

MANUAL for NAPCC NOVITIATE

*Approved by the NAPCC
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Feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch*



NAPCC Novitiate Manual

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
First Section: Policies	5
I. Philosophy and Goals	6
II. Relationship to the NAPCC	8
III. Novitiate Personnel.....	10
IV. Participation in the Novitiate.....	12
V. Structural and Programmatic Elements.....	14
1. Direction of the Novices	14
2. Constitutive Elements	15
3. Evaluation of the Novices.....	17
4. Keeping of Records.....	18
5. Departure from Novitiate.....	18
VI. Evaluation of the Program	20
Second Section: Practices	21
I. Beginning of the Novitiate	22
II. The Prayer Life of the Novitiate	23
III. Fraternal Life of the Novitiate	27
IV. Intellectual Formation of the Novices	30
V. Affective Formation of the Novices.....	31
VI. Ministerial Formation of the Novices.....	34
VII. Evaluation of the Novices and Votation.....	35
VIII. The End of Novitiate.....	37
Third Section: Guidelines	39
I. What to bring to Novitiate	40
II. Visitors to the Novitiate	41
III. Questions for Formation Advising Sessions.....	43
IV. Guidelines for Evaluation Tools.....	45
V. Novitiate Curriculum	49
VI. Typical Weekly Schedule.....	51
Appendices.....	53
I. Useful Information about the Novitiate.....	55
II. Calendar Dates for Investiture and End of Novitiate	56
III. Forms	58
IV. Additional Suggestions for Curriculum.....	58
V. Bibliography.....	59

Introduction

This document concerns the Novitiate Program of the North American Pacific Capuchin Conference (NAPCC). The purpose of this manual is to establish the vision of this interprovincial collaboration and provide for continuity in the novitiate program.

The first section contains the policies established by the conference for the novitiate, as well as the philosophical basis upon which the various elements of the program are established.

The second section contains practices and program elements concerned with the daily running of the novitiate.

The third section contains guidelines helpful in the ongoing formation and evaluation of the novices.

Other useful information is appended.

Note: Because of the composition of the North American Pacific Capuchin Conference, any mention below of the *Provincial Ministers* is meant to include also *Vice-Provincial Ministers* where this is applicable.

Citations and Abbreviations

CIC=Code of Canon Law: all quotations are from the text of Canon Law on the Vatican Website:
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM

Individual canons are denoted by the abbreviation c. or cc.

All quotations of other documents of the church are also taken from the Vatican website.

Constitutions=*The Constitutions of the Capuchin Friars Minor*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M., Cap., published by the NAPCC.¹

The Constitutions are cited by number, and subparagraph where necessary: e.g. Number 34, subparagraph 3=34.3

Plenary Councils of the Order

I PCO=Our Life in Fraternity and Poverty (Quito, 1971)

II PCO=Our Life and Practice of Prayer (Taizé, 1973)

III PCO=Missionary Life and Activity (Mattli, 1978)

IV PCO=Formation Guidelines (Rome, 1981)

V PCO=Our Prophetic Presence in the World (Garibaldi, 1986)

VI PCO=Living Poverty in Brotherhood (Assisi, 1998)

VII PCO=Our Fraternal Life in Minority (Assisi, 2004)

Texts for the first five councils are found in *The Path of Renewal*, Regis Armstrong, ed. published by the NAPCC. Texts for all the councils are also found on the Order's website.

¹ When the *Constitutions* as revised by the General Chapter of 2012 receive official status, changes will be made to the manual as necessary.

FIRST SECTION: POLICIES



NAPCC Novitiate Manual

I. Philosophy and Goal of the NAPCC Novitiate

“The novitiate is the period of a more intense initiation and more profound experience of the Capuchin Franciscan life of the Gospel according to its basic demands and presupposes a free and mature choice of religious life.” (Constitutions 29.1)

“The novitiate, through which life in an institute is begun, is arranged so that the novices better understand their divine vocation, and indeed one which is proper to the institute, experience the manner of living of the institute, and form their mind and heart in its spirit, and so that their intention and suitability are tested..”(CIC, c. 646)

1. Overall philosophy

The novitiate year provides the structure to allow the novice to enter into an interior prayer life that is analogous to the “cave experience” of Francis of Assisi.² Francis struggled with his own sinfulness, fears and weakness, as he sought God’s mercy in his life.

This dynamic of intense interior prayer, conversion and discernment is what the structures of the novitiate year seek to create. The novice enters into the interior life more deeply and reflects on his experiences in life, in order to come to an honest knowledge of himself and to discern responsibly whether God is leading him to profession of vows as a Capuchin Franciscan. This requires maturity on the part of the novice, who is the “principal author of his own formation.”³ It also presumes that a vocation to the religious life is inspired by faith, and thus presupposes the gift of faith in the heart of the novice.

Prayer, as an act of faith, disposes the novice to the activity of the Holy Spirit, who informs and guides the formation process, and leads him to conformity with Christ.⁴ It is in his heart that the novice encounters Christ in a personal and intimate way as did Francis in his prayerful experience of the cave. Fervent prayer, therefore, is essential and foundational to discernment and to the formation of the novice in the Capuchin Franciscan identity. The structure, elements, and rhythm of the novitiate program help to facilitate that process.⁵

2. Goal

The goal of the novitiate is to help the novice and the Order discern whether his vocation is to live the consecrated life as a Capuchin Franciscan in an integrated fashion.

- a. *To live the consecrated life:* The novices are to learn the hallmarks, history, and lived nature of consecrated life in the Church.

² See “The Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Regis Armstrong et al. eds. (New City Press: New York, 1999), v. I, 186 ff. This source is hereafter referred to as *FA:ED*.

³ See *Constitutions* 23, 29, 40; IV PCO:1.

⁴ See *Constitutions* 2, 23. *Vita Consecrata* 65: “Since the very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus in his *total self-giving*, this must also be the principal objective of formation.”

⁵ *Constitutions* 29.

- b. *As a Capuchin Franciscan:* The formative process in the novitiate involves socialization in and internalization of the Capuchin charism, “the primary elements of which are faith, contemplative prayer, fraternal life, relationship with the poor, and work.”⁶ It includes prayerful reflection on the life and spirit of Francis and the early Capuchin founders and saints, as well as study of the *Rule* and *Testament* of St. Francis and the Capuchin *Constitutions*, the history of the Franciscan Movement and the Capuchin reform.⁷
The novitiate will also help the novice integrate his call as a Capuchin Franciscan from a particular province.
- c. *In an integrated fashion:* The novitiate formation program seeks to speak to all of the aspects of the person, including the psychological and spiritual,⁸ and to assist the novice in understanding his needs and gifts in relation to his person, his province, and his vocation.

⁶ *Constitutions* 29.4.

⁷ *Constitutions* 25.5: “The brothers in formation should acquire a thorough knowledge of the Capuchin Franciscan spirit and its practice not only by studying the life of Saint Francis, his mind concerning the observance of the Rule, the history and sound traditions of our Order, but, most of all, by assimilating internally and practically the life to which they are called.”

IV PCO 64: “The aim of the novitiate is to put the novice in a position, through direct experience, to deepen and interiorize the values and spirit of our life and be integrated into the fraternity.”

⁸ *Constitutions* 25.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

II. Relationship of the Novitiate to the NAPCC

1. Canonical status of the NAPCC Novitiate

Although it serves as the novitiate for the entire conference, because NAPCC itself is not a canonical jurisdiction, to be canonically licit and valid the NAPCC Novitiate has to be under a canonically established jurisdiction.⁹

The novitiate therefore is under the canonical jurisdiction of the province in which it is physically located. However, supervision and support of the novitiate is the responsibility of the NAPCC as a whole through the structures listed below.

2. Supervisory Board: NAPCC Oversight Committee for Initial Formation

The Oversight Committee for Initial Formation (hereafter designated OCIF), appointed by the NAPCC, acts as a liaison between the conference and the novitiate team. The committee conducts an annual evaluation of the novitiate program

The OCIF is made up of the Novice Director (*ex officio*), three provincial ministers and three provincial directors of initial formation, changed on a rotating basis according to the following schedule:

Year	Provincial Ministers	Provincial Directors
2013-2014	New Jersey, NY/New England*, Denver	Guam, California**, Pittsburgh
2014-2015	Central Canada, New Jersey*, NY/New England	Denver, Guam**, California
2015-2016	Detroit, Central Canada*, New Jersey	NY/New England, Denver**, Guam
2016-2017	Australia, Detroit*, Central Canada	New Jersey, NY/New England**, Denver
2017-2018	Pittsburgh, Australia*, Detroit	Central Canada, New Jersey**, NY/New England
2018-2019	California, Pittsburgh*, Australia	Detroit, Central Canada**, New Jersey
2019-2020	Guam, California*, Pittsburgh	Australia, Detroit**, Central Canada
2020-2021	Denver, Guam*, California	Pittsburgh, Australia**, Detroit
	*=convener	**=secretary

Terms begin at the time of the NAPCC Spring meeting.

⁹ See CIC, c. 647 and *Constitutions* 25.9.

3. NAPCC Formation Directors

The Provincial Directors of Initial Formation (PDIFs) are the official liaisons with the novices of their respective provinces, as well as their formation councils. They should visit the novitiate as well as maintain contact with their novices during the year. If they have any concerns, they should bring these to the novitiate team.

4. Finances of the Novitiate

Temporalities of the NAPCC Novitiate are managed through the civil corporation of the NAPCC, a New York Federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity known as the *Capuchin Friars of North America*. The NAPCC itself determines how the sponsoring provinces divide the expenses of the common novitiate.

- a. The NAPCC appoints a *Finance Committee* for the novitiate, consisting of financial officers from various provinces (the number determined by the Conference itself). The Conference Treasurer chairs the Finance Committee for the novitiate and oversees its regular financial matters.
- b. Each year the Finance Committee prepares a budget for the subsequent novitiate year. Normally the committee consults with the novitiate team and the treasurer of the novitiate regarding this budget. The Conference treasurer presents the budget to the members of the NAPCC at their regular spring meeting. The Conference reviews and approves the budget with any necessary modifications.
- c. In the case of extraordinary expenses arising during the novitiate year, the novitiate team contacts the Conference president with a request for funds. The president after consultation may give approval for those expenses deemed necessary.
- d. Normally a friar acts as *treasurer* for the novitiate and is part of the novitiate staff. Qualified local lay people may be asked to offer advice and help to the treasurer and novitiate team in regard to economic matters.

III. Novitiate Personnel

Friars from the provinces which comprise the NAPCC are assigned by the Conference to the novitiate fraternity. Their lived example of the Capuchin way of life is integral to creating an environment in which to form the novices in the Capuchin Franciscan charism.

1. Formation Personnel

Formation personnel are those directly responsible for the supervision, instruction and evaluation of the novices. Formators for the novitiate shall normally be friars from the member jurisdictions of the NAPCC.

a. Appointment

The appointment of the friars as formators in the novitiate is the responsibility of the NAPCC as a whole, with the consent of each friar's respective provincial minister, and shall normally take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the conference.

b. Terms

The friar chosen as Director of Novices (see below) is normally appointed for a term of six years. Other members of the formation team are appointed for a term of three years. These terms may be renewed. Ideally, replacement of formators should be staggered so that it does not happen that the entire team is replaced at the same time.

c. The Director of Novices and the Novitiate Team

In accordance with the Code of Canon Law, one friar is designated as the canonical Director of Novices, who may have assistants.¹⁰

However, the Director of Novices and others appointed as formators are understood to work as a "team-directorship," so that the responsibility and task of directing the NAPCC novitiate program is a shared, mutual directorship. The Director of Novices and other friars appointed to their formation make up the "Novitiate Team."

d. Financial Support for Novitiate Personnel

Friars who are assigned to the novitiate as formators or other support staff shall receive a stipend for health care and retirement in the amount determined by the NAPCC.

¹⁰CIC, c 650, §2. "Governance of the novices is reserved to one director under the authority of the major superiors." C. 651, §2. "If necessary, the director can be given assistants who are subject to the director in regard to the supervision of the novices and the program of formation."

e. Removal

Removal of a friar as a formator is the responsibility of the entire NAPCC, working with the friar's provincial minister. However, in urgent cases the president of the conference may remove a formator in consultation with the other provincials, if possible.

2. Other Novitiate Personnel

a. Treasurer

The Conference appoints a friar to serve as treasurer of the novitiate. The treasurer takes care of the fraternity's finances and also financial interactions with the treasurer of the Conference.

b. Other Novitiate Staff

Friars may be appointed to the novitiate for fraternal service.

c. Other friars in the Novitiate Community

The lived example of the vowed Capuchin Franciscan life, exemplified in the professed brothers in the novitiate fraternity, contributes significantly to the discernment process of the novices. Because of this, the NAPCC may assign friars other than formators or other novitiate staff members to form part of the novitiate community.

Only those friars committed to preserving an overall quiet, prayerful, and formative environment of the novitiate and participating in the novitiate horarium should be assigned there. These professed friars may be invited to teach classes or make presentations to the novices according to each one's talents and gifts. These friars may also participate in ministry both within and outside the friary.

All the perpetually professed friars at the novitiate participate in the evaluation of the novices as well as the final votation.¹¹

¹¹ *Constitutions* 34.1-2.

IV. Participation in the Novitiate Program

1. Participation in the Novitiate

The NAPCC novitiate is intended for the novices of the member jurisdictions.

Novices from provinces other than those which comprise the NAPCC may participate in the NAPCC novitiate with the consent of the conference. Contact should be made by the province with the president of the NAPCC, who seeks the consent of the members and consults the novitiate team.

2. Preparation for the Novitiate

The responsibility for the formation of the candidates prior to novitiate lies with each province and its postulancy program. Acceptance of candidates for the novitiate lies within the jurisdiction of the provincial of the province they are joining.

Those who will be novices in the NAPCC novitiate participate in the *Interprovincial Postulancy Program (IPP)*, sponsored and staffed by the NAPCC, unless other arrangements have been made. Members of the novitiate team make contact with the incoming novices during the IPP, and preferably visit them on site to inform them about the upcoming year.

3. Legal status of candidates for novitiate

It is up to the sponsoring provinces to ensure that candidates for the novitiate have the necessary legal status in the United States. This includes obtaining visas for novices from jurisdictions outside the U.S.

4. Timing and duration of the novitiate

The NAPCC novitiate normally begins with the investiture of the novices at the novitiate on the third or fourth Sunday of July. It will run until the second Sunday of July of the following year so as to last 51 weeks.¹²

5. Absences from the novitiate:

To protect the integral nature of the novitiate year and since the end of novitiate is anticipated by seven days, absences should be rare.¹³

The decision to allow a novice's absence from the novitiate belongs to the provincial minister of the novice's home jurisdiction.

¹² CIC, c. 649 §2: "With the permission of the competent major superior, first profession can be anticipated, but not by more than fifteen days." For a list of dates of the beginning and end of the novitiate year, see Appendix II.

¹³ CIC, c. 649 §1: "Without prejudice to the prescripts of c. 647, §3 and c. 648, §2, an absence from the novitiate house which lasts more than three months, either continuous or interrupted, renders the novitiate invalid. An absence which lasts more than fifteen days must be made up."

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

Normally acceptable reasons to be absent from the novitiate include a provincial chapter or assembly, or a funeral or marriage in the immediate family of the novice. In other unforeseen situations, the provincial minister can always make a decision about an absence after consulting with the Novice Director. Ministers are encouraged to disallow absences for other reasons.¹⁴

¹⁴ The policy on absences was approved by the NAPCC October 16, 2011.

V. Structural and Programmatic Elements of the Novitiate

1. Direction of the Novices

a. Novitiate Team

The formation of the novices is the responsibility of the novitiate team appointed by the NAPCC. Although each individual novice receives a formation advisor (see below), the novitiate team works together for the formation of all the novices. The Team meets regularly for this purpose.

b. Formation Advisors

Because of the importance of individual accompaniment of the novices, each novice is assigned a member of the novitiate team as his *Formation Advisor* (FA). The advisor and novice meet one-on-one in the context of faith which seeks to create a climate of mutual respect and trust, so that the novice may willingly share his own goals, values, and efforts with regard to his own formation process, and receive clear and honest feedback from his advisor in the process of discernment.

Each FA has the responsibility to support, encourage, and also challenge each novice assigned to him with respect to his preparation for vowed consecrated life. The novice and his advisor reflect on the areas listed on the Formation Advisor/Advisee Aid (Section Three)

The FA presents the novices assigned to him to the professed community at the time of evaluation and is responsible for writing the evaluations of the novices for whom he is advisor.

Since the formation advisors work as a team and cooperate in the novices' formative process, the relationship between formation advisor and novice is in the external forum. The novices are informed that the formation advisors consult with one another concerning their personal development and spiritual formation.

Though each novice has one advisor assigned to him, he is free to meet with any of member of the formation team at any time for consultation.

c. Spiritual Directors

An important help to the novice in his discernment is spiritual direction. The formation team compiles a list of possible directors near the novitiate. After consulting the novices, the team assigns each novice a spiritual director for the year.

The novices are encouraged to continue with the same director during the entire novitiate. If, however, the novice or the director finds that the relationship is not going well, a

change may be requested by either. The novitiate team considers the request and responds appropriately.

2. Constitutive Elements of the Novitiate Program

a. Formation in Prayer

The novitiate program seeks to assist the novice in developing a rhythm of prayer that is communal and personal.¹⁵ It does so by providing a structured environment which includes liturgical prayer and worship that is centered in the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as periods of time for personal prayer and study, so that the novice may enter “into an intimate conversation with the Father as he seeks to pray in the Spirit of Christ.”¹⁶ The novices are guided in the integration of the ecclesial and personal dimensions of prayer. They are also instructed in understanding and integrating contemplative prayer into their lives in accord within the Capuchin Franciscan charism.

The various structures of the novitiate program as well as the daily schedule aim at allowing the novices to establish a rhythm of prayer. The novices themselves are to be encouraged in maintaining an atmosphere that facilitates prayerful reflection and fosters personal discernment.

The novices participate in regularly scheduled days of recollection as well as two retreats during the year.

b. Formation in Fraternal Life

In his *Testament*, Francis declares that the Lord gave him brothers,¹⁷ and our Order acknowledges that “our Order is an order of brothers. The Gospel form of life it proposes to us is that of brotherhood.”¹⁸ A special emphasis is given to gospel brotherhood in the Capuchin novitiate program. It is a brotherhood that is to be modeled on the mutual charity and service of Jesus and his disciples, and to be an example in the Church and the world, of service to others, particularly to the poor.¹⁹ Peer formation is also an important component of the novice’s growth in evangelical brotherhood.

¹⁵ CIC, c 652 §2: “Novices are to be led to cultivate human and Christian virtues; through prayer and self-denial they are to be introduced to a fuller way of perfection; they are to be taught to contemplate the mystery of salvation and to read and meditate on the sacred scriptures; they are to be prepared to cultivate the worship of God in the sacred liturgy...”

¹⁶ *Constitutions* 45:4.

¹⁷ See *Testament* 14 in *FA:ED* I, 185.

¹⁸ IV PCO 14.

¹⁹ VII PCO 7.

c. Intellectual Formation

The novices are to receive regular classes, lectures, workshops, etc. which help their understanding of the Christian faith, spiritual life, religious life, etc. These classes are coordinated by the novitiate team, following the guidelines contained in the NAPCC approved formation curriculum.

Team members may give some of these classes themselves, while they may invite others, especially friars from the provinces of the NAPCC, to give courses and workshops.

d. Affective Formation

“Affectivity, meaning the capacity to express feelings, to establish interpersonal relationships and to love, contributes particularly to the integration of man’s various dimensions (social and working relationships, sexual role) and is basic to a person’s healthy development...Concretely, affective and sexual formation travels the gradual road to conversion from self-centered and possessive (infantile) love to an altruistic and self-sacrificing love capable of giving itself to others.”²⁰

Since one of the purposes of the novitiate program is to evaluate each novice’s personal and psychological readiness to embrace the demands of Capuchin Life, the program presumes the intention on the part of the novice to take personal responsibility in a mature discernment of a call to the consecrated life.²¹

The novitiate program helps the novices to grow in personal maturity and realize they represent not only themselves, but the church and the Order. They are guided in forming mature, healthy relationship and also learn to apply professional standards and maintain appropriate boundaries in various relationships, whether with one another or others, particularly in ministry.

e. Ministerial Formation

“Just as St. Francis grew in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus through his encounter with the leper, so should initial formation provide experiences of real contact with the ‘lepers’ of our age: the sick, the poor and every type of marginalized person, according to the places in which we are present”²²

Though the emphasis of the novitiate year is on discernment and development of a contemplative lifestyle, the novices continue to experience service to others as an essential component of our Capuchin Franciscan life.

²⁰ IV PCO, 52.

²¹ IV PCO 64.

²² VII PCO 29.

The novices dedicate one day a week to external ministry. The focus of this ministry, as far as possible, is on direct service to the poor and the proclamation of the gospel.²³

f. Particular Policies

i. Sexual Misconduct policies

The novitiate is subject to the same scrutiny as its sponsoring Capuchin Provinces with regard to sexual misconduct, and must make every effort to comply with policies and guidelines established by NAPCC and by the Diocese in which the novitiate is located.

ii. Use of the Media

The NAPCC wishes that the novices have some access to the internet as a means of communicating with others, since use of the internet has become widespread in modern society for communication, research, commerce, and entertainment. However, since the internet can also be a distraction to the spiritual life and its overuse or inappropriate use is contrary to the goals of the religious life and especially the novitiate year, the novices' access to the internet and other means of communication will be limited.

3. Evaluation of the Novices

a. Tools for Evaluation

- i. The novice's own self-reflection: this is shared with the novitiate team in the form of autobiography, written self-evaluations, and discussions with his FA.
- ii. Observations of the novice's behavior in fraternity by the novitiate team as well as other professed friars.
- iii. Peer evaluations also provide insights to help the novices and their formators in the task of discernment.

b. Formal Evaluation Process

There are *three* formal evaluations of each novice throughout the novitiate year:

- i. First Formal Evaluation: The first formal evaluation takes place in late October or early November.
- ii. Second Formal Evaluation: The second formal evaluation takes place in February.

²³ CIC, c. 648; *Constitutions* 29.

iii. Third Formal Evaluation and Votation: The third evaluation takes place in mid-May. At the time of the third evaluation there is also a votation by the perpetually professed friars whether each novice should be recommended for first profession of vows.²⁴

Each year the novitiate team prepares its calendar for the new novitiate year and informs the provincials of those jurisdictions with novices of the actual dates of the evaluations and votation, and when they can expect to receive the records of these.

4. Keeping of Records

A file is created for each novice at the novitiate, which contains all materials forwarded from the novice's postulancy and the IPP. To this file are added the record of the novice's reception, all evaluation materials, and any other necessary records. At the end of novitiate each year this file is sent to the appropriate post-novitiate formator.

5. Departure or Dismissal of a Novice²⁵

a. Voluntary departure

A novice who decides on his own to leave the program is directed to contact his provincial immediately. The novice's formation advisor or other team member also contacts the provincial.

b. Dismissal from the Novitiate

It is the competence of each provincial minister to dismiss a novice from his province.²⁶

Should it become apparent to the novitiate team that it would be in the best interest of the novitiate program for a novice to be dismissed from the program, the novice's provincial minister will be contacted by the team to discuss the matter.

In cases of extreme urgency (e.g., threat of physical violence), the novitiate team may ask someone to leave immediately.²⁷

²⁴ *Constitutions*, 34.2: "During the novitiate...the perpetually professed brothers who have lived for four months in the respective fraternity should...express their opinion by a consultative vote in the matter determined by the provincial minister."

²⁵ CIC c. 653 §1: "A novice can freely leave an institute; moreover, the competent authority of the institute can dismiss a novice."

²⁶ *Constitutions* 36.1.

²⁷ *Constitutions* 36.2: "The master of novices...possesses the same faculty [to dismiss a novice], but with the consent of the council of the fraternity, when there is a grave reason that will not permit of delay. The provincial minister is to be notified immediately of this action."

c. Process of Departure

Once it has been decided that a novice will leave the program, arrangements for departure are made and the provincial minister kept abreast of developments up to the time of the novice's actual departure.

The departure should happen in a timely manner. The novice's formation advisor accompanies him until his actual departure and helps ensure that the novice's needs are met.

The novice is to be provided adequate financial resources for travel by his province.

VI. Evaluation of the Program, Review and Update of the *Manual*

1. Annual Evaluation

A review of the novitiate program will be conducted by the OCIF (except the novice director) each year around the end of May. As part of this process, the novices will also be asked to complete an evaluation of the novitiate formation program. The committee will interview each novice as well as each member of the novitiate team and other members of the novitiate community.

The committee's recommendations are shared with the provincial ministers, PDIFs, and novitiate team.

2. Revision, Updating of Policies and Practices

NAPCC formation policies are established by the NAPCC itself and must be implemented by the staffs of the NAPCC Novitiate and the Interprovincial Postulancy Program. Only the NAPCC can add to, delete or change policies. **Formation practices for the NAPCC Novitiate and the Interprovincial Postulancy Program are established by the staffs of those respective programs** and can be added to, deleted or changed at will by those staffs.²⁸

The novice team reviews annually and revises the second and third sections of this manual as needed for the purpose of keeping it current. Each year, a copy of the manual is sent to the OCIF, as well as to all provincial ministers and provincial directors of formation.

If the novitiate team, PDIFs, or members of the NAPCC themselves feel that a change needs to be made the first section of this manual (i.e., to policies), they should contact the chair of the Novitiate Oversight Committee, who will discuss this with the Conference president to decide if and when it should be brought before the NAPCC (normally during one of their regular meetings.)

²⁸ This policy was approved by the NAPCC 10/16/11.

SECOND SECTION: PRACTICES



I. Beginning of the Novitiate:

“All of the professed brothers should view the novices as brothers, as gifts from God, and signs of hope prompting renewal.”²⁹

1. Arrival and Reception of the Novices

As soon as it is possible, each province submits a definitive list to the novitiate team of those accepted as potential novices.

The novitiate team sends each potential novice a letter of welcome as well as a list of what to bring and not to bring with them to novitiate. (See Appendix I, p. 54)

After participating in the IPP, the potential novices should normally arrive all together on the Friday before their investiture date.

The investiture of the novices takes place during evening prayer in the novitiate chapel. Normally each novice will receive the habit from his provincial or another friar from his province representing the provincial, or if this is not possible, a member of the novitiate team.

2. Orientation and Direction of the Novices

The first few weeks of novitiate focus on orienting the new novices to the program, life of the novitiate, etc.

The novitiate team interviews each novice individually. They then assign each novice a formation advisor. The formation advisor is to have one-on-one formation conferences with the novice every seven to ten days in the beginning of the novitiate year, and then every ten to fourteen days as the year progresses.

The novitiate team also assigns each novice a spiritual director. Once he is assigned a spiritual director, each novice arranges with his director an initial meeting. For the first three months of novitiate the novices are to meet with their director once every two weeks. After the third month, they may work out with the director himself the frequency of their sessions. The novices will keep a record of the number of sessions they have with their directors and indicate this number in each evaluation.

The spiritual directors are offered compensation by the novitiate for this service to the friars.

²⁹IV PCO 66.

II. The Prayer Life of the Novitiate

“Since we have been more intimately consecrated for divine worship through the profession of the evangelical counsels, let us strive in freedom of spirit to pursue this life of prayer faithfully and continually.”³⁰

During novitiate, the novices are introduced to the Church’s rich tradition of prayer. They learn particularly the teachings of St. Francis and other Franciscans regarding prayer.

1. Liturgical Prayer

The Church’s liturgical prayer, the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, is of the highest value of Capuchin life and, therefore, of the novitiate year.³¹

a. Eucharist

The Eucharist as the “source and summit of Christian life,” is central to consecrated life and to the life of the novice.³² The Eucharist is celebrated daily at the novitiate.³³ The novices are involved in preparing the celebration of the daily Eucharist, and regularly participate as acolytes, readers, cantors, Eucharistic ministers, etc.

On Sundays, the novices participate in the Eucharistic celebration either at the novitiate or at a nearby parish, in order to maintain a relationship with the local Church. The novices are divided into groups and provided with a list of local parishes they may attend. While they may socialize with the people in the parishes, they are to return to the novitiate in a timely fashion after the mass.

Eucharistic adoration will also take place each week, as it is beneficial to the consecrated life and encouraged in our Constitutions.³⁴

³⁰ *Constitutions* 45.6.

³¹ *Constitutions* 47. II PCO 36: “The Liturgy of the Hours, being the Church’s own prayer, should, together with the Eucharist, have first place in every fraternity and in the life of each individual friar.”

³² *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* 11: “It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion . . . Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It.”

³³ *Constitutions* 48.2.

³⁴ *Constitutions*, 48.5: “Following the example of Saint Francis, let us venerate above all else Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist. With Him let us offer ourselves and our actions to God the Father, and frequently pour out devout prayers before Him Who is the spiritual center of the fraternity.” *Vita Consecrata* 38: “All, believers and non-believers alike, need to learn a silence that allows the Other to speak when and how he wishes, and allows us to understand his words”. In practice this involves great fidelity to liturgical and personal prayer, to periods devoted to mental prayer and contemplation, to Eucharistic adoration, to monthly retreats and to spiritual exercises.”

b. Liturgy of the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours is the public prayer of the Church and has as its purpose the sanctification of the day.³⁵ In it, the community gathers together to pray in Christ, through Christ, and with Christ. Participating in this prayer keeps the novice aware of his place in the universal Church, from which vocations come forth and continue to develop.

The novitiate community celebrates in common the Liturgy of the Hours, with special emphasis on morning and evening prayer. The novices are to be involved in planning and leading the celebration of the office, with proper input from the novitiate team.

2. Other Forms of Common Prayer

a. Scripture Reflection

To promote a prayerful understanding of Scripture, especially the Gospels upon which the consecrated life is based,³⁶ the novices gather with the formation team once a week for faith sharing, using the gospel of the coming Sunday as a basis for this reflection.³⁷ This normally takes place on Friday evenings.

b. Devotional Prayer

During Lent, the novitiate community joins for a communal celebration of the Stations of the Cross.

In consultation with the novitiate team, the novices may practice other forms of communal prayer, including the rosary and other devotional prayers.

The novices may propose particular prayer services (e.g., prayer for peace) which they may be asked to plan under the guidance of the novitiate team.

3. Days of Recollection and Retreats

a. Days of Recollection

There occur Days of Recollection throughout the novitiate year approximately once a month.³⁸

³⁵ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 84: “By tradition going back to early Christian times, the divine office is devised so that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God.”

³⁶ Cf. CIC, c. 652, §2: “Novices are to be . . . taught to contemplate the mystery of salvation and to read and meditate on the sacred scriptures.” *Constitutions* 58.1: “The reading of Sacred Scripture and other spiritual books is an effective means of nourishing true devotion and of fostering the experience of God.”

³⁷ For this exercise, the novices will be divided into groups and led by one member of the team.

³⁸ *Constitutions* 55.1.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

While the entire novitiate community may participate in these days, the talks on are to be geared to the needs of the novices.

The spirit of the day is one of silence. The format for the day is arranged by the formation team, and usually begins with night prayer of the previous night, and ends with Evening Prayer, followed by a small social before supper.

The days of recollection are usually to be led by a friar. The novitiate team first invites provincials of the NAPCC to lead these days. Other friars from the conference or members of the novitiate community may also be called upon for this task.

The novitiate program provides a stipend and travel reimbursement to the presenter.

b. Retreats

There are two special retreats the novices attend during the novitiate year which take place away from the novitiate.

i. Midyear Discernment Retreat

The first retreat takes place mid-way through the novitiate year, around March.

The purpose of the Discernment Retreat is to allow the novice the time and space to consider in a more focused way, whether his own life, talents, and personality are suited to the Capuchin life, and whether the Capuchin life fits with the way in which the Lord seems to be calling him.

This is a silent retreat (except at meal times). During this retreat each novice will meet at least briefly with each member of the Formation Team.

ii. Year-end Profession Retreat

This retreat takes place in June, after the third evaluation of the novices has been completed and they have made the request and received approval for temporary profession of vows from their provincial councils.

The purpose of the Profession Retreat is to provide the novices time to prayerfully reflect on the novitiate experience and prepare themselves interiorly to make the transition into the vowed life and post-novitiate formation.

The retreat includes the reading of the *Rule* and the *Testament*. The novices are given time to reflect and share their experiences and future expectations concerning the topics of Poverty & Minority, Chastity & Fraternity, and Obedience & Ministry.

4. Personal Prayer

The novices are instructed in various methods and approaches to mental prayer.

The novices participate in communal meditation periods of half an hour twice a day.

The novices are given special periods of quiet, contemplative time. This includes several evenings during the week as well as one afternoon a week, designated “hermitage time.” Prayerful silence is to be fostered during these periods.

The novices are encouraged to develop other forms of personal prayer, including charismatic prayer, bodily prayer, etc. They are encouraged to seek God in nature, art, music, etc.

5. Reflection on Prayer

The novices with the professed friars of the novitiate community periodically reflect on the quality of the community’s prayer life. Each friar is encouraged to make observations and recommendations in a fraternal spirit in this regard. Final decisions on liturgical and other matters of common prayer, however, are made by the novitiate team.

6. Penitential Practices

“Penance, as an exodus and conversion, is a disposition of the heart that demands an external manifestation in daily life...At all times, moved by the spirit of conversion and renewal, let us devote ourselves to works of penance...”³⁹

The liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent provide opportunities for the novitiate community to do penance with the universal Church. The entire community discusses the penitential practices that will be observed at such times.

Communal penance may also be an expression of prayer and concern for other world or societal issues. This might include specific periods of penance suggested by the Church (for example, a World Day of Prayer for Peace or for Respect Life).

Each novice may also engage in individual penitential practices with the guidance from his FA and spiritual director, and the permission of his FA. He is made aware that certain penitential choices have an effect on the entire community and must be appropriately adapted to fraternal life.

³⁹ *Constitutions* 102.1,3.

III. Fraternal Life of the Novitiate

“Inspired by God, Saint Francis initiated a gospel form of life that he called a brotherhood according to the example of the life of Christ and his disciples. We who profess this form of life, therefore, truly constitute an Order of brothers.”⁴⁰

The rhythm of novitiate life is established to help the novices experience the reality of fraternal life and continue to develop the skills needed to live that life fruitfully. To help them do so, the following are considered essential to the novitiate’s fraternal life:

1. Participation in Community Activities:

a. Participation in meals

The novices are expected to be present for community meals.

b. Participation in communal recreation

The novices participate in set periods of recreation according to the novitiate schedule.

c. Participation in special occasions

The novices participate in “socials” which mark special occasions: e.g., the birthdays of the brothers, patronal feast days of the various jurisdictions, etc.

d. Participation in local chapter (including review of life)

The novices are present for the monthly local chapter. They are asked for input regarding the agenda and are free to participate in any discussions. Before each chapter the novices participate in a “review of life” facilitated by the formation advisers.⁴¹

2. Developing Fraternal Relationships within and outside of the community

a. Appropriate interaction

The novices are encouraged to interact with one another and the other friars in a fraternal manner. If concerns arise about this, the novice’s FA speaks with him about the matter.

⁴⁰ *Constitutions* 83.5-6.

⁴¹ *Constitutions* 84.2: “Let us cultivate mutual dialogue, sharing experiences with confidence and manifesting our needs to one another.” Since it would be too much to have each one share at the local chapter itself, this is done on Fridays in the groups designated for faith sharing on the scriptures.

b. Caring for the Sick

Since our Rule tells us “When any brother falls sick, the other brothers must serve him as they would wish to be served themselves,” the novices learn to care for one another especially in sickness.⁴² One or more of them are designated infirmarians to make sure the needs of any sick brother are attended to.

c. Hospitality and Guests

St. Francis wanted his brothers to be courteous and hospitable. The novices are expected to grow in their knowledge of how to show hospitality to guests as well as in the proper management of personal and fraternal boundaries. Thus, they are encouraged to show guests to the novitiate courtesy and concern, and to interact with them in an appropriate manner, while maintaining the spirit of prayer and recollection.

d. Other interactions

The novices are encouraged to develop appropriate relationships with the people with whom they work in ministry, as well as the people who are friends and benefactors of San Lorenzo, again maintaining their focus on the novitiate community and program.

3. Awareness of and respect for cultural diversity

Cultural diversity is a reality in the Church and the Order, as well as in the NAPCC Novitiate. They are also encouraged to be open to the richness of the various cultures.

Cultural diversity manifests itself in various ways: for example, in different cuisines, prayer styles, etc. The novices are encouraged to be aware of such differences in culture, even among themselves, and to show proper respect.

Attempts will be made during the novitiate year to integrate different languages into liturgical celebrations, depending on the needs of individual novices and as deemed practical and desirable by the novitiate team.

One way to celebrate this diversity is by observing national and religious holidays and patronal feast days. These special days are noted on a calendar at the beginning of the novitiate year.

⁴² *Later Rule* VI.9 in *FA:ED* v. I, 103.

4. Service to the fraternity, including manual labor/house tasks

“According to the earliest tradition of the Order, the brothers should be ready to undertake manual work to the extent that fraternal charity or obedience demands.”⁴³

The novices participate in the tasks necessary for the cleaning and upkeep of the friary. They are assigned particular tasks by the novitiate team. The same applies to helping with the set up before and cleaning up after meals.

Other opportunities for manual labor are provided in order to facilitate the fraternal and service aspects of the Franciscan charism. These opportunities include maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and grounds, cooking, working in the garden, etc.

The novices are expected to keep their own rooms clean and to take care of their own laundry.

⁴³ *Constitutions* 78.2.

IV. Intellectual Formation of the Novices

“Initial formation into our life requires that candidates, under the guidance of formation personnel, gain the necessary experience and knowledge and enter gradually into the Franciscan Gospel way of life...The brothers in formation should acquire a thorough knowledge of the Capuchin Franciscan spirit and its practice...”⁴⁴

Novitiate formation aims at forming the novices intellectually by giving them information regarding the Christian faith, religious life, our Franciscan charism etc. in such a way that they may make an informed decision regarding their vocation.

1. Classes

The novitiate team arranges a curriculum each year for the novitiate that ensures the novices will receive adequate instruction in those areas indicated by the guidelines of the NAPCC formation curriculum (see page 51-2). The team works to ensure that this curriculum is both comprehensive and internally coherent. Instruction is given either by members of the novitiate team or others brought in to cover specific topics.

The novices normally have classes three days a week: Monday to Wednesday, in the mornings. The format of each class varies according to the topic and presenter. The novices are encouraged to participate in class through question and discussion. They also may be called upon to do some research and/or presentation to enhance their understanding and assimilation of the materials presented.

2. Workshops

Beside the regular curriculum, various workshops may be offered as deemed appropriate and useful. The novices may participate in workshops offsite, normally accompanied by the formation team, if these are not disruptive to the program.

3. Library

The novitiate maintains a library to provide the novices with an opportunity to read and research topics for classes or of special interest.

⁴⁴ *Constitutions* 25.1,5.

V. Affective Formation of the Novices

“Our integral formation looks to the entire person, especially in its psychological, religious, cultural and even professional aspects.”⁴⁵

The novitiate program strives to help the novice develop a holistic spirituality, and to develop a personal and psychological readiness to embrace the demands of Capuchin Life.

1. Physical health

During novitiate, the novices are encouraged to recognize the importance of their attending to their physical health, as it affects all aspects of their religious life.

a. Exercise

The novices are encouraged to make physical exercise a part of their daily lives. Outdoor activities, such as walking, jogging, basketball, bike riding, etc. may be included in this. The novitiate also provides an exercise room equipped with treadmills, weights, etc.

b. Diet

The novitiate strives to provide the novices with a healthy diet. Workshops on nutrition also seek to help them toward healthy choices in food. Novices who are dealing with weight issues are encouraged to take steps to address these, in consultation with the formation team and in light of the novitiate horarium and program. Novices considering major dietary changes (e.g., adoption of a vegetarian or vegan diet) should similarly consult with the formation team

c. Personal behaviors

The novices are made aware of how their choices regarding personal behaviors affect their spiritual life as well as the life of the entire fraternity. This is especially true in regard to such things as alcohol and smoking.

i. Alcohol

While alcohol is available at the novitiate, the novices, with all the friars, are encouraged to use alcohol responsibly. Guidelines will be set and announced by the novitiate team at the beginning of the year, and reviewed from time to time. The legal drinking age of the state where the novitiate is located will be enforced.

If any novice is part of AA or AlAnon, or other twelve-step or support groups that help overcome addictive behaviors, provision is made for him to attend meetings in the local area in conformity with the novitiate program and its requirements.

⁴⁵ *Constitutions* 22.2.

ii. Smoking

Smoking is not encouraged, but is allowed at the novitiate; brothers may smoke only in designated areas outside the buildings.

Any novice who smokes but wants to quit will be assisted in this under the direction of the novitiate team and in accord with the overall novitiate program.

d. Doctor and Dentist Visits

The novice, upon conferring with the novitiate team and the appropriate person in his province, may pick a local doctor and dentist to maintain normal health. Extraordinary procedures should be avoided unless they are absolutely necessary. For all health related matters each novice maintains communication not only with the novitiate team but also with the appropriate person in his province.

2. Recreation and Use of media, especially social media

a. Recreation

“According to the customs and possibilities of the regions, special times of recreation...should be given to the brothers; let these times...be spent in a way consistent with our state as lesser brothers.”⁴⁶

The novices are encouraged to use the novitiate grounds and its surroundings for their recreation.

Once a week they will have time to go “off campus” for recreation. They are encouraged to make these days fraternal by seeking activities involving groups rather than individual activities.

The novices will be given a certain amount of money every two weeks for recreational and personal needs.

b. Media Use

“Let [the brothers] use these media with moderation and mature discrimination; those that are dangerous to faith, morals and religious life should be studiously avoided.”⁴⁷

Each novice will be permitted to use the internet up to ninety (90) minutes per week. The novices reflect in community as well as with their FAs on how they may develop habits which help toward moderate and mature use of the internet and other media.

⁴⁶ *Constitutions* 81.2.

⁴⁷ *Constitutions* 90.2.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

Because time often flies by when using the internet, novices are asked by their formation advisor to account for their compliance with the allotted 90 minute time limit.

Certain exceptions may apply to this policy. There may be times when the novices are asked to undertake research on the web as part of a class or workshop assignment, and this does not count as part of the ninety minute limit.

If a question arises regarding any other exception to the ninety minute limitation, the novice may discuss it with his formation advisor.

The internet is not to be used during periods of prayerful silence or during recollection days. It is not to be used during breaks within class periods.

The novices may watch television during times of recreation, again reflecting on how it aids or detracts from fraternal interaction and the spirit of prayer.

3. Psychological health

a. Adherence to sexual conduct policies

The novices receive training at the beginning of novitiate according to the requirements of the local diocese. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, this means that they receive training with *Virtus* and also are fingerprinted.

Any inappropriate behaviors on the part of a novice are to be addressed immediately. The novitiate team will notify the novice's provincial minister as well as comply with all pertinent civil and church laws.

b. Counseling

If it becomes apparent to the novice and/or formation team that he would benefit from counseling, the novice and his FA contact his PDIF to get approval. This is in cases that are not drastic and do not affect the novice's participation in the novitiate program as a whole.

VI. Ministerial Formation of the Novices

“[T]he Holy Spirit...raised up Saint Francis and his apostolic Fraternity so that, according to the more urgent needs of its time, it might offer all its energies to the Church in its mission to all peoples, especially to those who are in most need of hearing the gospel message.”⁴⁸

1. Ministry Outside the Novitiate

In keeping both with our apostolic charism and the contemplative nature of the novitiate year, the novices will do outside ministry once a week on Fridays, generally from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

At the beginning of the novitiate, the novitiate team compiles a list of possible ministries for the novices. These as far as possible involve the novices in direct service to the poor and the proclamation of the gospel by deed and word.

The various ministerial possibilities are presented and explained to the novices, and the novices asked to reflect on them and state their preferences. The team then reflects on the needs of each ministry, the talents of the novices and their stated preference, and chooses a particular ministry for each novice.

Each novice normally engages in the same ministry for the entire novitiate year.

A minimum of two novices are assigned to a given ministry. If a novice leaves the program, adjustment may be made as deemed necessary by the novitiate team to maintain this principle.

The novices have the responsibility of informing their ministerial sites in advance of those Fridays when they will not be able to come because of other activities in the novitiate.

2. Feedback on Ministry

One member of the novitiate team maintains contact with those who at each site are supervising the ministry of the novices. He seeks feedback on the novices' performance and also addresses any problems which may arise. He conveys any relevant information and feedback to the formation advisor of each novice.

Each formation advisor spends time reflecting with his novices not only on the actual fulfillment of the ministry, but also on how it calls him to more strongly embrace the principles of Franciscan spirituality.

Friars who are currently active in ministry may be invited to reflect with the novices more systematically on the various aspects and challenges of ministry within our Capuchin Franciscan charism.

⁴⁸ *Constitutions*, 144:2,3.

VII. Evaluation of the Novices and Votation

1. First Formal Evaluation:

The first formal evaluation will usually occur in late October or early November. Each novice will be asked to write a self-evaluation, developed in conjunction with his formation advisor.⁴⁹

The professed brothers of the novitiate fraternity will share observations regarding each novice.

The formation advisor will compose a written evaluation for his novices. This written evaluation will include both areas of strength and recommendations with regard to areas requiring special attention in terms of growth and discernment. The Formation Team will meet to review these written evaluations before they are shared with the novices.

The advisor will then review this evaluation with the novice. If the novice feels the need to respond in writing, he may do so.

A copy will be sent to each novice's provincial minister and provincial director of initial formation and another will be kept in the novice's formation file. The novice and his formation advisor will also receive a copy.

2. Second Formal Evaluation:

The second formal evaluation will usually occur in February. Once more, each novice will be asked for a written self-evaluation, developed in conjunction with his formation advisor. This evaluation will reflect on how the novice has integrated recommendations and suggestions made in the first formal evaluation.

The professed brothers of the novitiate fraternity will share observations regarding each novice.

In addition, peer evaluations will be solicited in regard to each novice. These will be reviewed by the Formation Team and then summarized in the written evaluation to be shared with the novice.

Again, a copy of the written evaluation and a copy of the self-evaluation will be included in the novice's file, copies of each will be sent to the provincial minister and his director of initial formation. The novice and his advisor will also receive copies.

⁴⁹ For guidelines for self-evaluations, peer evaluations, etc., see following section.

3. Third Formal Evaluation and Votation:

The third evaluation of the novices will occur in late spring. Each novice will again write a self-evaluation, reflecting on progress since the last evaluation as well as the novitiate year as a whole. Peer evaluations will again be solicited.

At the time of the third evaluation, the professed community will be asked to share their observations.

There will also be an official votation by members of the perpetually professed community. In this votation, the community members may vote in the following ways regarding the candidates' fitness for temporary vows: *yes*, *yes with reservations*, *no*, or *abstain*.⁵⁰

Once more, results of this evaluation and consultative vote will be shared with the individual novice, who will have a chance to respond in writing. He and his advisor will then sign the evaluation. The evaluation and result of the votation will be sent to the respective provincial ministers of each novice.

The recommendation will be based on all evaluative information available to the professed friars of the novitiate fraternity. The formation advisors will forward the resulting recommendation to the respective provincials, adding any confidential information which they deem necessary.

⁵⁰ Brothers who vote “yes with reservations” are asked to provide a short summary of the reservations that have, so that this information may be communicated in the novice’s evaluation.

VIII. The End of Novitiate

1. Process of Seeking Admission to Temporary Profession

a. Letter to Provincial Minister

After the third evaluation is complete and all documentation sent to the provinces, each novice will then write a letter on novitiate letterhead to his provincial minister to request admission to temporary vows. The following points are to be addressed by all candidates requesting temporary profession:

- i. The letter is addressed to the provincial minister by name, and asks him for admission to temporary vows.⁵¹
- ii. The letter addresses briefly the novices' understanding of the seriousness of the commitment he is about to make, and his understanding of the vowed life, as well as the characteristics of Capuchin life: fraternity, contemplative prayer, service to the poor, work, and penance.
- iii. The letter may state briefly why the individual novice believes himself called to commit his life to the Lord as a Capuchin Franciscan friar.
- iv. The letter will indicate clearly that the novice is asking to make this commitment in freedom and without pressure from anyone.

Each novice will submit this letter to his formation advisor for review prior to sending it to his provincial minister, especially to assure that it is in compliance with all canonical requirements. Once the final letter is completed, a copy will be placed in the novice's formation file.

b. Acceptance by Provincial Minister

A novice is only officially approved for profession when such acceptance is communicated by the provincial minister to the novice and novitiate staff. As far as possible, travel arrangements for the end of novitiate should not be made before this acceptance is official.

2. Arrangements for Travel and Profession

After a novice has been formally approved by his provincial council for profession, he and the classmates from his province (if any) approach the novitiate treasurer to make travel arrangements for his departure at the end of novitiate.

⁵¹ See *Constitutions* 32.1.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

No novice makes travel arrangements for himself. If the novice's province handles the travel arrangements itself, the novice still informs the treasurer and his formation advisor before plans are completed.

The novitiate team will work with the novices to make sure they are able to get to the airport or other destination.

3. Reflection for End of Novitiate

During the final days of novitiate, each novice will be asked to make a 15-20 minute presentation to the novitiate team and his fellow novices.

Each novice is asked to articulate and share in fraternity the ways that God has worked in his life during his novitiate year. This reflection should include the highlights and challenges of the novitiate year, including any insights that he has gained during the year with regard to his own personal and spiritual development and the Capuchin Franciscan charism.

Helpful questions for this reflection: "How has your understanding of your vocation grown over the year?" "What goals that you set for yourself have you achieved?" "How has the Lord graced you?"

NOTE: The presentation is not to be critique of the year in terms of the schedule, the team or the novitiate class, but rather the continuation of each novice's Vocation Story.

4. Departure for the Provinces

The end of the novitiate is marked by attendance at the rite of profession of the novices of the host province. If there are none, the end of the novitiate will be marked by a liturgical service prepared by the novitiate team and novices.

THIRD SECTION: GUIDELINES



I. Guidelines for the new novices regarding what to bring to novitiate:

The following guidelines will be communicated to the potential novices before they participate in the IPP so that they may make appropriate preparations:

1. Clothing:

Each postulant may bring with him any clothes that he used during the postulancy, including casual wear, moderate dress wear, and work clothes, including clothes that can be worn under the habit such as casual slacks, long-sleeve shirts, and thermal wear for the colder months; and casual and/or athletic shorts and t-shirts for the warmer months.

2. Other Personal Effects

Postulants should also bring with them the four-volume *Liturgy of the Hours*. They are also encouraged to bring a Bible and a few spiritual and special interest books. They do **not** need to bring the *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* volumes.

While the postulants may bring other personal effects and devotional items, they are encouraged to discover that freedom from within and to give themselves generously to the “cave experience,” which requires a strong element of trust in the Lord and a willingness to live for one year with as little distraction as possible.

3. Electronic Devices, Credit Cards:

Postulants shall **not** bring personal electronic devices (such as laptop computers, cell phones/CD/iPod/mp3 players), credit cards, or checkbooks. If there is a question about the appropriateness of any similar item, the postulant contacts the novitiate team to inquire.

4. Getting Items to the Novitiate

Postulants may send items to the novitiate beforehand. However, they are advised to keep such items to a minimum.

II. Guidelines Regarding Visitors to the Novitiate

“While favoring access to our houses or dwellings, the entrance of outsiders should be so regulated with prudence and discretion that an atmosphere conducive to privacy, prayer, and study may be safeguarded.”⁵²

The novitiate team sets the guidelines regarding visitors and if any questions arise in this regard the team should be consulted.

1. Visits from family and friends:

Visits to the novices by family members are welcome. However, such visits are take place only after the October 31 and before May 31. Family visits should be limited to one or two times during the novitiate year, wherever the novices’ families may live.

A novice whose family members want to visit approaches his formation advisor. The formation advisor works with the novice to make sure that the number of visits is limited and does not interfere with the novitiate program. If the family wishes to stay at the guest house, the novice then checks with the guest master and completes arrangements with him.

Family members are welcomed to join in community prayers and meals. Normally the novices do not go out with their families if it means they would miss communal activities, unless permission is given by the formation advisor.

Visits by others who are not family members are to be limited, and always arranged in advance in consultation with the formation advisor.

2. Other visitors to the Novitiate

The novitiate team makes sure that both hospitality and the needs of the fraternity for privacy are respected in regard to visitors.

Friars, as well as other religious and clergy, are always welcome to visit the novitiate, while respecting the parameters of the novitiate program.

Friends and other visitors may be invited to join the community for meals. A novice should consult his formation advisor before making any such invitation, however.

3. Visiting areas:

Residential areas of the novitiate are not normally opened to the public or visitors. Signs are posted advising visitors of which areas are set aside to guard the friars’ privacy and personal space.

⁵² *Constitutions* 88.3.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

The friars' bedrooms are always off-limits to female visitors and minors; however, visitors may be escorted through the residential buildings to join the community in common areas, using the shortest route.

No family members or other visitors should be taken to individual friars' rooms during their visit.

Visitors are welcome to walk the main grounds. If a visitor appears to be looking for a particular friar or some other need (e.g., for confession), that person may be approached and taken to the Hourihan Room while the appropriate friar is paged.

For shorter visits, the novices and other friars may use the small dining room off the kitchen or the Hourihan Room.

III. Suggested Questions to Help Guide Formation Advisor/Advisee Discussions

1. Catholic-Christian Commitment:

- Are my basic value patterns rooted in the Gospel virtues of faith, hope and love?
- In what way have I grown towards my being a man of faith? Of hope? Of love?
- What is my relationship to the person of Christ?
- What are my experiences and expectations of the Church?
- Do I pray? How? How do I relate my work and my prayer?
- Does reflection on the Word of God have a prized place in my life?
- What place does the sacrament of reconciliation have in my life and spiritual growth?
- What does the Eucharist mean in my life and to what extent do I celebrate and seek to deepen my grasp of liturgy?

2. Vocation to Religious Life as a Capuchin Franciscan:

- What does being a Capuchin mean to me and how does it touch my life of faith?
- In what ways am I actively contributing to my own formation?
- Do I feel comfortable with my advisor and spiritual director? Am I able to be honest with them without difficulty?
- How is my commitment to the Capuchin way of life evident in my behavior? How have I shown that I want to be here, and in this formation program?
- Am I honest about my strengths and weaknesses and their bearing on my future as a religious?
- How knowledgeable am I about my province and its needs, especially as these factors relate to my present situation, my hopes and my personal satisfaction? What are my hopes for the future of my province?
- What do the vows mean to me? How do I understand poverty, chastity, and obedience as part of my commitment to God as a Capuchin Franciscan?

3. Maturity and Personal Responsibility:

- Have I progressed in self-knowledge and self-confidence, personal initiative, and the capacity to make true value judgments?
- Am I aware of my limitations and doing something about them? Have I over-extended myself in any area? Do I have a mature attitude regarding the use of alcohol?
- How do I relate with authority figures?

- Can I accept legitimate criticism in a constructive way? Can I give it in the same spirit?
- How do I handle tension and anxieties? How do I deal with setbacks in a calm and intelligent manner?
- How do I relax? How do I adapt to changing ideas and situations?
- What principles guide my use of time and choice of activities outside the friary?

4. Relationships with Others:

- Am I growing in my love for people and my desire to serve them?
- Have I been able to form positive, healthy relationships with a wide number of people?
- Am I at ease with women? Do my associations with women and men reflect my commitment to a life of celibate love?
- Am I accepting of my peers? How do I deal with tensions with them?
- Do I have close friendships with other friars? Other people?
- Am I personally demanding of others? Do I stand in constant need of peer affirmation or acceptance on my terms?
- Am I aware of the needs and sensitivities of others?
- Have I been willing to help others in a real way both inside and outside of the friary?
- How do I react to and cooperate with those who are not my friends or with whom I disagree? Am I without prejudices toward people or am I, at least, aware of the prejudices I possess?
- Are there any insincere aspects of my relationships to others?
- Do I reflect to the friars with whom I live the same person that I am as when I am with my friends? How do I deal with my attachments and attractions to others?
- Am I burdened by my attachments and sexual attractions? Do they hinder my relationships with fraternity?
- Is my behavior outside of the friary consistent with my goals?

IV. Guidelines to Novices for Evaluation Tools

1. Vocation History and the Novitiate Program

Begin with the biographical/vocational reflection you wrote during the NAPCC Interprovincial Postulancy Program. Give it prayerful reflection according to the following questions:

- How has God been manifested in your life? Have there been moments when you know that it was God speaking clearly to you? Are there any common characteristics of these experiences? What are they? Up to this point in your life, how have you clarified God's will for you?
- Is there anything of significance that you may have overlooked?
- Are there themes or any patterns which might be indicative of God's working in your life?
- Looking at your personal/vocational history, what are your strengths and weaknesses?
- In what areas will you need growth?
- Are there any personal characteristics or situations in your history which would seem contrary to a vocation to the consecrated life as a Capuchin Franciscan?
- Which elements in the novitiate program might be the most challenging to you with respect to your weaknesses? Which elements might come more easily to you with regard to your strengths?
- What insights have you gained from writing your autobiography?

2. Self-Reflection for the First Evaluation

The purpose of this self-reflection is to have you articulate your spiritual and personal development with respect to the goals of the novitiate program.

The following questions are a tool to help you begin writing this self-reflection.

The text of the evaluation should be double-spaced, at least one page in length and no more than three pages in length, following the format provided to you by the novitiate team.

You are to include the number of times you have seen your spiritual director since the novitiate began.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

Looking at the time that you have been here at the Novitiate thus far, what are your observations with regard to your vocation to the Capuchin Franciscan way of life?

- What was difficult in your transition and adjustment to the life in the novitiate?
- Do you feel at home here? If so, at what point did you begin to feel at home? What event or situation helped you to feel at home?
- How are you growing in your identity as a Capuchin? Which of the characteristics have you found easier to own? Which would be more difficult?
- What do you find helpful or not very helpful with regard to the novitiate classes, your apostolate, your formation advisor, spiritual director, recollection days, the schedule, and any other element or aspect of novitiate life?
- Have you experienced any difficulties with the formation staff?
- Do you feel a part of the fraternity here at the novitiate? Are there any difficulties? How do you respond to difficult situations?
- Do you feel a part of your province?
- What are your feelings, thoughts, concerns, and expectations with regard to the vows? Do you feel unsure with regard to any of the vows?
- Do you feel comfortable with the prospect of living a vowed life? Do you feel burdened by attachments to things or to people? Do sexual attractions distract you from living a peaceful and joyful life?
- Do you feel that you have invested yourself in the novitiate formation program? Have your gifts been utilized sufficiently during your time here?

3. Self-Reflection for the Second Evaluation

The purpose of the self-reflection is to have you evaluate your progress since the first evaluation and further reflect on your discernment regarding the Lord's call.

The following questions are a tool to help you in writing this second self-reflection.

Again, the text of the evaluation should be double-spaced, at least one page in length and no more than three pages in length, following the format provided to you by the novitiate team.

You are to include the number of times you have seen your spiritual director since the last evaluation.

Questions to help in the writing of the evaluations

- Having lived as a Capuchin friar, do you believe that the Consecrated Life is suited to your personality, strengths and weaknesses? Why or why not?
- Do you consider yourself a prayerful person? In what ways?
- Do you consider yourself a fraternal person? In what ways?
- What has been some of your most rewarding experiences in being a brother?
- What has been some of your most difficult experiences in being a brother?
- What have you learned about yourself since coming to the novitiate? Has any growth taken place in you personally and spiritually?
- Was there anything that happened in the fraternity that had an effect on you? How did it affect you? Focus also on how you felt at the time and the effect it had on your heart.
- Have these experiences affected your relationship with the Lord, your brothers, your province, or the Order?
- Why do you believe that these events affected you?
- How well have you responded to any challenges presented to you in the first evaluation? Give an example(s).

4. Self-Reflection for the Third Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to have you review the novitiate year and the progress of your discernment. It is made with the expectation that you have discerned that the Lord is calling you to profess vows as a Capuchin Franciscan and thus should focus on why you consider this to be so.

Again, the text of the evaluation should be double-spaced, at least one page in length and no more than three pages in length, following the format provided to you by the novitiate team.

You are to include the number of times you have seen your spiritual director since the last evaluation.

The following questions may be helpful in writing this evaluation:

- How has your experience of the novitiate confirmed your call to live as a Capuchin Franciscan friar? How confident are you that you can live the Capuchin life faithfully and happily?
- How has your experience of the novitiate confirmed for you that living the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience will contribute positively to your growth as a Christian?
- What have been the major challenges for you during the novitiate year? How have you resolved these? How will you continue to deal with them as you continue in formation?
- What are the gifts you bring to the Order? How do you see those gifts being used in your province?

5. Peer Reflections for the Second and Third Evaluation

The peer reflection is an opportunity for you to present your observations with respect to your brother novices to help in their discernment of their vocation as Capuchin Franciscans. You will be asked to write this reflection about only a certain number of your fellow novices.

The peer reflections should be written with honesty, charity, and the intention of helping your brothers.

You will be asked to put your name on your peer reflections. However, your comments will be communicated to your peers by their formation advisors anonymously.

This reflection is to be brief, only three to five sentences long, following the format provided to you by the novitiate team.

For each peer evaluation, please answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the strengths that this brother brings to the fraternity? Please include specific examples to illustrate your comments. Note that this is aimed at helping the brother see his own gifts and the signs that he is being called specifically to the Capuchin Franciscan Order.
- 2) What are the weaknesses that he brings? Please include specific examples to illustrate your comments. Note that this is aimed at helping the brother discern the challenges that face him as a Capuchin friar, not a judgment of his goodness or sincerity.

NAPCC Novitiate Manual

V. Novitiate Curriculum

(Based on the Formation Curriculum approved by the NAPCC, March 2012)

1. Capuchin Franciscan Formation

The History of the Franciscan Movement before the Capuchins. (12 hours)

The History of the Franciscan Movement from the Capuchin Reform to the present. (12 hours)

Aspects of Franciscan Spirituality. List of possible topics, see Appendix IV. (20 hours)

The Life and Writings of Clare of Assisi. (10 hours)

Capuchin Constitutions/PCO Documents. (12 hours)

The history of NAPCC jurisdictions. (As needed)

An Introduction to the Secular Franciscan Order. (5 hours)

2. Religious Life and the Vows

History of Religious Life. (6 hours)

The Vows. (18 hours)

The Vows – A Workshop. This workshop ought to include the practical wisdom of the presenter. (3 hours)

Sexuality/Celibate Chastity. (12 hours)

3. Liturgy

Liturgical Spirituality. (8 hours)

History of Liturgy: Eucharist. (8 hours)

History of Liturgy: Divine Office. (8 hours).

4. Spirituality

History of Christian Spirituality and Prayer. (12 hours)

Biblical Spirituality. (6 hours)

Spiritual Discernment. (12 hours)

Reflection/Integration experiences. Reflection on a variety of Capuchin-Franciscan *values* with an eye toward integrating those values across numerous levels of one's life using a discussion format. (See Appendix IV)

VII. Typical Weekly Schedule⁵³

Sunday

8:00 Morning Prayer
9:00 Eucharist at San Lorenzo or local parish⁵⁴
4:30 Evening Prayer/Eucharistic Adoration
5:30 Fraternal Gathering
6:15 Supper
7:45 Night Prayer followed by Personal Time⁵⁵

Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday

6:30 Morning Prayer followed by communal meditation
7:30 Eucharist, followed by breakfast.
9:30 Class
11:45 Midday Prayer
12:00 Lunch
1:00 Work projects (Monday)
Housework (Tuesday)
Hermitage time (Wednesday)
3:00 Rest, exercise, recreation (Monday, Tuesday)
5:00 Office of Readings followed by communal meditation
5:45 Evening Prayer
6:00 Supper
Monday/Tuesday:
7:45 Prayerful silence/study
8:45 Night Prayer
9:00 Fraternal Recreation
Wednesday:
Supper followed by Personal Time, Night Prayer private

Thursday

8:00 Eucharist with Morning Prayer
9:00 Personal time (can be off-site)
5:15 Evening Prayer followed by communal meditation
6:00 Supper
7:45 Prayerful Silence
8:45 Night Prayer
9:00 Fraternal Recreation

⁵³Given special occasions such as major Church/Franciscan Solemnities and Feast Days, national holidays, birthday celebrations, working with the schedules of the presenters, etc.; there will be certain days when the schedule will naturally need to shift. These changes are made at the discretion of the novitiate team.

⁵⁴Novices choose a parish from the approved list of churches in Santa Barbara County.

⁵⁵All "Personal Time" is on-site unless otherwise specified.

Friday

6:30 Morning Prayer followed by communal meditation

7:30 Eucharist followed by breakfast

9:00 Ministries

5:15 Evening Prayer followed by communal meditation

6:00 Supper

7:45 Faith Sharing followed by Fraternal Recreation

Saturday

6:30 Morning Prayer followed by communal meditation

7:30 Eucharist followed by breakfast

9:30 Work Projects

11:45 Midday Prayer

12:00 Lunch (pick-up)

1:00 Housework

5:00 Office of Readings followed by communal meditation

5:45 Evening Prayer

6:00 Supper

Personal time, Night Prayer private

Appendices



Appendix I

Useful Information about the Novitiate

1. Location of the Novitiate

The NAPCC Novitiate Program takes place at San Lorenzo Friary in the Province of Our Lady of Angels. It is located in rural Santa Barbara County, California within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The novitiate is located within the parish of Old Mission Santa Inés, Solvang, which has been administered by the Capuchins since 1924.

The property leased to the NAPCC Novitiate Program comprises 28 acres of land. It is surrounded by a further 400 acres owned by the Capuchin Seminary of San Lorenzo Corporation, which includes a four bedroom ranch house used as a guest house. Its setting provides a natural environment for prayer and contemplation.

2. Address

Physical Address: 1802 Sky Drive, Santa Ynez, California 93460.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 247, Santa Ynez, California 93460.

(Note: when sending things via the post office (USPS), please send them to the P.O. Box. When shipping via Fedex, UPS or other parcel services, use the street address).

Phone: 805-688-5630. Fax: 805-686-0775.

Website: *Under construction.*

3. Transportation

Airports:

The closest airport is Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA); it is about 40 minutes from the novitiate and is accessible from most parts of the country.

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is approximately 2½ hours from the novitiate. There is bus service from Santa Barbara.

Amtrak: There is a station in Santa Barbara, and a connecting bus to Solvang.

Appendix II
Calendar Dates for Investitures and Novitiate Year Endings

2013-2014

Investiture Sunday July 21st, 2013 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 12th, 2014

2014-2015

Investiture Sunday July 20th, 2014 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 11th, 2015

2015-2016

Investiture Sunday July 19th, 2015 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 16th, 2016

2016-2017

Investiture Sunday July 24th, 2016 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 15th, 2017

2017-2018

Investiture Sunday July 23rd, 2017 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 14th, 2018

2018-2019

Investiture Sunday July 22nd, 2018 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 13th, 2019

2019-2020

Investiture Sunday July 21st, 2019 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 11th, 2020

2020-2021

Investiture Sunday July 19th, 2020 Novitiate Year Ends Saturday July 17th, 2021

2. Peer Evaluations

Peer Evaluation
Evaluation of Br. _____
By Br. _____
Date: _____

Appendix IV

Additional Suggestions for Curriculum

1. List of possible topics to be covered in classes on Franciscan Spirituality

- The foundations of Franciscan sister-brotherhood
- A Franciscan approach to the environment
- The Trinitarian and Christological basis of Franciscan prayer
- The spirituality of Franciscan poverty (esp. VI PCO)
- The spirituality of Franciscan obedience
- The spirituality of Franciscan celibate chastity
- The spirituality of Franciscan humility and minority (esp. PCO VII)
- The spirituality of the San Damiano Cross
- Clare's contribution to Franciscan contemplative prayer.
- Bonaventure's contribution to Franciscan contemplative prayer
- The early Capuchin way of contemplative prayer
- Interreligious dialogue in the Franciscan Spirit
- The Writings of St. Francis

2. Topics for reflection/integration on Capuchin-Franciscan Values

- Poverty (esp. VI PCO)
- Obedience
- Chaste celibacy
- Humility
- Minority (esp. VII PCO)
- Simple living
- Option for the poor
- Contemplative Prayer
- Fraternity (esp. Br. John Corriveau's letters)
- Selflessness (Penance)
- Mission
- Work
- A Franciscan Use of Power (esp. VII PCO)
- Itinerancy

Appendix V
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