



THE GENERAL RULE OF THE ORTHODOX ANGLICAN SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS

The Three Aims of the Orthodox Anglican Society of St. Francis (ASF) are:

To make our Lord known and loved everywhere by word and example, Brothers and Sisters witness to Christ in their daily lives. By prayer and sacrifice they help forward God's work, wherever they are called.

To spread the spirit of fellowship by working happily with people regardless of race, color, creed, education and opportunity, Brothers and Sisters seek to break down the divisions in the world. They try to live in the spirit of St Francis' prayer: "Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace."

To live simply acknowledging that everything belongs to God, Brothers and Sisters seek to use God's gifts wisely acting as good stewards of this fragile earth, never destroying or wasting what God has made. They provide the things necessary for themselves and their families without demanding luxuries. They seek never to forget the needs of others.

CHAPTER ONE: ECCLESIASTICAL OVERSIGHT

The Orthodox Anglican Society of St. Francis (ASF), is a Religious Order of the Orthodox Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Guardian of the Society is The Most Revd Dr Scott E. McLaughlin, Primate of the Communion.

CHAPTER TWO: STAGES OF COMMITMENT

Each member will progress through the following stages of commitment:

1. Postulancy. This is the period of time after a Brother or Sister makes application to join the Society and is accepted as a Postulant. Upon mutual agreement between their Guardian or the Minister General, the Postulant, is admitted as a "Novice". The length of Postulancy is not less than two months.

2. Novitiate. This is a period of not less than twelve months in which the new Brother or Sister continues to work and communicate with the Minister General. These communications may be either in person, via telephone or via the internet. Thirty days prior to the expiration of the Novitiate, the novice and the Minister General make the decision to move to the next stage. This communication will be written, dated, and signed by the novice and the Minister General. The length of Novitiate is not more than two years.

3. First / Temporary Profession. The Brother or Sister will live under temporary vows for a period of not less than one year. The brother or sister will make a monthly report to the Minister General pertinent to the Brother's or Sister's progress toward solemn profession. The length of Temporary Profession is

not more than three years.

4. Solemn Profession. The temporarily vowed Brother or Sister can make a permanent profession of vows at their own written request to the Minister General after a minimum of one year under temporary vows. Solemn vows are a lifetime commitment to be joined to the Society and to follow the Rule of St. Francis.

CHAPTER THREE: DAILY LIFE

The Brothers and Sisters of this Society shall dress simply when in secular clothing. Those who are accepted into the Society shall be presented with a Tau Cross pendant which is to be worn either outside or under secular clothing as an ever-present reminder of their professed vows. Bishops in the Society may wear their pectoral cross instead of the Tau Cross pendant.

Those who are novices and professed members of the Society may wear the habit of the Society.

Novices wear an unknotted cord. The habit may be worn to services of Divine worship and at meetings of the Society. The habit of the Society should not be worn in public unless functioning in a ministerial capacity or traveling to and from a gathering of the Society. Brothers and Sisters who live in a friary or convent may wear their habits at all times.

The Brothers and Sisters should refrain from attending unseemly parties, shows or dances. They should avoid unholy conversation - always mindful of the purity of life to which all Christians are called.

Each Brother and Sister is encouraged to be actively involved with issues of the environment, children, the elderly, the poor, race relations, human rights, etc. This involvement may be expressed either as involvement with groups relating to these issues, personal work with individuals or by intercessory prayer.

CHAPTER FOUR: ABSTINENCE, FASTING AND OTHER PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINES

All Brothers and Sisters shall abstain from meat on all Fridays of the year and observe a strict fast on one Friday of each month, and all Fridays of Lent. After discussion with the Minister General, any Brother or Sister may substitute abstinence and fasting with any other specific behavior which, for them, will require sustained and meaningful discipline to maintain.

Any Brother or Sister who is ill or suffers from a chronic health condition that would preclude them from fasting is dispensed from such obligation.

Any Brother or Sister who is over the age of sixty is automatically dispensed from the obligation of fasting and abstinence. This does not preclude a Brother or Sister from either penance on an occasional basis, as they are so inclined. Other acts of charity or penance such as visitation to the sick and infirm or additional time of prayer and meditation may be substituted and are encouraged.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRAYER

All Brothers and Sisters are to pray the Daily Office of the Church consisting of, at least, Morning, and Evening Prayer. All Brothers and Sisters and Sisters are prayerfully to read and ponder the daily lectionary, especially the Gospel of our Lord each day.

CHAPTER SIX: THE SACRAMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

All Brothers and Sisters are to make a confession of their sins at each Office and service of Holy Communion. In case of scruple, having committed grave sin, confession to a priest, as directed by the *Book of Common Prayer*, should be sought as soon as possible.

Brothers and Sisters are to receive communion at least weekly on Sunday and more often if available. Those ordained as Priests or Bishops should make every effort to celebrate the Holy Communion service daily.

Brothers and Sisters are to be reconciled to their neighbors and to restore what belongs to others.

Tertiary Brothers and Sisters are to support financially their local church community in order to support the work of the Lord. Each Brother or Sister should contribute each month, if able, for the support of the Society, the exact amount to be determined jointly in General Chapter.

Brothers and Sisters are not to take up lethal weapons, or bear them against any person unless a part of their secular occupation.

Brothers and Sisters are to refrain from formal oaths, unless necessity compels for peace, for the Faith, to refute slander, and in bearing witness.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CORRECTION, DISPENSATION AND OFFICERS

The Brother elected at the General Chapter to be the leader of the Society shall be known as the Minister General. This election is to be held every third year at a place and time designated by the current Minister General. Postulants and Novices may not be counted in the voting process, but may speak and express opinion. Every community of three or more Brothers and Sisters living in a friary or convent shall elect one of the Brothers or Sisters to serve as the Father Guardian of the friary or Mother Guardian of a convent to be served in three year terms.

Each Brother and Sister owes obedience to Almighty God, to the “Rule” and to the Primate of the Orthodox Anglican Communion. In addition, a vow of obedience is expected to the Minister General, Father Guardian of a friary or Mother Guardian of a convent. Only those solemnly professed may hold any of these Offices.

If anyone learns that scandal is occurring relative to a Brother or Sister of the Society, it shall be reported to the Minister General. If scandal is reported occurring relative to the Minister General, it shall be reported to the Episcopal Protector. If the scandal continues after counseling and the offending Brother or Sister remains unrepentant, the Minister General, or the Episcopal Protector, may expel the offending Brother or Sister from the Society. Without exception, any behavior of a criminal nature will be immediately reported to the proper civilian authorities.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHAPTER MEETINGS, MONTHLY REPORTS, AND THE ANNUAL MEETING

All Brothers and Sisters are to gather together at the time the Minister General shall see fit, in a church or meeting place the Minister will make known, and there assist at Divine services and fellowship. These Chapters are generally held once every year.

All Brothers and Sisters are to send a monthly report to their Spiritual Director and the Minister General sharing how following in the Rule of the Society has helped in their spiritual growth in that time. The report should share their joys, expectations, concerns and needs. (The report may be submitted electronically via the Society's website.)

All Brothers and Sisters should make every effort to attend the General Chapter meetings of the Society. It is at these meetings that Brothers and Sisters will make their permanent profession and seek the blessing of, and instruction from, the Minister General.

HERE ENDS THE RULE OF THE ORTHODOX ANGLICAN SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS.

“All powerful, all holy, most high and supreme God, sovereign good, all good, every good, you who alone are good, it is right that we must give all praise, all glory, all honour, all blessing: to you we must refer all good always. Amen”