

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**INQUIRY CANDIDACY FORMATION**



Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**INITIAL FORMATION  
CHECKLIST**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Observation	Check	Date/Initials
1. Visitor for at least 3 regular fraternity meetings		
2. Application form completed		
3. Initial interview with Minister, Formation Director and (if available) Spiritual Assistant		
4. Application and letters of reference brought to Council for discussion and vote		
<b>Period of Orientation: materials used→</b>		
5. Completion of a period of orientation		
<b>Period of Inquiry: materials used→</b>		
6 Ceremony of introduction and welcome		
7. Start initial formation program		
8. Written Statement of Intent to begin Candidacy		
9. Interview with Minister and Formation Director		
10. Letter of reference from parish priest		
11. Letter of reference from a practicing Catholic		
12. Statement of Intent and Progress Interview Report brought to Council for discussion and vote		

<b>Period of Candidacy: materials used→</b>		
13. Rite of Admission to the Secular Franciscan Order		
14. Candidate's name entered into Fraternity Register		
15. Sponsor for Candidate: name		
16. Written request for profession into the OFS		
17. Interview with Spiritual Assistant, Minister, Formation Director and Sponsor		
18. Request and Progress Interview Report brought to Council for discussion and vote by secret ballot		
19. Completion of Formation Program		
20. Request for Profession Page in Fraternity Register		
21. Plan Rite of Profession : Candidate, Spiritual Assistant, Minister, Formation Director and Sponsor(s)		
22. Rite of Permanent Profession		
23. Profession entered in Fraternity Register		
24. Optional: Rite of Temporary Commitment when permanent profession not yet possible		

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**FORMATION PROCESS**  
**FROM OBSERVER TO PROFESSED MEMBER**

**Someone aspiring to become a member of the Secular Franciscan Order should display the following criteria:**

1. A practicing Catholic.
2. ... has a desire to follow Jesus. Jesus and his Gospel are at the heart of the Franciscan way of life.
3. ... has a personal faith relationship with Jesus, not simply intellectual knowledge about him. Franciscans follow Francis' example in loving God, our sister earth and all people.
4. ... is hope-filled and is willing to deal with life's issues. Pessimists, nay-sayers, and persons who want to hide from the world are typically not good candidates for the OFS.
5. ... realizes that we are all sinful people in need of conversion. — Perfect people do not need the OFS, and the OFS certainly does not need them!
6. ... has at least some knowledge of Francis and Clare of Assisi.
7. ... is willing and able to make a commitment to the *Rule of the OFS* and to live in fraternity. Basic communication skills are needed to listen to and interact with our brothers and sisters in fraternity.
8. ... trusts in God and realizes that God is needed in his/her life. Anyone who is prejudiced, arrogant and closed-minded will not make a good candidate for the OFS.
9. ... has a reverence for all of creation. Courtesy and respect are part of the spirit of reverence for all of creation.
10. ... is willing to live the countercultural reality of a life in fraternity. Secular Franciscans live in fraternity and are willing to share creative ideas and life with others.

**IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT, THE FRATERNITY RECEIVES THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT!!!**

Source: Adapted by David and Thérèse Ream, OFS., from: Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap., *Catch Me A Rainbow Too*, 1999, pages 49-51. Lindsborg, KS: Barbo-Carlson Enterprises, 2005)

## Signs that a person is NOT a good candidate for the OFS:

- 1....a person already belonging to a religious Order may **not** belong to the OFS.
- 2 ...a non-Catholic may **not** be received as an Inquirer into the OFS, although may be able to participate to some extent in the life of a fraternity. Good dialogue can determine a healthy form of participation.
- 3.... a person who has interpersonal problems, problems with relationships, or wants to escape home or family problems is **not** likely to be a good candidate for the OFS. The OFS is not a therapy group/society, although we do offer our members supportive encouragement.
4. ...a “professional joiner” is **not** a good candidate for the OFS.
5. ...a person who forces personal devotions and ideas on others is **not** a good candidate for the OFS.
- 6 ...a person who is too individualistic and self-centered is **not** likely to be a good candidate for the OFS. The OFS fraternity must be united by a common goal, a sense of mission and a common desire to integrate life and Gospel, —going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel; (*OFS Rule*, art. #4).
7. ...someone living a lifestyle that is obviously counter to the Gospel is **not** a good candidate for the OFS.
8. ...someone who continuously gossips, or criticizes everything and everybody, or is irresponsible in family and/or work situations, or has addictions and does nothing to change (such as seeking professional help) is **not** a good candidate for the OFS.
- 9 ...someone who has rigid and unbending opinions and attitudes is **not** a good candidate for the OFS. The OFS does not need dictators! We are involved in servant leadership and need to work collaboratively.
- 10....someone who uses violence, power or prestige to control life is **not** suitable for a Gospel way of life.

IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT, THE FRATERNITY RECEIVES THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT!!!

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It is necessary to confirm the genuineness of a candidate's vocation before admitting him/her to final profession. This is done through a process of discernment by both the fraternity Council and candidate that begins with his/her first visit to a fraternity.

The fraternity members welcome the observer to join them and whenever the opportunity arises, any questions he/she may have regarding the Secular Franciscan Order are answered. If he/she returns for a second visit, one probably has an idea that he/she may be called, and the fraternity assumes that also, for the time being. The fraternity and the observer are still trying to get to know each other. He/she particularly wants to observe authentic witnessing on the part of the professed members of the fraternity that he/she is visiting. The above continues until one of two things happen: the observer discerns that he/she is not being called to this way of life, doesn't need to return to any further meetings and, therefore, the process is ended, or the observer returns and asks to begin a formal program of formation.

The fraternity may require the observer to go through a Period of Orientation prior to beginning the Period of Inquiry. These study sessions are intended to help the observer to understand the Secular Franciscan Order better before embarking on a formal formation program. The program may run three (3) to six (6) months. The fraternity Minister then asks the observer to put the petition in writing with a reason as to why he/she wishes to begin [such] a formal program of formation.

After the letter of request and letters of reference are received, the fraternity Council discusses them and discerns whether or not to conduct the first of three (3) interviews. If the Council discerns "no", the process is ended; if the Council discerns "yes", then the fraternity Minister and Spiritual Assistant interview the potential inquirer. The additional information is brought back to the fraternity Council for further discernment. If the applicant appears to lack some of the expected criteria, the process is ended; if the expected criteria is evident, then the observer is welcomed into a Period of Inquiry (formerly called Postulancy) that may last between three (3) to six (6) months.

Discernment of a vocation by both the Inquirer and the fraternity continues and the process may stop at any time, but if he/she continues to the end of the Period of Inquiry, he/she makes a written request to enter the Period of Candidacy (formerly called Novitiate). The fraternity Minister, Spiritual Assistant and Formation Director interview the potential candidate and bring this information, plus the written request, and to supply two (2) letters of reference (one from a Roman Catholic priest, the other from a lay person who has some knowledge of Franciscan spirituality) to the fraternity Council for further discernment. If no signs of a vocation are evident, the process is ended; if a vocation appears to be developing, then the Inquirer is formally received, during a paralyurgy, into the Period of Candidacy. The act of admission is registered and preserved in the records of the fraternity.

The Candidate continues his/her formation program and this phase may last between twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. The Candidate is given a sponsor to assist him/her on this journey. Discernment by both the Candidate and the fraternity continues and the process may

stop at any time. If he/she continues to the end of the Period of Candidacy and believes that the Secular Franciscan Order is the way of life to which he/she is being called, he/she makes a written request to be admitted to Profession. After receipt of the written request, the third in the series of three interviews is held. The fraternity Minister, Spiritual Assistant, Formation Director and Sponsor present information to the Council for further discernment. If there is doubt about the authenticity of the candidate's vocation, the process is ended; if all the information and actions of the Candidate verify the presence of a vocation, he/she is admitted to Profession.

The Rite of profession is most often celebrated during Mass because the nature of permanent commitment as a public and ecclesial act is closely tied to the celebration of the Eucharist. The Minister of the fraternity receives the Profession at a suitable place in the sanctuary; the act of Profession is registered and preserved in the records of the fraternity.

Temporary Profession – It is possible for either the candidate or the Council to request “temporary profession”. A temporary profession must be renewed annually and cannot exceed more than three years.

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**THE ROLE OF THE FRATERNITY IN  
THE FORMATION PROCESS**

**C**

**COUNCIL:**

1. must be warm, hospitable, and give authentic witness of living the Secular Franciscan vocation;
2. decides, through prayerful discussion and discernment, on the acceptance and admission of candidates into the various stages of formation and to Profession;
3. gains additional personal insight about the candidates by participating in periodic Formation sessions.

**THE MINISTER:**

1. receives the Inquirer's request to begin a formal program of formation;
2. requests that the petition be given in writing and that the Inquirer supplies two letters of reference;
3. receives the written ***Application to the Period of Inquiry*** and letters of reference, and brings them to a subsequent Council meeting;
4. decides collegially **with the Council** whether the Inquirer exhibits the necessary criteria to hold the first in a series of three interviews;
5. conducts the first interview of the Inquirer with the Spiritual Assistant;
6. decides collegially **with the Council** whether welcoming the Inquirer into a formal period of study is in the best interest of the fraternity and the Order;
7. gives a formal answer to the Inquirer and communicates this to the fraternity;
8. receives the Inquirer's written request to enter the Period of Candidacy;
9. conducts the second interview of the Inquirer with the Spiritual Assistant and the Formation Director;



10. decides collegially **with the Council** whether the Inquirer shows initial signs of having a calling to the Secular Franciscan Order;
11. receives the Inquirer into the Period of Candidacy;
12. participates in the formation process as often as possible;
13. receives the Candidate's written request for admittance to Profession;
14. conducts the third interview of the Candidate with the Spiritual Assistant, the Formation Director and Sponsor;
15. decides collegially **with the Council** whether to admit the Candidate to Profession;
16. receives the Candidate's Profession.

#### **THE SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT:**

1. participates with the Minister in conducting the three interviews of the candidate;
2. provides whatever assistance the Formation Director may require during the course of the formation program;
3. participates, as a member of Council, in the decision-making regarding the acceptance and admission of candidates into the various stages of formation and to Profession.

#### **THE FORMATION DIRECTOR:**

1. uses adult methods of education during the formation program sessions;
2. is more a facilitator of growth and development rather than just a conveyor of information;
3. presents himself/herself as a big brother or sister who accompanies the Inquirers and Candidates along their discovery of the Franciscan evangelical life;
4. replicates by word and action this striving for holiness in the Secular Franciscan way;
5. tells his/her own "story" of embracing and maintaining permanent commitment to Gospel living;
6. helps the Inquirers/Candidates to choose a **sponsor** from among the professed members of the fraternity; helps candidates to become involved in fraternity or other apostolates

7. participates, as a member of Council, in the decision-making regarding the acceptance and admission of candidates into the various stages of formation and to Profession.

**THE SPONSOR:**

1. accompanies the candidate through the formation program;
2. is a person with whom the candidate will want to share prayer, study, apostolic work, dialogue and leisure;
3. gives a lived experience of Franciscan fraternity and introduces practical ways of living out the Franciscan vocation;
4. participates in the third interview of his/her Candidate;
5. provides additional information/insight to the Council regarding growth to the Franciscan way of life.

**THE FRATERNITY MEMBERS:**

1. must be warm, hospitable, and give authentic witness of living the Secular Franciscan vocation;
2. add fullness to the candidates' development by participating in periodic formation sessions and presenting their own lived experience in ongoing conversion;
3. should be open to becoming a candidate's sponsor.

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**APPLICATION TO THE PERIOD OF INQUIRY**

To the Applicant – We are very happy that you have asked to begin a program of formation in the Secular Franciscan Order. To help us get to know you better, please provide the following information:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_  
SINGLE \_\_\_\_\_ MARRIED \_\_\_\_\_ WIDOWED \_\_\_\_\_ SEPARATED \_\_\_\_\_ DIVORCED \_\_\_\_\_  
IF MARRIED, SPOUSE’S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCE 1:**

PASTOR \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCE 2:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER?**

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Please use the space below to tell us about yourself, and state why you wish to become a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. For example, tell us about your background, spirituality, family history, work history, hobbies, talents, interests, and anything else that you

consider pertinent. If you are active in your parish, please tell us about your involvement (e.g. Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Choir member, etc.). If you are engaged in any apostolic works (E.g., visiting the sick, care for the poor, etc.) Please tell us about these activities.

**I understand that, by signing, I am giving permission to contact references and to verify all information.**

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

# FORMATION INTERVIEWS

A

### WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An Interview is a face-to-face meeting between individuals for specific purposes such as evaluation of one of the individuals. An interview is also a dialogue whereby individuals share ideas, questions etc.

### WHY THE INTERVIEW?

For the Secular Franciscan Order, the purposes of the interview are as follows:

1. To welcome the prospective candidate to the Order;
2. To ascertain eligibility of the prospective candidate;
3. To explain the purpose of the Secular Franciscan Order and what our Rule of Life involves;
4. To answer any questions that the candidate may have;
5. To give out pertinent material such as brochures, books, etc.;
6. To gather information that will assist the process of discerning the authenticity of the candidate's vocation.

N.B. The interview is *not* an interrogation and/or counselling session.

### WHO MAY INTERVIEW?

In the first and second interview: The Fraternity Minister, Spiritual Assistant, Formation Director; and in the third interview the candidate's sponsor is included.

### WHEN SHOULD THE INTERVIEWS TAKE PLACE?

Ideally at the time of each application:

1. application to enter the Period of Inquiry
2. application to enter the Period of Candidacy
3. application for admission to Profession

The date and time of day should be one that is convenient for all the participants.

### WHERE SHOULD THE INTERVIEWS TAKE PLACE?

The interviews should take place in a clean, comfortable and quiet room, somewhere where you will not be disturbed. Privacy and confidentiality are essential and should be respected.

# Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

## INITIAL FORMATION RESOURCES

The following resources are a few of the vast resource materials available, and are intended to stimulate your fraternity to become joyful seekers of knowledge. A creative Orientation and Initial Formation program at each fraternity meeting adds vitality to the proceedings.

### SFO Resources

The International Council have provided documents concerning Formation and the National Council of Canada has also published an Initial Formation Program for use in Canada and accompanying notes for Formation Directors. These documents will be found in the Appendix of this Directory. In addition the following resources are also available:

#### 1. Orientation:

- Come and See: Orientation and Inquiry by Lester Bach, OFM, Teresa Baker, SFO, published by Barbo Carlson Enterprises, 2001.

#### 2. Inquiry:

- Come and See: Orientation and Inquiry by Lester Bach, OFM, Teresa Baker, SFO, published by Barbo Carlson Enterprises, 2001.
- Fully Mature In The Fullness of Christ, third edition, by Benet A. Fonck, OFM, published by Franciscan Press, revised 1983.
- Catch Me a Rainbow Too by Lester Bach, OFM Cap, published by Barbo Carlson Enterprises, 1999.

#### 3. Candidacy:

- Fully Mature In The Fullness of Christ, third edition, by Benet A. Fonck, OFM, published by Franciscan Press, revised 1983.
- Catch Me a Rainbow Too-Lester Bach, OFM Cap, published by Barbo Carlson Enterprises, 1999.
- To Live as Francis Lived by Leonard Foley, OFM, Jovian Wiegel, OFM and Patti Normile, SFO. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000.
- Franciscan Journey, Embracing the Franciscan Vision (Orientation – Inquiry – Candidacy) by Lester Bach OFM Cap published by Smoky Valley Printing, Lindsborg, KS

#### 4. Recommended Biographies:

- Journey and the Dream by Murray Bodo, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988.
- St. Francis of Assisi: a Biography by Omer Englebert, published by Servant Books.
- St. Francis of Assisi by John R.H. Moormon, published by Franciscan Press.
- St. Francis of Assisi by G.K. Chesterton, published by Image Books.
- The Life of St. Francis by Thomas Celano, published by Franciscan Press.
- Francis and Clare: The Complete Works published by Paulist Press, 1982.

#### 5.

##### **Franciscan Resources**

P.O. Box 350, Menahga, MN

56464, U.S.A.

phone: 1-800-772-6910

fax: 1-218-837-5447

e-mail: [franres@wcta.net](mailto:franres@wcta.net)

web-site: [www.franciscanresources.com](http://www.franciscanresources.com)

##### **St. Joseph's Workshop**

259 Traders Blvd. E. Unit #12

Mississauga, ON, L4Z 2E5

phone: 905-568-8777

fax: 905-568-2676

e-mail: [stjowksp@sympatico.ca](mailto:stjowksp@sympatico.ca)

**St. Francis Bookstore:** [www.stfrancisonline.com](http://www.stfrancisonline.com)

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**Sample APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY**

To the Applicant: Your decision to be admitted to the Secular Franciscan Order is warmly received by this fraternity. We ask that you use the space below (and an additional page, if necessary) to explain your reasons for wishing to become a candidate. Please tell us how you intend to live out this commitment in your everyday life.

FRATERNITY \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_



Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**Sample: LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

An essential part of the initial application to the Secular Franciscan Order is two letters of recommendation. It is suggested that one be from a priest or religious, and another from a lay person who has some knowledge of Secular Franciscan spirituality.

The following is a suggested form letter the fraternity might use:

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER  
Fraternity Name  
Address

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

(Name of Applicant) has applied for admission to the Secular Franciscan Order. Secular Franciscans are a community of men and women in the world who seek to pattern their lives after Jesus Christ in the spirit of St. Francis. We would appreciate receiving a letter of recommendation from you regarding (name of applicant). Please be assured that all information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

**Minister or Formation Director**

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
**Sample APPLICATION FOR PROFESSION**

To the Applicant: Your decision to become a Professed member of the Secular Franciscan Order is warmly received by this fraternity. We ask that you use the space below (and an additional page, if necessary) to explain your reasons for wishing to become a Professed member. Please tell us how you intend to live out this commitment in your everyday life.

FRATERNITY \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_