becomes secondary for Francis. All work done by the friars is good if it is done “with fidelity and devotion” (LR 5, 2), but if done “under the guise of some reward”, it takes “the mind and heart from the Lord” (ER 22, 25). The Spirit of the Lord and the life of minority (cf. ER 7,2) then, are the criteria for each kind of activity of the Friars Minor.

It is in this context, in which Francis “above all things” chooses to have “the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion” (LR 5, 2; cf. LtAnt 2), that the warning of Francis himself must be interpreted: “Let those who are illiterate not be anxious to learn” (LR 10, 8). The “Poverello” does not condemn studies or prohibit his friars to study (cf. 2Cel 163), but he wants all friars, without distinction, to be able to “follow in the footsteps of the beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ” (LtOrd 51), by loving God and adoring him “with a pure heart and a pure mind, seeking this above all things else” (2Ltf 19).

Francis, “an uneducated man, a friend of true simplicity” (1Cel 120), accepted without any distinctions “simple” (Test 19) and “literate” men (1Cel 57) into his Fraternity from the beginning. Among these is the “bishop” Br. Anthony, who he allowed with “pleasure” to teach “sacred theology to the friars” (LtAnt 1; cf. LMj 11, 1).

With the “blessing” of Francis, the friars very soon began to study and to teach, not only in the “General Studies of the Order” but also in the great Universities known at that time. In this way they legitimised and defended the spiritual tradition of the Order, especially the apostolic, poor and itinerant life. And they did it in such a way that the spiritual principles of the Franciscan tradition, above all the evangelical experience of Francis, could become well founded and well presented theological principles.

Anthony, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, Alexander of Hales, William of Ockham, Bernardine of Sienna, John Capistran, Nicholas of Lira are only some of the “literati” friars that form the school of the great Franciscan Masters. They, uniting “sanctity of life and knowledge”, offered a great contribution, in history, to the affirmation of God in the values of life, of the world, of nature and of man.

The co-existence of the “simple and illiterate” and the “literate, of the “queen wisdom” and her sister “holy and pure simplicity” (SaV 1), characteristic of the Franciscan Fraternity from its origins, has not always been peaceful. In fact, moved by the desire to be faithful to the “intentio Francisci”, the friars interpreted the exhortation of Francis to the “nescientes litteras” (LR 10, 8) in different and opposing ways. Such interpretative “tensions”, nevertheless, injected a creative dialectic into the Franciscan soul, pushing it towards minority and simplicity, and at the same time, towards a commitment in the world through scientific preparation.

The Ratio Studiorum O.F.M., “In notitia veritatis proficere” (LMj 11, 1), conscious of this dialectical tension within the Franciscan Fraternity, seeks to insert studies into the whole of the Franciscan vocation, so that the future of the Order of Friars Minor may be supported, as it has always been in history, on the two pillars of knowledge and sanctity of life.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The vocation and the mission of the Friar Minor consist of following closely the footsteps of Jesus Christ (cf. GGCC 5 §2) and of radically living the Gospel according to the way of life and Rule of St. Francis (cf. GGCC 126) cultivating the spirit of prayer and devotion, living in fraternal communion, giving witness to minority and poverty, filling the earth with the Gospel (cf. FE) and preaching reconciliation, peace and justice (cf. GGCC 1 §2).
2. Franciscan formation, based on the personal encounter with the poor and crucified Jesus Christ, gives solidity to the vocation, prepares for mission (cf. RFF 1-3) and leads to the development of the physical, psychic, moral, intellectual and spiritual gifts of the friar in an organic, gradual and coherent way (cf. GGCC 127 §2; 133; RFF 45).
3. Study, as an “expression of the unquenchable desire for an ever deeper knowledge of God, the source of light and of all human truth” (VC 98), is fundamental to the life and formation, whether on-going or initial, of every Friar Minor.
4. As an intellectual activity, study leads not only to learning science and doctrine, but above all to achieve wisdom of spirit and to allow oneself be possessed by the Truth and the Good, in order to love and praise the Lord to whom belongs all good (Adm 7; cf. RFF 53) and to serve the brothers in the charity of Christ.



5. The Ratio Studiorum O.F.M., shows the reason, the orientating principles, the meaning and purpose of studies in the life and mission of the Friar Minor and contains the particular elements and the programme of his intellectual formation, especially in regard to the Franciscan units.
  6. This Ratio Studiorum O.F.M., valid for the whole Order, was written taking into account:
    - a. the documents of the universal Church;
    - b. the documents of the Order;
    - c. the cultural context of our times and the requirements of the new evangelisation.
  7. §1 All the Provinces, and wherever possible, the Conferences also, in conformity with the GGSS (art 98 §2), are required to elaborate their own Ratio Studiorum, taking into account:
    - a. this Ratio Studiorum O.F.M.,
    - b. the documents of the local Church,
    - c. the cultural, religious and ecclesiastical context.
- §2 In the Ratio Studiorum let there be established:
- a. the specific programme of animation and promotion of the intellectual life of the Province or Conference;
  - b. the orientations and directives for the study activity of the friars;
  - c. the programme of specific study for the candidates to Sacred Orders and to Church lay ministries and for those who are being prepared for a professional or technical-manual activity;
  - d. the concrete manner of carrying out the programmes of specifically Franciscan formation contained in section VI of this Ratio.
8. The Ratio Studiorum O.F.M. of the Province or Conference is to be confirmed by the Minister General.

## I. INTELLECTUAL FORMATION OF THE FRIAR MINOR

### 1. THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

9. The Friar Minor has an internal need, arising from his vocation, to seek, know and appreciate the Truth of God, of man and of creation revealed by the Word incarnate (cf. GGSS 53), and therefore cultivates study as a response to this need.
10. The Friar Minor is aware that study, like all other activity, has to be seen always as a grace received from God, carried out with fidelity and devotion (cf. LR 5, 2) and considered as a good to be shared with the brothers.
11. Therefore the Friar Minor does not consider the fulfilment of a programme of study or the acquisition of an academic title as a motive of pride or an occasion of promotion to a state of privilege, but joyfully puts the fruits of his intellectual labours at the disposition and advantage of the Fraternity.
12. The Friar Minor is aware that study, besides requiring commitment, dedication and discipline, implies a long and profound intellectual investment, severe undoubtedly, but which, in the long term, produces its fruits, leading to progress in the faith (cf. Rm 1, 17; MGCh 6).

13. The Friar Minor appreciates study as an itinerary and way to be enlightened by God in mind and heart (cf. PrCr) and thus to be able to be witnesses, announcers and servants of Truth and Good “with great humility” (CtC 14).

14. Study permits the Friar Minor to respond to many requirements:
- a. the desire to know ever more the beauty, goodness and truth of God (cf. VC 98);
  - b. the need to learn ever better the Franciscan “style” of living the Gospel (cf. DPAA);
  - c. the development of the human being in his wholeness (cf. GGCC 127 §2);
  - d. the prophetic witness in our time and in our environment, in conformity with our mission (cf. RFF 160; 169);
  - e. the thorough examination of revealed truth (cf. AG 9; LG 16);
  - f. the balance between theory and practice and between action and contemplation (Itin., Prol. 4);
  - g. to “give the reason for the hope that you have” (1P 3, 15);
  - h. the carrying out of the ministry of evangelisation (SapC, Preface; GGCC 83-84; MP 9-17; VC 96-99; MGCh 6) that requires rigorous and continuous preparation in regard to the mastery of the methodology and language suitable to the communication of the faith;
  - i. the service and commitment to ecumenical, inter-religion and inter-cultural dialogue (VC 100-103).

15. According to the tradition of the Franciscan Masters, study and intellectual reflection are rooted in the experience of God in Christ and are characterised by their contact with the concrete and by fidelity to the Truth and the Good (cf. DPAA).

16. The Franciscan tradition has always sought dialogue between faith and reason, between sanctity and doctrine. Placing himself in continuity with this, the Friar Minor seeks to elaborate, through study, methods and models for a critical dialogue with the present-day culture and to propose a human, Christian and Franciscan response to the challenges that come to us from the said culture (GGCC 96 §1; PDV 51).

17. For the Friar Minor, then, it is all the more dutiful to know and to assimilate the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Franciscan Masters in order to focus attention on them and make their voices heard in the world of today (cf. GGCC 166 §§1-2), conscious that the Franciscan view of the world and Franciscan thought, characterised by being Christ-centred, respond to the expectations and petitions of contemporary man and to his longing to know and meet God.

18. The Friar Minor must also organise study in relation to life and normal procedure. Study, while it makes one capable of reading the historical reality with an evangelical spirit, must find fruitful motives of inspiration in them.

## 2. STUDIES AND OUR “WAY OF LIFE”

19. For the Friars Minor, study tends to feed the necessary “dialogue” between knowledge and devotion, between research and contemplation, between science and charity (Itin, Prol. 4).

20. In order to achieve this aim, studies have to be faced up to in both a docility to the Spirit, which “purifies, enlightens, inflames” (LMj 13, 7) and guides the discernment of the signs of the times, and in taking account of the fundamental options that characterise the Franciscan way of life, that is: the spirit of prayer and devotion (cf. LtAnt 2), communion of life in fraternity, minority, poverty and evangelisation (cf. RFF 5-39; PrS).

## THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER AND DEVOTION

21. The Friar Minor is reminded that study must be rooted always in the context of the mutual and complementary relationship between intellectual formation and spiritual experience. As a consequence, study draws nourishment from contemplation, is placed at its service and leads to it.

22. Franciscan learning is intimately united to the Word of God, as the presence of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate. The Scriptures are like the mirror in which the Friar Minor can see the Christ (cf. 4LtAg) and in this way nourish his intelligence, his will and his feelings, assimilating and sharing the feelings of Christ (cf. Ph 2, 5).

#### COMMUNION OF LIFE IN FRATERNITY

23. The Fraternity is a constitutive element of the Franciscan life (GGCC 1 §1). In the Order of Friars Minor study and intellectual formation are carried out, normally, in the context of the Fraternity (cf. GGCC 137 §2), so that the communion of life becomes the source of learning, and learning becomes the gift of sharing and placing oneself at the service of the brothers.

24. For the Friar Minor to study is also to enter into dialogue with others in the search for the only Good and only Truth that make us free (cf. Jn 8, 32), without making absolute that part of Truth that each one has an inkling of. In this way studies contribute to the building up of Fraternity.

#### LIFE OF MINORITY, POVERTY AND SOLIDARITY

25. The life of minority, poverty and solidarity forms part of our vocation. Let study and intellectual formation be animated by the spirit of charity (cf. Adm 17) and simplicity (cf. SalV 1), of minority and poverty (cf. Adm 7) and let them be guided always by “holy humility” (SalV 2).

26. Study makes Friars become seekers and servants of Truth and Good. While they receive the Truth and Good that come from God, source of all learning and goodness (Cf. PDV 52), the Friars Minor:

- a. make themselves attentive to the other manifestations of the Truth and Good present in people, especially in the poor, in culture and in religions, and they make an effort to undertake an open and respectful dialogue (cf. GGCC 93 §2);
- b. living always “without anything of their own” (LR 1, 1) they make known the need to communicate freely that which they received freely (cf. Mt 10, 8) and thus, in sharing with others all that they have received through studies, they return to the Lord all that they received from Him (cf. Adm 7, 4).

27. The Friar Minor, who has received the gift of feeling himself loved, reconciled and freed, is a custodian of hope (cf. GGCC 70; 85; 98 §2). Study, especially of Sacred Scripture, united to a serene and critical analysis of today’s society prepares him to listen to God, who calls him, and, through the poor, the excluded and the suffering, to announce the word of liberation (cf. GGCC 96, §2).

#### EVANGELISATION

28. The Friars Minor form an evangelising Fraternity (cf. LtOrd 9; 1Cel 23; OEv 2; MP 9-17). Study, joined to sanctity of life (cf. Eccleston 90), is “a fundamental requirement of evangelisation” (MGCh 6), since it contributes to the building of the Kingdom of God, forms in order to evangelise cultures (cf. OEv 11; EN 20; ReM IV), and makes one sensitive to the promotion of justice and the defence of human rights (cf. GS 4).

29. Let the Friars Minor be conscious that disaffection with studies – due to, among many causes, a strong anti-rationalist current of certain cultural circles, even religious – can have severe consequences for the adequate fulfilment of their evangelising mission (cf. VC 98). Therefore, in fidelity to the tradition of our Order (cf. OEv 10), let them take up study with renewed love and place it at the service of the Gospel and the new evangelisation (cf. MGCh 7).

30. Let the Friars who, through divine inspiration (cf. LR 12, 1; GGCC 116-125), feel called to the missions ad gentes, commit themselves to deepening their knowledge:

- a. of the nature of the mission according to the vision of the Church and the Order;
- b. of the local culture;
- c. of the other religious groups present in the lands of mission.

### 3. STUDIES IN THE FORMATIVE CONTEXT AND JOURNEY

31. Studies, as a path to a person's maturity, are an essential component of both on-going and initial formation of the Friars Minor, (cf. FE 129).

#### IN ON-GOING FORMATION

32. On-going formation, as a path "that embraces all the components of life (human, Christian, Franciscan, professional, ministerial)" is also a "process of maturation of all the dimensions of the person (corporal, psychological, spiritual, intellectual)" (OF 38; cf. GGCC 136). Let the Friar Minor cultivate, during the course of his life, his own intellectual formation as an essential dimension of integral formation (cf. VC 98; PI 67).

33. Studies also look to animate, nourish and sustain fidelity to one's own vocation (cf. RFF 59) and to cultivate "the spiritual, doctrinal and professional abilities, the up-dating and maturation of the Friar Minor, so that he can carry out his service to the Order, to the Church and to the world in an ever more adequate way" (RFF 61).

34. Each friar, principal protagonist in his own human, Christian and Franciscan growth (cf. RFF 63), in dialogue with and in the context of the local and Provincial Fraternity, is the primary person responsible for his own intellectual, professional and technical-manual formation (cf. GGCC 137 §1).

35. The local and provincial Fraternity, "primary centre of on-going formation" (GGCC 137 §2) offers to the individual Friars the appropriate means to cultivate their intellectual and professional gifts, and to promote up-dating in both the sphere of theological formation (cf. RFF 164-168; VC 71) and the sphere of professional and technical-manual formation (cf. RFF 169-172). Let care be taken to prepare a well-articulated programme that helps to achieve the below-indicated objectives (cf. OF 41-46).

36. Let study be conducted in such a way that each friar, cleric or lay:

- a. may discover and guard the word of the Lord as spirit and life (cf. Test 13);
- b. may understand, "with a watchful and critical attitude, but also with confident attention" (VC 98), the problems of today's world (cf. GGCC 110; 116; 167; OEv 10);
- c. may be a speaker capable of "fruitful dialogue" with present-day culture (FE 131);
- d. may promote dialogue between faith and culture (cf. SapC 470) and inter-religion dialogue.

37. The contents of the specific Franciscan formation, to be carried out during on-going formation, are specified in "The Programme of Franciscan Studies" of this Ratio.

#### IN INITIAL FORMATION

38. Studies, during initial formation, look towards the acquisition, on the part of the candidates and of the temporarily professed friars, of a wide and solid instruction in knowledge. This should be united to general culture, proportionate both to the stage of formation in which they find themselves and to their aptitudes and the needs of our times, so that they may be able to announce profitably the Gospel message to the men of today and to insert it into their culture.

39. Studies, as a means to human, Christian and Franciscan maturation (cf. RFF 55-56), concern all the candidates and temporarily professed friars, without distinction between lay and cleric.

40. Study forms part of the whole formative project that is carried out during the period of initial formation: postulancy (cf. RFF 128; 160; 163), noviciate (cf. GGSS 87; RFF 139) and temporary profession (cf. GGSS 94; RFF 151).
41. Before solemn profession the friars should have adequate time at their disposal in order to study deeply and to assimilate the fundamental contents of the traditions of the Franciscan Masters.
42. Let study be conducted in such a way that each candidate and each friar, both cleric and lay:
- a. may develop the capacity for intellectual, professional and technical-manual work in such a way that he can live, with serenity and intelligence, the Christian and Franciscan values in the context of present-day culture (cf. FFM 66; RFF 160);
  - b. may acquire a method for personal and group work, a critical spirit and an aptitude for dialogue;
  - c. may be enamoured of Knowledge and allow himself be questioned by it, and accept with enthusiasm the challenges that come from the demands of conversion, of the radical following of Christ and of witness;
  - d. may assimilate the methods and the content of each of the disciplines of the curriculum planned for by the Ratio Formationis Franciscanae and by this Ratio Studiorum OFM.
43. The contents of the specifically Franciscan formation, to be carried out during initial formation, are specified in part VI. “The Programmes of Franciscan Studies” of this Ratio.

## II. THE AREAS OF STUDY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

44. The Friar Minor is in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and, through Him, with creation, with mankind and with God. Therefore, the Areas here proposed have a connection with this triple relational dimension.
45. The description of the Areas that are outlined here below show some of the basic contents and the objectives, which, though being proposed for the attention of all, constitute as such an option that, above all, concerns and binds the Order.
46. All the friars, both lay and clerical, according to their aptitudes and the needs of the Fraternity, must follow a course of study that embraces the Areas of study described in this Ratio.
47. Each friar is not asked for specialisation in all the disciplinary sectors contained in the Areas but for a general and basic knowledge that is acquired in harmony with the requirements of the Franciscan charism, with the “talents” of each one (cf. Mt 25, 14-30), with the request of the society in which he is called to carry out his mission and according to the times, rhythms and requirements of the different stages of on-going and initial formation.

### 2. CREATION (CF. ITIN. 1-2)

48. “In the early Franciscan experience humans, nature and God are linked together by an intense degree of sympathy and affection” (FE 160). Each creature, shaped by God, “bears a likeness of Him” (CtC 4). Therefore, nothing that exists is foreign to the interest and the love of the Friar Minor.
49. While man is tempted to make an instrument of creation, the Friar Minor, following the example of St. Francis (cf. 1Cel 81), finds it instead to be a motive for praise, in an attitude of reverence and even of submission

(cf. GGCC 71; SaIV 17). This attitude offers him a totally singular perspective in his approach to and study of creation.

50. The Order encourages the friars to dedicate themselves to the exact, natural and environmental sciences (cf. FE 164), in order to recuperate “the All in all” (2Cel 165), to admire the rays of splendour and goodness of God present in his creatures, to favour “a fraternal relationship” with them, to contribute to the quality of life and to protect the balance of creation (cf. GGCC 71; FE 57).

### 3. MAN (CF. ITIN. 3-4)

51. The Friars Minor should appreciate the study of the sciences that concern history, the arts and human progress for love of the human person created in the image of the Word incarnate.

52. In intellectual formation, particular attention should be given to the questioning and challenges of contemporary thought that come from the natural and human sciences and to the different ways of thinking and living from which flow the inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural nature of all human dialogue.

### LANGUAGES

53. Let the friars, with special care, study languages that are, among other things, an indispensable means to helping the fraternity on the international level, to carry out the ministry of evangelisation and to place their work at the service of the Order (cf. MP 33; CIC 249).

### THE HUMAN SCIENCES

54. The Order of Friars Minor encourages the study of the human sciences: Psychology, Pedagogy, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Social Communications, etc. Their study is necessary for a more useful knowledge of mankind, of social phenomena and of the development of society (cf. PDV 52).

### LITERATURE AND ARTS

55. From the beginning of the Order many friars have attempted to praise God the source of Knowledge, of Beauty and of Harmony with their genius and their industry in the field of literature and arts: prose, poetry, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc. In the consciousness that literary and artistic production is a heritage of inestimable value to the whole of humanity, let the Ministers Provincial be concerned for the care and encouragement of the formation and activity of those friars who shown these particular gifts.

### PHILOSOPHY

56. Philosophy is the heritage of universal culture and is a resource, which cannot be renounced by mankind, for promoting research and knowledge of the truth (cf. FR 1-6). It “leads to a deeper understanding and interpretation of the person, and of the person’s freedom and relationships with the world and with God” (PDV 52) and, as such, is very important in the intellectual formation of the Friar Minor (cf. CIC 251).

57. The study of philosophy should be organised in a way that helps the Friar Minor:

- a. to understand fully “the links between the great philosophical questions and the mysteries of salvation” (PDV 52);
- b. to “overcome subjectivism as a criterion and measure of truth” (PDV 52);
- c. to develop “a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ” (PDV 52).

- d. to continually form his own way of thinking in the search for meaning, for a true freedom of thought and for a healthy criticism.

58. In organising the programme for this Area of knowledge let ample space be given to the thought and contribution of the Franciscan philosophers.

## HISTORY

59. Given the importance that “memory” of the past has in the present culture, let the study and the knowledge of the history of the universal and local Church, of world and local history, be considered an important element in the intellectual formation of the Friars Minor.

60. Let study in this Area be planned in such a way that the Friar Minor, knowing the light and shadows of history, may have the opportunity to:

- a. acquire the perspective necessary to discern and judge the signs of the times;
- b. be witnesses to the love of God towards the marginalised and the victims of all violence and injustice;
- c. develop the sense of belonging to the Church and the Order;
- d. acquire also the information and the criteria necessary for inter-cultural, inter-religion and ecumenical dialogue.

61. In planning the programme for this Area of knowledge let due space be given to medieval history in order to understand our origins better.

## 4. GOD (CF. ITIN. 5-7)

62. The Most Holy Trinity is revealed through the Word in creation, in human history and in Sacred Scripture. Through a spiritual experience, attentive and devoted study of the Bible and theological reflection based on the Word of God, the Friar Minor learns to know ever better the God who loves him.

## SACRED SCRIPTURE

63. Embracing the way of life of St. Francis, the Friar Minor professes to live according to “the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (LR 1, 1). Let the study of Sacred Scripture – centred on Jesus Christ and his Gospel – always be present in the formative context of all friars and accompany them on their journey. Let the Gospels have a special place, “for they are the principal witness for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Saviour” (DV 18; cf. CIC 252 §2).

64. Let the Friar Minor undertake “to move ahead toward a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures” and to “scrutinise them” in such a way that his heart will be enlightened, his will be strengthened and that he grows continually in the love of God and of his brothers (cf. DV 23).

65. Let the Friar Minor, through the prayerful reading of the Bible, allow himself to be refreshed continually “by the spirit of divine Scripture” (Adm 7, 4) and learn, day by day in the school of the Word and in the following of the Lord Jesus, to draw from him “grace and truth” (cf. Jn 1, 17) and to live “on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt 4, 4).

66. The Word of God is always in need of translation and interpretation in order to be heard fruitfully and to be announced effectively in all cultural circles. It is ever so much that they, who down through the ages have been dedicated to the study of Sacred Scripture in the service of the faith, have achieved. This is a duty that cannot be abandoned and is an on-going commitment of the Friars Minor so that the men and women of our times also can hear, understand and welcome the Gospel of salvation.

## THEOLOGY

67. Theology, which has Sacred Scripture as its soul (cf. DV 24; OT 16), “is ordered to nourishing the faith” (PDV 53), given that the fundamental purpose at which it aims is that of providing “an understanding of Revelation and the content of faith” (FR 93). The study of theology, therefore, should be planned and conducted:

- a. in a Christ-centred key in accordance with the tradition of the Franciscan Masters: beginning with the uncreated Word, incarnate and inspired, the Alpha and the Omega of all creation;
- b. in a way of offering to the Friar Minor the opportunity of achieving a solid and deep understanding of the faith;
- c. so as to favour in the Friar Minor the unity of scientific rigour with a great and lively love of Jesus Christ, of the Church and of all creatures (cf. OT 14; PDV 53).

68. Let the Friar Minor pay special attention both to the interaction between theology and philosophy, thought over according to the method and the implications of the relationship between faith and reason (cf. FR, VI), and to the relationship between the scientific rigour of theology and its pastoral purposes.

69. In planning the programme of this Area of knowledge let ample space be given to the thought and contribution of the great Franciscan theologians.

#### ECUMENICAL, INTER-RELIGION □ AND INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE

70. The Friars Minor, faithful to the charism of St. Francis, are committed to promoting reconciliation, peace and inter-cultural, inter-religion and ecumenical dialogue (cf. GGCC 93 §2; 95 §§1-3). The spirit of dialogue must permeate, therefore, all their theological formation.

##### Ecumenical dialogue

71. Let the Friars Minor make the preoccupation of the Lord for unity (Jn 17, 21) and the preoccupation of the Church for the reestablishment of unity among Christians (cf. GGCC 95 §1) their own. Let them take care, then, to know the other Christian confessions properly.

##### Inter-religion dialogue

72. The diversity and plurality of religions is a fact of great importance for our mission. Let the friars show respect towards the other religions (cf. GGCC 95 §2), especially towards those who are found in their regions, and let them take measures to have an adequate knowledge of them.

73. Let them give, besides, special attention to Islam (cf. GGCC 95 §3), as is the tradition in the Order since the time of St. Francis.

##### Dialogue with cultures

74. In all cultures the seeds of the Word are found: let the Friars Minor, assuming “the positive values in the various cultures and philosophies” (SapC 68 n. 2), enter into dialogue with the local culture in order to give their active contribution to the inculturisation of the Gospel and the Franciscan charism (cf. PAC 4-6).

##### Franciscanism

75. Let the Friar Minor, through the study of Franciscanism, acquire:

- a. a knowledge, suitable to his condition, of the fundamental units of Franciscan spirituality oriented so as to “follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ” (ER 1, 2);
- b. a knowledge, the most complete possible, of the philosophical and theological thought of the great Franciscan Masters, the validity of which is recognised for a fruitful dialogue with contemporary culture;



- c. a solid and objective knowledge of the history of the Order and of local Franciscanism with their lights and shadows.

76. Let each Friar Minor study with care and passion the life, spiritual experience, charism and teaching of the Seraphic Father St. Francis.

77. Let the Friar Minor be anxious to know adequately also the figure, life and spirituality of St. Clare, “the new woman”, and the lay Franciscan movement (SFO).

78. In our Study Centres let the programme of profound study presented in Chap. VI be proposed to all the students who attend the Centre but it is obligatory for all the friars and must be fulfilled during the carrying out of the philosophical-theological curriculum.

79. In Provinces where the friars attend the philosophical-theological courses in Diocesan or inter-religious Centres of Study, the Minister Provincial must provide for and assure the Franciscan formation of his candidate subjects, as it is laid down by this Ratio and in accordance with the specific ways that will be determined by the Ratio Studiorum of the Province.

### III. SPECIFIC STUDIES

#### 1. STUDIES FOR SACRED ORDERS AND FOR CHURCH LAY MINISTRIES

80. The friars who are called to any church ministry, ordained or lay, must carry out the studies laid down in accordance with the disposition of the Church (cf. CIC 659 §3) so that “under the action of the Holy Spirit and with the guidance of the formation directors” they can, in a proper manner, study deeply the nature and the duties of ministries (cf. RFF 174) and can “live and exercise them with competence” (RFF 176).

81. Let studies for Sacred Orders and Church lay ministries be organised in such a way that the Franciscan “vision” also is made evident and known so that the friars may know and later exercise them in fidelity to the Franciscan spirit (cf. LtCl; LtOrd; GGCC 164).

#### STUDIES FOR SACRED ORDERS

82. The subjects that are the object of formation for Sacred Orders are those indicated by the universal Law of the Church (cf. CIC 659-661; PI 61) and by the Ratio Studiorum of the local Episcopal Conference.

83. The subjects that are the object of Franciscan formation are indicated in the RFF (151, 1), and in section VI. “Programme of Franciscan Studies” of this document.

## STUDIES FOR CHURCH LAY MINISTRIES

84. The Church lay ministries to be preferred are those of Charity, of the Word, of Liturgy, of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation among men (cf. RFF 180). A suitable preparation, in accordance with church dispositions and the capacities of the candidates, is required for the exercise of these ministries.

## 2. PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL-MANUAL STUDIES

85. Following the example and teaching of St. Francis, who worked with his own hands and wished that his friars should work (cf. Test 20; LR 5) – and “let those who do not know how to work learn” (Test 21) – the friars who carry out manual, technical and professional work should have the means for it. Study, together with the guided practice by a “master in the work”, is a very important instrument in the labour and professional world of today. Through doing work, “avoiding idleness, the enemy of the soul” (LR 5, 2), the Friar Minor gives an example of life according to the Gospel and places himself in solidarity with the poor.

86. Studies concerning the professional and technical-manual formation aim at “the acquisition of competence in a manual, technical, artistic or scientific field” (RFF 169) that permits the Friar Minor to “realise himself and to develop his gifts” (RFF 170), to give service to the Fraternity and to be in solidarity with workers by sharing in their life (cf. GGCC 162; RFF 169).

87. The friars who do professional and technical-manual studies are those who:

- request to continue carrying out the profession already exercised or begun before entering the Order;
- choose a profession during the period of initial formation;
- prepare themselves to exercise a profession during on-going formation.

88. In choosing professional and technical-manual studies, account should be taken of the pre-dispositions, gifts and aspirations of each one (cf. RFF 171) but also of the needs of the Fraternity, of the Province and of the Order (cf. GGCC 79) and of the cultural context where the Friar Minor will exercise his mission (cf. RFF 172).

89. These studies are linked to the life and mission of the local, Provincial and international Fraternities, and do not exclude the contemporary exercise of Sacred Orders or of the various Church lay ministries.

## 3. HIGHER STUDIES

90. This type of study of the decidedly academic and university level, which is at the service of the quality of life and mission, concerns both those friars who are being prepared to become professors, researchers or experts in the different fields of knowledge and those friars who already are and carry out their activity of study, research and teaching.

91. The constant commitment of the Order in this sector of studies favours:

- the insertion and active presence of friars in the “areopagi” of present-day culture, in the centres and circles, both state and ecclesiastical, where culture is made (cf. FE 13. 171-175);
- the preparation of future teachers and researchers for the Centres of Study and Research of the Order (cf. GGCC 166 §2);

- c. the preservation and transmission, but also the promotion, of a many-century university tradition typical of our Order.

92. Let the friars who are embarking on higher studies, or who are already engaged in it, always do so while taking into account the priority of the Franciscan “way of life” (cf. LR 5, 1-4; 10, 7-12) and in communion with the local, Provincial and international Fraternity.

93. The Provinces – even those that do not have their own Centre of Studies – should encourage access to higher studies “especially Franciscan philosophical and theological studies” (GGCC 166 §1; cf. 166 §2) for those friars who show they have the necessary capacity and quality.

#### 4. STUDY FOR FORMATORS

94. Notwithstanding the apostolic needs and the urgencies that the Province must face up to, the attentive care in the choice and in the preparation of Formators remains a priority (cf. IICF 23).

95. The service of formation is a gift and an art at the same time. Or better still, it is “the art of arts” (RaFIS V, 30). It is important, therefore, that formators follow a course of studies that, besides permitting them to know the reality of youth (cf. IICF 23) prepares them to carry out the task that awaits them in a fitting manner (cf. VC 66).

96. To strengthen the initiatives for the formation of Formators already underway, and to assure the necessary formation in theology, pedagogy, spirituality and human sciences and give a precise expertise relative to the duties to be carried out along the long journey of formation (cf. IICF 24), the creation of a Centre for Formators OFM, on the part of the Order, is considered necessary, as is the creation on the part of the Conferences of a Centre for Formators OFM. Let such a Centre be created, if it is possible, in collaboration with other members of the Franciscan family (cf. IICF 25).

#### 5. ACADEMIC DEGREES

97. Let the friars, once they have undertaken a course of studies, complete it by getting a title, a diploma or the corresponding academic degree.

98. Let it be done in such a way that the future professors, and they who are candidates for scientific research and other professions that require a specific competence, can succeed in achieving the respective title of Laureate or Doctorate, taking account of the needs and possibilities of the Province and the capacity of the candidates.



## IV. THE AGENTS

### 1. ALL THE FRIARS

99. Through assiduous commitment the friars progressively acquire the intellectual and wise habitus that, thanks to the assimilation of knowledge, creates the capacity of knowing how to organise one's life around the values of the Franciscan charism.

100. In accordance with the thought and example of our Masters, let the friars remember that it is not he who knows many things that is the wisest but he who is consistent in the essential things he knows (cf. Adm 7). Franciscan learning does not consist of the possession of many truths so much as allowing ourselves to be possessed by the Truth and in being authentic and credible witnesses to that Truth that transcends us (cf. Ord, prol. p. 5, q. 2, n. 355; CSent, Proem. q. 3, concl.).

101. Since, on the journey of the human race, knowledge of the truth is always on the increase (cf. Ord. IV d. 1), let the friars feel themselves called to undertake every effort that leads to the knowledge of the truth.

### 2. THE PROFESSORS

102. Let the Order and the Province – even those that do not have their own Centre for Study – prepare professors and expert researchers in the different fields of knowledge, especially in the fields of history, philosophy, theology and Franciscan spirituality (cf. GGCC 166 §§1-2; PCO 1981, 60. 63).

103. Let the friars who are dedicated to teaching and research not be easily chosen for other tasks not compatible with study.

104. In the selection of professors for our Centres of Study, let account be taken of:

- a. intellectual preparation;
- b. preparation in the didactic and pedagogical fields;
- c. the capacity to collaborate in the formation of the candidates.

105. Let the Secretary General for Formation and Studies, in agreement with those responsible for the Centres of Study and Research, take steps to elaborate and make operative a very precise programme for the formation of new professors and researchers.

106. Let the professors who teach in ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties exercise their ministries in communion with the Church and Order, from which they received their mandate (cf. GGCC 110; RaFIS 87-88).

107. In the Centres of Study attended by friar students, the professors are the ones charged with their intellectual, technical, scientific and professional formation. For this reason it is indispensable that they be available to accompany the students on their scholastic journey, always working together in close collaboration with the formators.

108. Let the friars that exercise the ministry of teaching continually cultivate their preparation in such a way that it will be solid and suitable for the methodological and critical rigour of their respective disciplines of specialisation.

109. To help in the bringing up to date of the professors, let each one of them take advantage of a semester or a sabbatical period at least once every six years. Let the Order, the Provinces and the Conferences work out concrete programmes for this purpose in collaboration with those directly interested and those responsible for the Centres of Study and Research.

110. Let the friars called to carry out their services as professors try to be witnesses to their vocation and mission of Friars Minor by moulding themselves to the school of the Seraphic Father St. Francis and by being careful to maintain harmony between unction and speculation, between knowledge and sanctity, between intelligence and will after the example of St. Anthony, St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus and the other Franciscan Masters.

111. Let the friars who have received the mission of teaching in the university academic and research Centres carry out this task as a priority and not take on, for that reason, other works that could compromise their dedication to research, teaching, publication and the accompaniment of students.

112. Let each Centre of Studies furnish its professors with the means necessary to carry out their mission adequately (cf. PCO 1981, 60).

113. Through the General Secretariate for Formation and Studies let the Order promote both interchange and collaboration between the professors of our Centres of Study and also study meetings between the professors of the Order and between them and other colleagues.

### 3. THE FRIAR STUDENTS

114. An environment that favours study and the acquisition of the habitus of study must be created in the houses of formation.

115. During the time of study, let each Minister and formator hold it as important that study may not be compromised by other activities that limit the necessary amount of time or that might cause disturbance to serenity and proper concentration.

116. The shortage of vocations does not dispense the Provinces from the duty of directing the friar students, who show they have the right qualities, to higher studies in the human and sacred sciences (cf. FFM, 71) so that the Order may be able and know how to open up wider spaces in contemporary society for the values contained in the Gospel (cf. MGCh 8).

117. Let the friar students participate responsibly and actively in the life of the Centres of Study they attend (cf. SapC 34).

## V. STRUCTURES AND MEANS AT THE SERVICE OF STUDIES

### 1. THE CENTRES OF STUDY AND RESEARCH

118. §1 Let the Provinces, where it is possible, have their own Centres of Study for the preparation of their candidates and for formation to sacred orders and church lay ministries (cf. MP 37).

§2 With other members of the Franciscan Family and other religious and diocesan Institutes (cf. IICF 11a), preserving their right to guarantee the specifically Franciscan formation of our candidates and friars (cf. IICF 7-9).

119. Both the Order and individual Provinces, or more Provinces together, have founded and maintain Centres of Higher Studies (Universities and Faculties) and Centres for Research. Besides the maintenance and the increase of these seats of study and research (cf. GGCC 167 §1; GGSS 97 §1), let them also take care of the creation of Centres of Franciscan Spirituality in accordance with the indications given by the General Chapter of 1997 (cf. MP 37).

120. In the Centres of Study and Research let inter-provincial collaboration, along with collaboration with other members of the Franciscan Family (cf. MP 34, 5), with other Religious Institutes and with the laity, be promoted through the interchange of professors and with other initiatives of an academic and scientific nature.

121. Let the Centres of Study belonging to the Order, in conformity with the directives of the Church and the Order (cf. CIC 659 §3), highlight their specific characteristics (cf. PCO 1981, 77) by pursuing, among others, the following objectives:

- a. to highlight the relationship between the fundamental aspects of the Franciscan tradition revisited in its different expressions (history, philosophy, theology, spiritual, artistic ...) and the culture of today, in such a way that they become a place of dialogue between the problems and the hopes of the world of today and the Franciscan charism (cf. CPO 1981 78).
- b. to co-operate in the spread and making the most of the doctrinal and spiritual heritage of the Franciscan tradition through teaching and scientific publications;
- c. to prepare the friars for a significant and incisive evangelical testimony in society, based on a qualified intellectual formation that should enable them to contribute validly to the promotion of culture and to the dialogue between faith and culture (cf. VC 98);
- d. to offer their own qualified contribution to the formation of professors, researchers and formators (cf. MP 34, 3).

122. §1 The Order of Friars Minor considers the “Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum” in Rome to be first among its Centres of Study (cf. GGSS 104 §1).

§2 Let the “Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum”, characterised by its internationality and inter-Franciscan collaboration, be a Centre of Franciscan Research and Study, the centre for the preparation



of teachers and formators of the entire Order and let it place its scientific research at the service and use of the different Institutes of the Order, contributing in this way to the unity of thought and spirituality of the Order (cf. GGSS 104 §2).

123. There are already various Centres of Study affiliated to the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum. In continuation with this praxis it is hoped that other Centres of Study, where possible, might be affiliated to the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum (cf. MP 34, 4).

124. The Research Centres of the Order – like that of Grottaferrata (Rome) and the “Scotus Commission” located at ICSA – and the others that exist in the Provinces, through their scientific and editorial activity carry out a service of great importance in regard to the preservation and diffusion of the historical, philosophical, theological and spiritual heritage of the Order. The Order expresses great appreciation of the work carried out in these Centres and encourages the young friars to prepare themselves suitably in order to continue in them the teaching and research.

125. Let the Provinces be generous in sending properly prepared friars to collaborate in these institutions (cf. GGSS 105). If necessary, the Minister General can assign a professor to give his service in any Centre of Study in the Order (cf. GGCC 198).

126. If a Province cannot have its own Centre of Study let it offer its collaboration to those Centres attended by the friars, especially by placing qualified professors at their disposal (cf. MuR 31).

127. Let the Secretary General for Formation and Studies promote the creation of new centres of Study and their constant up-dating on the level of programmes (Cf. MP 34).

128. Let the Order and the Provinces, conscious of the importance of the Centres of Study and Research that produce culture, commit themselves to maintain and promote their activity with adequate means of subsistence and with the preparation and sending of researchers.

129. With regard to the cessation of the activity of a Centre of Research it is necessary to have prior consent of the Minister General and his Definitory.

## 2. LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

130. Let the Order of Friars Minor favour the preservation and functioning of Libraries and historical Archives (cf. GGSS 26 §2; ELMC) for the purpose of keeping alive its historical memory and being instruments at the service of study and evangelisation.

131. Let each Province have a central Library and Archives in addition to the Libraries and Archives of each local Fraternity. Let both the Library and the Archives, duly kept and catalogued, be put at the disposal of friars, researchers and scholars, except those documents that, in the opinion of the Minister Provincial, are reserved.

132. Let the esteem and practical knowledge of the Libraries and Archives be boosted in the friars so that, besides being aware of their value, they might be able to use them in a fitting manner.

133. Wherever it is possible, let the Libraries of the Order be specialised, particularly on the topics that have a connection with our history, our spirituality and the thought of the Franciscan Masters.

134. Let the Provinces send all their publications, especially those of a scientific and Franciscan nature to the Library of the “Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum”, in order “to construct a common heritage” (PCO 1981, 92).

135. Where it is possible, let the associations of librarians and archivists of the Order be promoted in order to boost mutual collaboration through the interchange of duplicates and cataloguing.

136. Wherever it is possible, let the Libraries be computerised and put on the Internet so that all the Provinces may have access to the bibliographical heritage that exists in the Order.

### 3. EDITORIAL ACTIVITY

137. §1 No areopagus is unrelated to the Franciscan way of evangelising. Today, as in the past, our Editorial Houses continue to carry out an important role in the sectors of intellectual and evangelising activity.

§2 Our Editorial Houses carry out this task by circulating, through the press:

- a. the values of the Gospel;
- b. the doctrinal heritage of the Franciscan Masters;
- c. the “ecological” values of life in every sense: respect for creation, the dignity of creatures,
- d. Christ the centre of creation, history, fraternity, solidarity, justice and peace;
- e. the constructive topics such as: understanding, pardon, reconciliation, contemplation and pacification;
- f. ecumenical, inter-religion and cultural dialogue (cf. StFE).

138. Let all the Editorial Houses OFM participate in the Association of Franciscan Editors so that it might be possible to have greater dialogue and collaboration between the Editors and that our thought might be promoted more.

### 4. COMPUTING

139. Today, computing constitutes a new place of contact (cf. PAC 33-34). In a world that is travelling ever more quickly towards globalisation this new means offers the possibility to:

- a. gain access to different types of information;
- b. send information and messages to others in real time;
- c. make contact with a public that would otherwise be inaccessible.

140. As a sign and as constructors of a world-wide Fraternity, let the Friars Minor be stimulated to:

- a. acquire an adequate formation in order to use these means of communication;
- b. use computers to announce the Gospel and Franciscan values;
- c. facilitate study and research;
- d. develop a closer communication and a more efficient collaboration between the Entities of the Order, the Centres of Study and Research, Libraries and the individual scholars.

141. The Office for Communications of the Curia General OFM, through the web site of the Order ([www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)) favours:

- a. the circulation of information within the Order;
- b. links between the Centres of Study and Research;
- c. the diffusion of the means of study, as, for example, the texts and documents that concern the tradition of the Franciscan Masters and the publications of our teachers and scholars.

## VI. PROGRAMME OF FRANCISCAN STUDIES

### 1. THE PROGRAMME FOR FRIARS WHO ATTEND OUR CENTRES OF STUDY OR OTHER CENTRES OF HIGHER STUDIES

142. For our Centres of Study, and for the friars who attend other Centres of Higher Studies in each Province or Conference, in addition to the programme of study in accordance with the Ratio of the Church and the Ratio of the Episcopal Conference, let there be a programme of study set up, well articulated, in order to go deeply into the following core units of Franciscanism:

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF FRANCISCANISM

- The situation of Christianity in the XII-XIII Centuries.
- The story of Francis of Assisi.
- From the Fraternity to the Order.
- The Later Rule and Testament.
- The Christian proposal of Francis of Assisi.

#### THE THOUGHT OF THE FRANCISCAN MASTERS

- The Franciscan Presence in the Universities.
- St. Bonaventure and his School, Dun Scotus and his School, William of Ockham and the new School.
- The Doctrine of the Logos in Bonaventure; the centrality of Christ in John Duns Scotus; the study and re-evaluation of the concrete in Roger Bacon and William of Ockham; Franciscan Mysticism.
- The Bible and Franciscanism, the Law and Franciscanism, Art and Franciscanism, Literature and Franciscanism, etc.

#### ELEMENTS OF FRANCISCAN HISTORY

- From the foundation till 1517: Francis and Bonaventure. The Spiritualists. Conventualism and the Observance.
- The Observants, Conventuals and Capuchins.
- The Suppression and Restoration in the XIX century.
- The Order of Poor Clares and the Order of Penance.
- The Franciscan Apostolic Institutes.

#### FRANCISCANISM IN OUR TIMES

- The Missionary dimension of the Franciscan vocation.
- Inculturation of the Franciscan charism in the different cultures.
- The involvement of the Laity in our life and mission.
- The “spirit” of Assisi and the present day challenges: ecological disorder, the problems of peace, the contempt for human rights, respect for life (cf. NMI 51).

### 2. THE PROGRAMME FOR THE FRIARS IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF FORMATION

143. Let all the friars, without distinction between cleric and lay, have the deepest knowledge possible, in accordance with the gifts received, of the principal core units of Franciscanism listed in this Ratio.

144. In every stage of formation, both on-going and initial, let the respective programme of formation assure all the friars, independently of their option, of the gradual, organic and systematic presentation of these core units, in accordance with how they are prescribed in this Ratio, in addition to the study of biblical and theological materials pointed out by the Ratio Formationis Franciscanae for each stage of formation.

#### ON-GOING FORMATION

145. Let each Province or Conference elaborate programmes of study that assure the continual deepening of study and adequate synthesis of Franciscan history and spirituality and also of the Franciscan Masters, taking the following into account:

##### Thematic Units

- a. Francis and Clare: the essential elements of their spirituality.
- b. The Franciscan vision of God, Christ, Creation and Man in the light of the Franciscan Masters.
- c. Dialogue with the world starting from our cultural, spiritual, philosophical and theological heritage.

##### Commentated Readings

- a. The Rule and General Constitutions.
- b. The Other Writings of St. Francis.
- c. The Principal Works of St. Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus.
- d. Recent Documents of the Order.

#### POSTULANCY

146. Let there be elaborated and carried out in each Province a programme of its own that would lead the postulant to an initial knowledge of the Franciscan charism and life (cf. RFF 128), taking the following into account:

##### Thematic Units

- a. The life of St. Francis.
- b. The Presentation of the Franciscan Family
- c. The general Elements of Franciscan Spirituality.
- d. The Life of St. Clare.

##### Commentated Readings

- a. The Fioretti and 1st Celano
- b. The Prayers of St. Francis.

#### NOVICIATE

147. Let each Noviciate House elaborate a programme of study that is well articulated so that the novices can know the Franciscan life (cf. RFF 139) in the light of that prescribed by the General Constitutions and Statutes (cf. GGCC 153 §1; GGSS 87) and taking the following into account:

##### Thematic Units

- a. Study of the Writings of St. Francis.
- b. Study of the Franciscan Sources.
- c. Study of the Rule of St. Francis.
- d. Study of the General and Provincial Constitutions and Statutes.
- e. Study of the general elements of the history of the Order and Province.

- f. Study of the general elements of Franciscan Spirituality.

#### Commentated Readings

- a. The Admonitions and Testament of St. Francis.
- b. The Testament of St. Clare.
- c. The Biographies by St. Bonaventure and The Three Companions.

#### TEMPORARY PROFESSION

148. Each Province should have its own well articulated programme so that the temporary professed can go deeply into the knowledge of the Franciscan charism (cf. RFF 151), taking the following into account:

#### Thematic Units

- a. The Franciscan Question.
- b. Franciscan History: from the foundation till 1517; Francis and Bonaventure. The Spiritualists; Conventualism and Observants; Observants, Conventuals and Capuchins; The Suppression and Restoration in the XIX Century; The Order of Poor Clares and the Order of Penance; the Franciscan Apostolic Institutes.
- c. The Thought of the Franciscan Masters (St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, William of Ockham): God, Christ, Man, Creation.
- d. Franciscanism and our times: Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in the Franciscan Vision; the Evangelising Fraternity; the Franciscan Missionary Spirit; Inculturation of the Franciscan charism in the different current cultures.

#### Commentated Readings

- a. The Writings of St. Francis.
- b. The Letters of St. Clare.
- c. The First Franciscan Chronicles.
- d. The Texts of the Franciscan Mystics.
- e. Recent Documents of the Order.