

TERTIARY SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

FORMATION GUIDE



CHAPTER MANDATE OF 2013:

“The General Administration will form a commission composed of formators from all the Provinces/Region under the guidance of a competent person to work out a ratio for the whole Congregation at all levels of formation. The ratio formationis is to be approved by the General Administration, for the PURPOSE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONALITY.”

Rome, October 4th 2018

I want to thank everybody who was working on these guide lines, first of all Sr. Ignatia Asoh who was serving as coordinator.

The guidelines provide a framework for comprehensive formation for our sisters in the respective continents. Acknowledging cultural difference they are to be understood broadly. They are maintaining a basic unity of formation throughout the congregation and have to be adapted according to the context. They are like signposts to show us the way which will lead us closer to Christ.

The way is Jesus Christ himself. "I am the way, the truth and the life."
(John 14:6)

With St. Francis it is our desire to live the Gospel, to value each person as unique, good, worthy of respect and reverence, because it is Jesus Christ himself whom we meet. Joy and simplicity characterize our life.

The happiness of each individual sister is based on her commitment to live the life that she has chosen and then walk in faithfulness, which means, to be ready for formation and transformation.

These guidelines will be of good help for each sister and for the formators.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord together with St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Elizabeth and our Mother Beginner Maria Hueber.

Sr. Maria Theresia Oberwalder

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Superior General OSF

Generalate of the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis
Via San Giovanni della Croce, 33
00166 Roma, Italy

THE LORD IS THE POTTER AND WE ARE THE CLAY

Jer. 18:6



INTRODUCTION

We, the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis, while accepting with joy and gratitude the grace of our Vocation,¹ commit ourselves to live the Gospel in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. In the footsteps of St. Clare of Assisi, St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Maria Hueber, we are inspired to be an empowering and prophetic presence in the world (cf. Ins. General Chap. 2013, Const. Art. 3).

The mandate entrusted to the General Administration by the General Chapter of 2013, echoes the constant concern of the Church for the formation of persons who have chosen a vowed consecrated life. Several of its documents express the importance of integral formation and affirm that the renewal of our communities and prophetic mission in the world depend on a solid, holistic and continuous formation. The Church then calls on Institutes of Consecrated Life to draw up a ***Ratio Formationis*** as a guide, inspired by the charism, spirituality and mission of the Congregation (cf. Ins. General Chap. 2013, Const. Art. 21).

This formation program for the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis is meant to trace the fundamental elements of Religious Life in the formation process, to respect the individual and her cultural background,

¹ cf. Fonte Francescane, St. Clare Testament, nn. 2823

while paying attention to the ecclesial, cultural, political, social and apostolic demands of the times. It puts the person at the centre of the formation process and empowers her to be responsible in her response to the divine call, growing stage by stage in the charismatic identity of the Congregation, developing the awareness and sense of belonging to the Church through her being, consecration and mission. It responds to the norms of the Canon Law and ensures the application of the Church's directives, the Constitutions and the Directives of the Congregation as set up by the General Chapter held in 2013. It responds to the challenges encountered in Religious Formation. It safeguards the specific identity of our Congregation.²



² cf. *Vita Consecrata*, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II, Pauline Publications, Kenya 1996, nn. 65

FIRST PART

1. BASIC GUIDELINES

1.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR CONGREGATION

“May the Grace of the Holy Spirit be with us and work greater things to his greater glory.” (2nd Letter of Maria Hueber)

The Tertiary Sisters of Saint Francis belong to the Third Order **Regular** of St. Francis, an International Congregation of Pontifical Right founded in Brixen by Maria Hueber in the year 1701. Maria Hueber was a charismatic woman and a member of the Third Order **Secular** of St. Francis. Encouraged by her Spiritual Director Fr. Isidor Kirnigl, OFM, she recognized the will of God in the signs of her time and responded by beginning the first free school for girls in Brixen. Her constant search for the will of God is transmitted to her followers. It is manifested today in the particular attention the Congregation pays to the underprivileged, through our numerous apostolates. (cf. Const. Art. 2)

“As Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis, we mirror the spiritual gift of our Mother Beginner who strove with all her heart through contemplation to search for, and live the will of God in the signs and needs of her time. We follow the Gospel, with a special love for serving the needs of the poor. Realizing that the Holy Spirit is working great things through us, we renew our commitment to be an empowering presence wherever we are called to mission.” (Ins. of General Chap. 2013, pg. 1)

by:

- ❖ encouraging critical consciousness and promoting formation of the heart,
- ❖ creating stable environments for the people and giving them opportunities to develop, and
- ❖ remaining steadfast to God’s mission.

Our lives are shaped by the love of God for the people, and become tangible in the mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection.

Thus, with Saint Francis and Maria Hueber, we believe that our mission is among the people.

1.2 CONTEXT

We live in a time of globalization of cultures and complexity of relationships. The hazards of climate change and technological advancements pose serious challenges. Yet, one has to be aware that God is present in our reality and speaks the language of the present. Thus, our formation is to enable us to respond to the needs of our time and make use of our potentials for:

- ❖ solidarity in the family of humankind,
- ❖ fostering dialogue,
- ❖ a peaceful coexistence of generations, nations, religions and cultures,
- ❖ integrity of creation and equal distribution of goods,
- ❖ the responsible use of technology and knowledge.

In regards to this, Pope Francis reminds us to live the present with passion. This means becoming “experts of communion”, because the creativity of charity is boundless, and it can find countless new ways of bringing the newness of the Gospel to every culture and society.³ Hence, our mission today as Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis is to rebuild the Church in the spirit of St. Francis.

1.3 Meaning and importance of the Ratio Formationis

This *Ratio Formationis* refers to the General Formation Program of the Congregation.

³Apostolic Letter to all consecrated people on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life 11 § 3, 21 November 2014; cf. Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 25

It is:

- ❖ a pedagogic instrument for transmitting the spiritual patrimony of the Congregation as well as our sound traditions⁴ and values according to the inspirations of St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Maria Hueber, (Ref. Art. 3)
- ❖ meant to give guidelines to the Provinces and Region in their elaboration of the specific formation program,
- ❖ an instrument that unifies the Congregation while respecting the cultural diversity that enriches us,
- ❖ takes into account the ecclesial and apostolic demands of our time and responds to its challenges,
- ❖ a constant reminder for every member of the Congregation that formation is the key to authenticity and apostolic efficiency,
- ❖ invites us to be faithful in living the Gospel as the supreme Norm of Life, and
- ❖ in response to the norms of Canon Law, ensures the application of the church's directives as well as the Rule, Constitutions and Directives of the Congregation, as set up by the General Chapter.

Aims

To:

- ❖ develop a Formation Program that will enable each member of the Congregation to claim her identity ecclesially, culturally and globally in the 21st Century,
- ❖ enable us to live our vocation and mission in the church and society, and to strengthen us to live the vows in a constant spirit of conversion as we grow in full maturity of faith in Christ,
- ❖ ensure an adequate, solid and efficient formation for each member,
- ❖ safeguard the specific identity of the Congregation.

⁴ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II, Pauline Publications, Kenya, 1996, nn. 68

1.4 AGENTS OF FORMATION

(i) The Spirit of God

“It is God who calls one to a consecrated life within the church and who, all through the course of religious life, keeps the initiative: ‘He who has called you is faithful and He will do it.’”⁵ Hence the Holy Spirit is the Formator par excellence, taking the initiative to call and to give the necessary graces to respond. However, in this work, the Holy Spirit makes use of human instruments, placing more experienced sisters at the side of those whom He calls.

Cognizant of the primordial role of the Holy Spirit in formation, Maria Hueber often invoked the Spirit in these words: “May the grace of the Holy Spirit be with us and work great things in us to His greater glory.” (2nd Letter of Maria Hueber)

It is against this background that each member is encouraged to rely on the grace of the Holy Spirit in answering God’s call.

(ii) The Virgin Mary

“The work of the Spirit has always been associated with the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of all members of the people of God.”⁶ Between Mary and the Church there are many bonds. Francis entrusted his Order to the Patronage of Mary whom he addresses as “Virgin made Church, daughter and handmaid of the Most High Supreme King”⁷. She remains always a model of Consecrated Life and of the Church. Maria Hueber had a deep experience of Mary as her companion and mother on the journey. She wrote, “The Mother of Jesus had pressed my heart on the Heart of Jesus.” (1st Letter of Maria Hueber, 15th August 1701)

Each member is invited to “renew her Religious Consecration according to the model of the consecration of the very Mother of God”.⁸

⁵ Directive on formation in Religious Institutes, Pauline Publications Kenya, 1990, nn. 20; 1Thes 5.23-24

⁶ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, Pauline Publications Kenya, 1990, nn. 20

⁷ cf. Omnibus of Sources, Office of the Passion 1, pg. 142

⁸ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 20

(iii) The Church

In the Church, religious receive that which nourishes their baptismal life and consecration. In it, they receive the bread of life from the table of the Word of God and of the Body of Christ. We partake in its life and holiness, participating in the sacramental life of God's people. Our complete gift of self to God unites us to the Church and her mystery. St. Francis exhorts us to be obedient to Mother Church. Therefore, as a Congregation and individual members, we owe respect and obedience to the Church which nourishes and sustains us.⁹

(iv) Community

The community has a strong formative role. Without prejudice to the designated formator's role, all community members share responsibility in formation.¹⁰ The community is a place where each member grows in fidelity to the Lord according to the spirituality of the Institute, united, "by a common consecration and for a common mission within the Church."¹¹ Interaction with others helps us to accept and to appreciate various characters, personalities and cultures. Thus, community is an indispensable milieu and a pre-eminent means of formation.¹²

(v) Formee

It is the individual who assumes the first responsibility for saying, "Yes" to the call. This indicates the extent to which her formation must be personalized.

(vi) The Formator

The formator is not only a guide but also a mentor to the candidate. The task of formation for the formator is her most important apostolate. Thus, she is to devote enough time to pray for the candidates, in order to learn from Jesus, what to teach them.

⁹ Rule of TOR Art. 32

¹⁰ Starting Afresh from Christ, nn.16-17, 28-30

¹¹ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 25-27

¹² Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 25

The Formator's role during this delicate journey is to:

- ❖ endeavour to know the backgrounds from where the candidates come,
- ❖ discern the authenticity of the call to the Religious Life,
- ❖ encourage and sustain the candidates in the process of self-formation,
- ❖ help them to integrate the various dimensions of formation,
- ❖ facilitate, accompany and encourage them to claim responsibility for their choices,
- ❖ dedicate time to listen, journey and accompany candidates in the light of the Holy Spirit in the discernment of God's will for them,
- ❖ help the candidates to personalize, interiorize, and integrate values that will lead them to transformation and the acquisition of inner freedom,
- ❖ help them to be in touch with themselves and their reality,
- ❖ introduce them to spiritual practices and devotions that will help them to develop their personal spirituality without imposing her own personal devotions on them.¹³

In addition to the sound knowledge of the catholic faith and morals, those who are responsible for formation need to have:

- ❖ the human qualities of insight and responsiveness,
- ❖ a certain experiential knowledge of God and prayer,
- ❖ wisdom resulting from attentive and prolonged listening to the Word of God,
- ❖ love of the liturgy and understanding of its role in spiritual and ecclesial formation,
- ❖ necessary cultural competence,
- ❖ sufficient time and good will to attend to candidates individually,
- ❖ openness and readiness to accept differences,
- ❖ be free, open-minded, and can direct them to Jesus,
- ❖ make the effort to emulate the attitudes and dispositions of Jesus as seen in the Gospel,
- ❖ maintain confidentiality,
- ❖ know church documents,
- ❖ readiness for her own ongoing formation.

¹³ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 30

“Consequently, this office requires inner serenity, availability, patience, understanding, and true affection for those who have been confided to the pastoral responsibility of the formator.”¹⁴

(vii) Assistant Formator

It is advisable to have an assistant formator especially in the Postulancy and Novitiate.

“If there is a group of formators under the personal responsibility of the one who is in charge of formation they should act in harmony with the formator, keenly aware of their common responsibility.”¹⁵

(viii) The Superiors

In the process of formation and search for meaning and quality of Consecrated Life the fundamental task is that of superiors, to whom the service of authority has been entrusted. Their role requires a mutual trust which can animate and propose, to recall the **raison d'être** of Consecrated Life, and to help those entrusted to them, to live in a constantly renewed fidelity to the call of the Spirit. This is done through sincere listening, dialogue and collaboration.¹⁶

1.5 DIMENSIONS OF FORMATION

(i) Human dimension

The human dimension aims at an integral and harmonious growth and development of all the facets of the human person, in accord with what the person is and wishes to be. The path towards human maturity, which is a prerequisite of a radiant Evangelical Life, is a process that knows no limits, since it involves continuous enrichment not only of spiritual values, but also of psychological, cultural and social order.¹⁷

¹⁴ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 31

¹⁵ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 32

¹⁶ Starting Afresh from Christ, nn. 14

¹⁷ Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor, nn. 35 (Fraternal Life in Community 1994)

Vatican II teaches that a prudent system of formation must aim at developing a proper degree of human maturity because human maturity is the foundation on which the vocational grace grows and produces fruits. This demands

- stability of character,
- the ability to make carefully weighed decisions,
- self-control,
- sincerity,
- constant love of justice,
- fidelity to one's promise,
- modesty and charity in speech.¹⁸

These human foundations are to be verified in those entering Religious Life and affective adjustments are made during the entire period of formation, according to the evolution of the individuals and events.¹⁹ It is necessary to offer the possibility of reflecting on the role of sexuality in the divine plan of creation and salvation. They are to be helped, to see their role and to assume responsibility for their process of maturity. This is priority and condition of integral human formation for all members.

(ii) Spiritual Dimension

If human formation represents the depth of the mystery of the human being and the religious sister's resources of energy, then the spiritual dimension indicates the greatness to which she is called to become. It seeks the maturity of the inner person. The fundamental motivation for Religious Life is to follow Christ radically and the central goal of formation is configuration to Christ. The Paschal mystery is the heart of the formation program. Hence, spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the cross which, in deep communion, leads to the totality of the Paschal Mystery.

¹⁸ cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree on the Formation of Priests, *OptatamTotius*, 28 October 1965, nn.11

¹⁹ cf. Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 33

(iii) Cultural dimension

Culture helps us to reflect on our life's journey, on our encounter with God and with others, to discern values and the choices we make. Through culture, we learn to express ourselves, to discover our identity, to recognize the fact that we are people on a journey and to search for the real meaning of life beyond our human capacities. Culture is an essential element for human and spiritual formation and is necessary for one to reach the fullness of the gift of self, to God and to others. Prayer, community life and varied apostolic activity demand a specific consideration of the culture from where we come. In fact, every consecrated person has a cultural identity.

(iv) Pastoral Dimension

Apostolic and charitable activities are of the very nature of Religious entrusted to them by the Church, to be performed in its name. "Accordingly, the whole life of the members is to be imbued with an apostolic spirit; indeed, the whole apostolic action is to be informed by a religious spirit."²⁰

This responsibility is born from the example of Jesus the Missionary of the Father,²¹ who came into the world, that the world might be saved.²² In turn, Jesus invited his disciples to continue his mission. Every baptized person is incorporated into mission. Religious by nature of their consecration have a specific role in this mission.

(v) Franciscan Dimension

"St. Francis was forming his new sons with new learning, teaching them to walk with undeviating steps the way of holy poverty and blessed

²⁰ Can. 675 §1

²¹ Jn. 7:29

²² Jn. 3:17

simplicity.”²³ He formed his brothers not only by words, but more by the enlightening witness of his life.²⁴

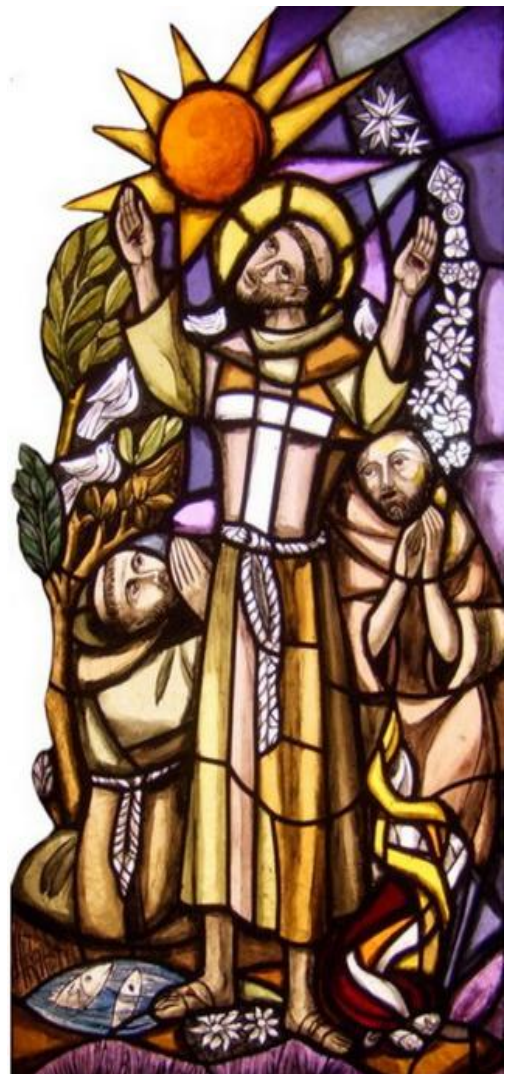
In the spirit of St. Francis, the sisters carry out their acts with love and mercy, which are expressed in their maternal tenderness. They are invited by St. Francis to be charitable.²⁵

A significant characteristic of Franciscan formation is to live in joy, fruit of interior peace and exterior serenity. “The saint, therefore, made it a point to keep himself in joy of heart and to preserve the unction of the spirit and the oil of gladness.”²⁶

(vi) Congregational Dimension

“As Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis we mirror the spiritual gift of our Mother Beginner who strove with all her heart through contemplation to search for and live the will of God in the signs and needs of her time. We follow the Gospel, with a special love for serving the needs of the poor.²⁷ Realizing that the Holy Spirit is working great things through us, we renew our commitment to be an empowering presence wherever we are called to mission.” (Ins. of General Chapter, pg. 1)

In the spirit of our Mother Beginner, the sisters are encouraged to be open to the signs of the times. (cf. Const. Art. 2)



²³ 1 Cel. 26 ff.

²⁴ 2 Cel 212

²⁵ 2 Cel. 180 ff.

²⁶ 2 Cel. 125;128

²⁷ Rule of TOR Chapter 1

SECOND PART

2. THE STAGES OF FORMATION

“The Name of the Lord be blessed for everything, for sweet and sour.”
(2nd Letter of Mother Maria Hueber)

Religious formation is a lifelong process. “The principal purpose of formation at its various stages, initial and ongoing, is to immerse the religious in the experience of God and to help them perfect it gradually in their lives.”²⁸

Each of these stages has its aims and specific objectives. However, in the formative process, the person achieves them progressively, considering the main dimensions of formation. Individual accompaniment is inevitable at every stage.

2.1 VOCATION PROMOTION

Vocation animation is one of the challenges of Consecrated Life today. The consecrated person is, by nature, also a vocation animator.

Hence, “Today vocation promotion is not something which can be delegated in an exclusive way to some specialists dedicated to the task, nor can it be separated from a true, specific youth ministry which first and foremost communicates Christ's love for youth. Every community and all the members of the Institute are called to take on the tasks of contact with youth, of an evangelical teaching of the following of Christ and of handing on the Charism.”²⁹

²⁸ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 35

²⁹ Starting Afresh from Christ, nn. 17

Objectives

The objectives are to set a solid pace for the holistic and integral formation of our candidates, that is, to:

- ❖ help candidates in their search for God,
- ❖ assist them in their discernment process,
- ❖ find out the suitability of the candidates for the Consecrated Life,
- ❖ inculcate Christian values in them,
- ❖ ensure their ability for community life.

The Vocation Animation Plan

In accordance with *'Starting Afresh from Christ'*, "The first task of any vocational pastoral program is always prayer"³⁰ and "the master plan of vocational promotion to Consecrated Life is that which the Lord himself began when he said to the apostles John and Andrew, 'Come and see.'"³¹ It is recommended that a sister does the work of Vocation Animation.

Task of Vocation Animators

Vocation animators are expected to:

- ❖ coordinate the activities of the vocation ministry,
- ❖ animate the local communities towards the vocation ministry,
- ❖ maintain communication with the candidates and the major superiors and collaborate with diocesan vocation directors from other Congregations, especially those of the Franciscan Order,
- ❖ update the provincial/regional program of vocation ministry,
- ❖ ascertain the seriousness of the candidates and assist them in the discernment process,
- ❖ accompany those who wish to join our way of life,
- ❖ recommend suitable candidates for admission into the postulancy,
- ❖ prepare vocation promotion materials and invite sisters to share their vocation stories, as an encouragement for the candidates,

³⁰ Starting Afresh from Christ, nn.16

³¹ Jn. 1:39

- ❖ help the candidates to know the implications, challenges and consequences of following Christ in the Religious Life and of living in community.

2.2 THE POSTULANCY

It is the period of formation when candidates prepare themselves for entry into the Novitiate. It is the time to gradually lead them in the transition from secular life to life in the institute and to evaluate their personal ability to live this option of life, to make firm their decision, to start the Novitiate. At this stage, discernment is done to ensure their progressive maturity and capability to live Religious Life although they do not need to assume all at once all those qualities that lead to maturity.

It is also a time for gradual, psychological and spiritual adjustments that prepare the candidates to decide consciously and freely about their choice of vocation.

Care is to be taken not to hasten the time for this admission, nor to prolong it unduly.³²

The Aim

“To deepen Christian values and obtain clarity of vocation” (Const. Art. 22).

Objectives

To help the candidates:

- ❖ inculcate a strong sense of personal responsibility for their formation,
- ❖ internalize the values of an authentic interior life,
- ❖ adapt to the new culture and promote internationality,
- ❖ attain a balanced affectivity to embrace the new form of life,
- ❖ deepen their understanding of the Christian faith, values and grow in their love for Jesus,
- ❖ learn to listen attentively to the Word of God,
- ❖ experience concretely the Franciscan way of living community life.

³² Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 43

These objectives are to be carried out in accordance with the Norms of our Constitutions.³³

(cf. Const. Arts. 21, 22)

Admission Requirements

For admission into the Congregation, a candidate must present:

- ❖ A hand-written application,
- ❖ Birth Certificate,
- ❖ Baptism card,
- ❖ Passport or National Identity card (ID)
- ❖ Other certificates,
 - ❖ a recent medical examination certificate from hospitals approved by the Provinces or Region,
 - ❖ a recommendation letter, (cf. Norms of the Directory to Art. 22)
 - ❖ an official admission letter from the respective Provincial or Regional Superior, (cf. Norms of the Directory to Art. 22)
 - ❖ proof of the unmarried state and good conduct,
 - ❖ a psychological test, (cf. Const. Art.22)
 - ❖ “The postulant declares in writing that she freely enters the Congregation, and is ready to render all services free of charge.” (Const. Art. 23)

Program

Formation during the Postulancy must provide a human, cultural, spiritual and pastoral preparation which pays special attention to the harmonious integration of all its various aspects.³⁴ The candidates are encouraged to develop their personal talents.

At the end of this period, each candidate after personal evaluation, applies to be admitted in the novitiate to continue discerning her call.

³³ Const. pg. 43

³⁴ Vita consecrata, nn. 65

The Formation in the Postulancy is to include:

- ❖ human development, sports and hobbies,
- ❖ personal discernment of vocation,
- ❖ introduction to Community Life, and appreciation of the assets of the community,³⁵
- ❖ Christian, Franciscan and inter-cultural living,
- ❖ languages of the Congregation,
- ❖ responsible use of the means of communication.

This formation also includes introduction to:

- ❖ Sacred Scripture and Liturgy,
- ❖ Life and spirituality of St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Maria Hueber,
- ❖ Prayer – types and importance, with special attention to Franciscan prayers,
- ❖ Christian Doctrine,
- ❖ History, Charism and Mission of the Congregation,
- ❖ Justice and Peace and Integrity for Creation.

2.3 THE NOVITIATE

The Novitiate is the formative period during which the candidate is inserted in our Congregation and is led to experience and to assimilate gradually its spirit. During this initiation period she seeks to clarify her intentions and, accompanied by her formator, she verifies her own capacity to make religious profession in our Congregation.

It is a time of integral initiation to the form of life chosen by Christ and proposed by the charism of the Institute.³⁶

Aim

The central and peculiar element of the novitiate is to deepen a personal relationship with Christ, contemplated in the light of the Franciscan Spirituality.

³⁵ Guidelines for the Administration of the Assets in Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, pg. 21

³⁶ Lumen Gentium, nn. 44 - 45

Objectives

To help the Novices

- ❖ cultivate human and christian values and deepen an intimate relationship with God,
- ❖ deepen the knowledge of Christ through the study of Sacred Scriptures and personal encounter in prayer,
- ❖ deepen and grow in the spirit, history, charism, mission and life of the congregation,
- ❖ continue deepening community life, interiorize and develop a sense of belonging. (cf. Const. Art. 24)

Admission Requirements

- ❖ human and christian maturity,
- ❖ a hand-written application from the postulant who has completed the period of Postulancy, (cf. Const. Art. 23)
- ❖ be above 17 years old³⁷,
- ❖ can live and work with others in community and also has the ability to appreciate solitude.

Place of formation

The following are necessary for the place of formation:

- ❖ An environment free from disturbances,
- ❖ a house approved by the General Administration,
- ❖ a house which is duly designated for this purpose³⁸,
- ❖ separate with its own identity and character.
- ❖ A candidate can make the novitiate in another house of the Institute, approved by the major superior.³⁹
- ❖ The novitiate can also be done in another Province or Region for valid reasons.

³⁷ Can. 643

³⁸ Can. 647

³⁹ Can. 647

Validity of the Novitiate (cf. Const. Art. 25)

- ❖ For validity the novitiate is to comprise two years, one of which is the canonical year and must be spent in the Novitiate Community.
- ❖ Novices are to be formed under the supervision of a formator.⁴⁰
- ❖ The formator of novices is to be a member of the Institute who has been finally professed. If need be, the formator is given an assistant who is well prepared.⁴¹
- ❖ Novices are not to be engaged in studies or duties which do not directly serve this formation.⁴²

Prolongation of the Novitiate (cf. Const. Art. 25)

On the completion of the novitiate, a novice if judged suitable, is to be admitted for Temporary Profession; otherwise, she is advised to leave.

If there is any doubt, the time of probation is given by the Major Superior for not more than six months.

Leaving the Congregation during the Novitiate⁴³ (cf. Can. 653)

- ❖ A novice may freely leave the Congregation at any time during formation, informing the Major Superior of her decision in writing.
- ❖ She may be dismissed by the Major Superior with the consent of her council and prior consultation with the formator.
- ❖ Dialogue with the novice before dismissal is necessary.
- ❖ The Province/Region will help her in the transition to her new environment.

⁴⁰ Can. 650

⁴¹ Can. 651

⁴² Can. 652 § 5

⁴³ Cf. Can. 653

Program of the Novitiate

“The Novitiate program of formation is defined by the institute’s law.”⁴⁴
(cf. Const. Art. 26)

The Formation in the novitiate is to include:

- ❖ Human Formation (self-knowledge, journaling, sexuality, emotional maturity, personal time to reflect and mature, one to one meetings, recreational activities, sports and hobbies),
- ❖ History of Religious Life (the history and theology of religious life, and the mission of the local church),
- ❖ Church History including the history of the local church,
- ❖ Community Life (the theology and spirituality of community life, interpersonal relationships, communication skills and community values),
- ❖ Spirituality (Franciscan Spirituality and the Spirituality of Maria Hueber),
- ❖ Apostolic formation (The mission of the Christ and the mission of the church),
- ❖ Introduction to the apostolates of the Congregation,
- ❖ Preparation for mission,
- ❖ Spiritual direction (Introduction to spiritual direction and its importance),
- ❖ Documents of the Church (Encyclicals especially those on Consecrated life, documents of Vatican II, Code of Canon Law),
- ❖ Ecumenism (World Religions, inter-religious dialogue and interculturality),
- ❖ Theology (Christology, Mariology, Moral theology, and Philosophy),
- ❖ Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation,
- ❖ Management of finances and Congregational Assets,
- ❖ Practical experience on home management,
- ❖ Responsible use of the Mass Media and Technology,

⁴⁴ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 47

- ❖ Congregational languages,
- ❖ Good spiritual literature.

“For formation to be complete it must include every aspect of Christian life.”⁴⁵ Therefore, there must be continuity. To guarantee continuity from the previous stage, the Novices state in writing, the outcomes of their novitiate period, highlighting the most important and helpful experiences, challenges, and their ability to integrate into the life of the Congregation.

2.4 JUNIORATE

“Formation is to be systematic, adapted to the capacity of the members, spiritual and apostolic, doctrinal and at the same time practical. The Church prescribes that in individual institutes after first profession the formation of all members is to be continued so that they may live more fully the proper life of the institute and carry it out more suitably.”⁴⁶

“The sister in the Juniorate receives regular ongoing formation to foster her spiritual growth, her life in community and to enable her to act responsibly in her undertakings.” (Const. Art. 29)

The Formation program must give room for personal accompaniment and shall assist the temporary professed to integrate previously acquired knowledge into the religious community.

This stage aims at retaining the spiritual enthusiasm given by the preceding stages and continues with human and spiritual growth in the apostolate one is entrusted with. It is a favorable time to experience the reality of the Charism of the institute, by actively participating in its life and mission.

⁴⁵ Vita Consecrata 65

⁴⁶ Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, nn. 58

Aim

The purpose is to transform the spiritual enthusiasm of the initial stages of formation into love, to continue with human and spiritual growth in the apostolate, and to act responsibly.

Objectives

To assist the Temporary Professed Sister:

- ❖ continue deepening and consolidating her relationship with God in on-going spiritual and human growth,
- ❖ foster participation in Christ's Paschal Mystery,
- ❖ ensure fidelity to the evangelical counsels,
- ❖ grow deeper in self awareness and holistic living,
- ❖ foster the living of religious life in community, with commitment, responsibility and freedom,
- ❖ be inserted into the way of life, spirituality and charism of the Congregation,
- ❖ acquire professional training for the apostolates of the Congregation.

Program

The formation of the Juniorate is to include:

- ❖ Biblical/dogmatic theology,
- ❖ Spiritual/pastoral theology,
- ❖ Human development, including recreational activities, sports and hobbies,
- ❖ Spirit of responsibility and stewardship,
- ❖ Accountability and solidarity,
- ❖ Spiritual direction,
- ❖ Community life,
- ❖ Inter-culturality,
- ❖ Midlife transitions
- ❖ Apostolic formation,
- ❖ Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation,

- ❖ Communication and Information Technology,
- ❖ Inter-congregational courses and workshops,
- ❖ Academic Studies.

Perpetual Vows

“Temporary vows are made for a period of one year over the span of five years. The time may be extended up to nine years.” (Const. Art. 30)

After five years, the temporary professed sister, motivated by a solid knowledge of herself and at the same time founded on the grace of God, may ask for Perpetual Profession as a definitive option.

The Temporary Professed Sister and the formators must be clear as to the requirements for final vows.⁴⁷ (cf. Const. Art. 31). The temporary professed sister must be able to:

- ❖ live according to the Evangelical Counsels,
- ❖ integrate herself into the priorities of the Congregation,
- ❖ live and work with others in community,
- ❖ have a human and affective maturity,
- ❖ face challenges during life’s storms.

At the end of this stage of formation, the Sister states in writing her readiness and desire to live as a full member of the Congregation. A sister who is not accepted must have the possibility to express herself and given the reasons for her not having been accepted.

2.5 ONGOING FORMATION

Ongoing formation as a dimension of life and a continuing process is a necessary requirement of religious consecration.⁴⁸ It is understood as the constant personalization or interiorization of Christ’s life.

⁴⁷ Can. 655, 657

⁴⁸ cf. Vita Consecrata, nn. 69

Religious consecration calls for a continual deepening of formation by responding to ever new situations, thus rendering the religious capable of dynamic fidelity to God's design in the ever-changing circumstances and needs of the Church and the world.



As Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis we allow ourselves in a “unique way to be molded by the Liturgical Year, in which the mysteries of the life of the Son of God are relived, to start afresh from Christ and from his death and resurrection everyday of our lives”.⁴⁹

Aim

The aim of Ongoing Formation is to keep alive a continual awareness among the sisters, of the need for ongoing formation which is a progressive taking up of the attitude of Christ.⁵⁰

(cf. Const. Art. 35)

Objectives

To:

- ❖ deepen her faith and cultivate a deeper spirituality,
- ❖ update the doctrinal and professional capacities,
- ❖ deepen the biblical and theological perspectives and social teachings of the Church,
- ❖ assume responsibility for helping to save the environment and to collaborate with the commissions of Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation,

⁴⁹ cf. Starting Afresh from Christ, nn. 15

⁵⁰ Vita Consecrata, nn. 69

- ❖ re-read the Charism, deepen her knowledge of the founders, our congregational history, spirit and mission.

Program

The program of ongoing formation includes:

- ❖ Human Development (ageing gracefully, accepting sickness, transitions, retirement, sports and hobbies),
- ❖ Religious life (vows, renewal courses, seminars/workshops, Franciscan spirituality, Sacred Scriptures, sacraments, prayer, mission, ecumenism, documents of Vatican II, Canon Law),
- ❖ Inter-connectedness (culture/cross culturality, communication and information technology, Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation).

The essence of ongoing formation is to assist the sister to be conscious of the fact that the vitality of the Congregation depends on the readiness of everyone to enter a process of development, which enables her to become who Christ has called her to be. (cf. Const. Art. 35)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

GENERAL POLICIES

- ❖ Each Province and Region prepares a formation program, drawn from the *Ratio Formationis*.
- ❖ If possible each Province and Region designates one or more suitable communities for receiving aspirants. In these communities, candidates are to be given an opportunity to experience and to gain closer knowledge of our life, by staying in the community for a longer period of time.
- ❖ Each Province and Region celebrates Jubilees with simplicity according to the directives of the various Provincial/Regional Chapters and the customs of its place.
- ❖ A ritual is prepared to mission a sister to another country.
- ❖ Sisters going on mission should have sufficient time to experience religious life after Novitiate and are to be prepared professionally.
- ❖ Having in mind the globalized world, opportunities will be given to formees to experience in another Province/Region.
- ❖ For posts demanding a lot of responsibility sisters must be experienced and well prepared.
- ❖ Each community is to have an annual plan for ongoing formation that includes the study of the Constitutions and Directives, as well as other topics pertaining to our way of life.
- ❖ Congregational programs for leaders and formators may be organized by the General Administration.

SPECIFIC POLICIES IN FORMATION

LEADERSHIP TEAMS

- ❖ The Superior General has ultimate responsibility for formation in the Congregation.

- ❖ The Provincial/Regional Leadership Team ensures that the appointed formation personnel are skilled and available. Where necessary it appoints an assistant.
- ❖ The Provincial/Regional leadership team, names a perpetually professed sister to be responsible in dialogue and collaboration with them for on-going formation and to coordinate this important ministry.
- ❖ Each Leadership Team encourages constant reflection on our way of life and mission.
- ❖ A member of the Provincial/Regional leadership team acts as a liaison person for formation.
- ❖ Decisions are taken based on dialogue and collaboration.

FORMATION TEAM

The formation team in each province/region consists of the formators and assistants of all stages. It assists formators of initial formation in planning, implementing and evaluating the formation program. They may be invited to be resource persons, assisting and offering suggestions in the process of discerning of candidates. The team works in collaboration with the respective Provincial/-Regional Leadership Team.

COMMUNITY

- ❖ Communities are challenged to search for creative ways of living our Charism in today's world and to deepen our contemplative spirit.
- ❖ Communities are places of care and hospitality for all. New members are welcomed with joy and gratitude.
- ❖ The direct responsibility for the temporary vow sister is entrusted to the community leader. She coordinates the community to give an evaluation. The community helps the sister to mature in her vocation.

SISTERS STUDYING ABROAD

Regarding international student sisters:

- ❖ The Superior is to dialogue with an individual sister about the possible areas of study and the purpose in view of her future ministry, taking into consideration the needs of the Congregation.
- ❖ It is necessary for the Superior to dialogue with the liaison person for formation, in order to acquire relevant information regarding the field of study.
- ❖ During the period of study, the sister will be a member of a local community of that area.
- ❖ The sister on the completion of her studies must return to her Province or Region of origin to render services there, unless other arrangements contrary to the above have been made by the competent authorities.



ABBREVIATIONS

Art	Article of the Constitutions
Chap	General Chapter
cf	Paraphrase
Con	Consecrata
Const	Constitutions OF THE Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis
Dir	Directory of the General Chapter
ff	Forward
Ins	Instructions of the General Chapter
Jn	St. John's Gospel
nn	Numbers
OFM	Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi
pg	Page
ref	Reference
St	Saint
TOR	Third Order Regular of St. Francis
1THES	First Letter of St. Paul to Thessalonica
1CEL	First life of St. Francis of Assisi by Thomas of Celano
2CEL	Second Life of St. Francis of Assisi by Thomas of Celano

Pictures:

- p. 3: Anam Cré Pottery Studio
- p. 9 and 17: San Damiano, Assisi
- p. 22: Elisabethinum Axams

This General Formation Guide was realized by the Grace of God, the prayers and contributions of Tertiary Sisters of Saint Francis, and the collaboration, experience and sacrifice of the following:

Formators who served as Commission Members

Sr. Maria Luise Eberharter - Hall
Sr. Reinhilde Oberparleiter - Brixen
Sr. Mary Patrick Senge - Cameroon
Sr. Doris Kongla – Cameroon
Sr. Nicole Nchanji – Cameroon
Sr. Petronila Rodriguez – Bolivia

Translators

Marita Wilzcek - German
Sr. Maria Florkova - Spanish
Sr. Marceline Yenmuleh
Sr. Eva Maria Staller
Sr. Eva-Maria Kaufhold

Facilitators

Sr. Maddalena Bonello SHJ
Sr. Rebecca Sepeka HUS
Sr. Gloria Wirba

Consultant

Sr. Marlene Weisenbeck FSPA

General Administration -Rome

Sr. Maria Theresia Oberwalder
Sr. Alphonsa Kiven
Sr. M. Paula Unterkalmsteiner
Sr. Maria Michaela Mayr
Sr. Ignatia Asoh

Coordinator

Sr. Ignatia Asoh

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