



The Constitution
of the
Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Martini

Chapter 1: Name.

The name of the Fraternity shall be, “**Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Martini**” (The Priestly Fraternity of S. Martin), and its initials shall be “**FSSM**” which shall determine a priest to be definitively incorporated, a full member.

Chapter 2: Purpose and Motto of the Fraternity.

- §1. The **primary purpose** of the Fraternity is brotherly support of fellow priests by example and encouragement. The Fraternity is committed to the catholic tradition, the example of the saints, and encourages priests in their daily life of prayer, study and pastoral care.
- §2. The Fraternity is committed to the classical English liturgical tradition. This is expressed in the Motto of the Fraternity, **PVLCHRITVDO SEMPER ANTIQVA NOVA** (Beauty ever ancient, ever new)
- §3. The Fraternity lives out this commitment in the context of **pastoral ministry** to the lay faithful who themselves are attached to the classical English liturgical tradition. Although maintaining their identity as secular clergy, members of the Fraternity are supported personally and in their priestly ministry by their common bond, which also lends itself to celebrating the liturgy with a greater degree of solemnity.
- §4. It is important that all Catholics, whichever form of worship they choose for themselves, have an awareness and respect for the way in which their predecessors in the Communion of Saints worshipped. In this regard, the presence of the historical forms of worship is an invitation to filial piety, and an opportunity to learn in humility. The Fraternity witnesses to this continuity of worship and doctrine through its example and especially through the organisation of **Parish Missions**.

Chapter 3: Membership

- §1. Membership in the Fraternity shall be open to all priests who can authenticate that they have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders from an orthodox bishop within a valid Apostolic Succession, and who are committed to the **Purpose of the Fraternity** and to the Fraternity’s **Rule of Life**.
- §2. It should be noted that by precedent those who have made profession, whether perpetual or temporal, within a religious order, whether first order or tertiary, or another religious institution which takes vows, are ineligible for membership within this Fraternity. Any priest wishing to join the Fraternity shall communicate to the Superior any membership which he may hold within a religious organisation.
- §3. Priests wishing to enter the Fraternity shall apply in writing to the Superior. Upon reception of the letter and relevant documents, the priest shall be known as a **Candidate**

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- of the Fraternity. The Superior shall examine the documents and inquire about the character of the priest. If the Superior is not satisfied he shall contact the individual priest and inform him of his decision in writing, informing the priest of his right to appeal to the Chapter.
- §4. If the Superior is satisfied that the priest is of a high character and committed to the purposes of the Fraternity, he shall inform him of his decision in writing. The priest shall be known as a **Postulant** until his reception into the Fraternity. The period of postulancy shall be no less than six months and no more than two years.
- §5. Reception into the Fraternity shall be before the Superior according to the Customary. The postulant shall sign the **Book of Membership** which shall signify his acceptance of the Purposes and Rule of Life of the Fraternity. After reception the priest is definitively incorporated, a **full member** of the Fraternity with all rights and privileges that entails. The member shall inform his parish, parish council, and ordinary of his membership within the Fraternity as soon as possible after he has become a full member.
- §6. Men who are studying for Holy Orders wishing to be incorporated in the Fraternity shall contact the Superior in writing. The Superior shall examine the documents and inquire about the character of the individual. If the Superior is not satisfied he shall contact the individual and inform him of his decision in writing. The Superior's decision is final. The individual, however, may reapply for membership when he has received holy orders.
- §7. If the Superior is satisfied that the individual is of a high character and committed to the purposes of the Fraternity, he shall inform him of his decision in writing. The individual shall be known as a **Novice** until his reception of the Tonsure (or ordination to the Subdeaconate or Diaconate). Upon the reception of the Tonsure (or ordination to the Subdeaconate or Diaconate) he shall be received into the Fraternity according to the Customary.
- §8. Members who wish to leave the Fraternity shall communicate their desire to the Superior in writing stating the reason. The Superior shall issue an **Indult** for the member to leave the Fraternity and remove his name from the roll of the Fraternity.

Chapter 4: Rule of Life

- §1. All members, being priests of the Church of God, are bound to the promises they made before God and their bishop at ordination. These promises can be distilled to **prayer, study, and obedience.**
- §2. The members of the Fraternity commit themselves to a life of prayer through the reverent offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the daily celebration of the Divine Office. Members are committed to upholding their brethren in prayer. Members may choose to use the **First Thursday** of the month as a special day of prayer for the Fraternity. Each member shall offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (if possible, the Votive Mass of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest) at least once a year for the intention of the Fraternity.
- §3. Members shall at all times endeavour to offer their life of prayer within the context of the classical English liturgical tradition.
- §4. The members of the Fraternity shall be committed to the study of God's Holy Word, the 'catholic fathers and ancient bishops' of the Church, and those areas which aid their priestly ministry. Fraternity members are encouraged to share their knowledge and insights with fellow members of the Fraternity. The Fraternity is especially committed to the study of ceremonial in reverent service to the Church and to aid members in their life of prayer.
- §5. Members shall be obedient to the catholic tradition of the Church. They shall work in reverent submission and follow the expressed wishes of their Ordinary. Members shall

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- work to promote the spiritual ministry of their bishop and to interpret all his actions in the best possible light.
- §6. Members shall lead an interior and exterior life of holiness and shall excel in rendering the laity an example of virtue and good deeds. They shall wear a decent ecclesiastical habit.
- §7. A careful examination of this Rule of Life should be made by all at least quarterly. Members of the Fraternity are encouraged to make regular use of sacramental confession, to seek the guidance of a spiritual director from within the Fraternity, and to withdraw from the world for a period of time to reflect on their priestly vocation.

Chapter 5: Officials

- §1. The Fraternity shall be governed by the **Superior** and the **Prior**. The Chapter shall elect these Office Bearers when it meets at its **Regular Chapter**. The Superior and Prior shall be eligible for re-election. The Superior and Prior shall be assisted in their work by the **Treasurer**.
- §2. The **Superior** shall be a member of the Fraternity who is exemplary in his priestly life and has shown a passionate commitment to the Fraternity and its purposes. The Superior shall be responsible for the running of the Fraternity. He may use members of the Fraternity to assist him in this task. He shall receive new members and help in the planning of Parish Missions. No event shall be offered in the name of the Fraternity without the expressed wishes of the Superior. The Superior, in all official Fraternity correspondence, shall use the Code of Arms of the Superior. The Superior shall assume office with the **Oath of Office** as in the Customary.
- §3. The **Prior** shall be a member of the Fraternity who is exemplary in his priestly life and has shown a passionate commitment to the Fraternity and its purposes. He shall be the keeper of the Book of Membership and shall keep records of the business which the Chapter transacts. He shall assist the Superior in the running of the Fraternity. The Superior shall install the Prior into his office using the Customary.
- §4. The **Treasurer** shall be a member of the Fraternity who will assist in the financial running of the Fraternity. The Treasurer shall report to the Superior and shall present a report to the Chapter. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Superior with the counsel of the Prior and Chapter.

Chapter 6: Chapter

- §1. The Fraternity shall meet in **Regular Chapter** at least every two years. The Superior shall be responsible for the planning of the Chapter and shall inform all members of the time and place of the Chapter meeting within at least two calendar months of the date. All members are required to attend the Chapter meetings. Inability to attend shall be communicated to the Superior, with reason for absence, in writing.
- §2. A **Special Chapter** of the Fraternity may be held at the discretion of the Superior on a call of one-third of all the members. The time and place of the **Special Chapter** shall be communicated to all full members within at least one calendar month of the date. The notice of **Special Chapter**, issued by the Superior, shall state the reason for the **Special Chapter**. The particulars shall be left to the Superior who will seek the advise of the Prior.
- §3. The Regular Chapter shall begin with a **Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost**. All liturgical celebrations within Chapter shall be celebrated by members of the Fraternity. The Chapter shall offer their life of prayer in community for the duration of the Chapter. If possible a **Requiem** shall be said for departed brethren. The Chapter shall close with a **Votive Mass of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Supreme and Eternal High Priest**.

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- §4. The Chapter shall receive reports from the Superior on the work and mission of the Fraternity. It shall also receive any other reports including a report of the finances of the Fraternity.
- §5. All full members present shall have a vote. Any changes to this Constitution or the Customary shall be by a two-third majority of Chapter. All other business, including elections, shall be transacted by a simple majority.
- §6. The Chapter shall elect the **Superior** of the Fraternity.
- §7. The Chapter shall elect the **Prior** of the Fraternity.
- §8. The Superior, with the assistance of the Prior and Chapter, shall appoint a **Treasurer**.
- §9. The Chapter shall unanimously nominate a **Bishop Benefactor**.

Chapter 7: Bishop Benefactor.

The **Bishop Benefactor** shall be the guardian of the Constitution and Customary and shall promote the Fraternity and its aims. He shall not be an Official of the Fraternity in the strict sense, but a spiritual guide to the Fraternity and especially to the Superior. He shall be an arbitrator in any questions or disputes. He, however, shall have no authority in the running of the Fraternity and shall not have a vote in Chapter.

Chapter 8: Of the Causes which shall separate Members from the Fraternity.

- §1. It is our deepest desire and prayer that all members of the Fraternity should persevere in this fraternal fellowship. Yet, it is only right that provision be made for the separating of those whose state of life is no longer in conformity with the Fraternity's **Purposes** and **Rule of Life**. Therefore, the following causes shall be deemed sufficient for the separation of members from the Fraternity.
- §2. Deposition from the Sacred Ministry or renunciation of the Sacred Ministry.
- §3. Information given in the process of seeking membership which is later found to be false or incomplete (such as membership within religious organisation which purposes, stated or otherwise, contradict or work against the **Purposes** of this Fraternity) shall be grounds for removal from the Fraternity.
- §4. Members who fail to uphold the purposes of the Fraternity, or whose life does not reflect their divine call, shall be removed from membership by a two-thirds majority of Chapter. If a member is convicted in a civil and/or ecclesiastical court of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct he shall be removed instantly from the membership.
- §5. Failure to attend two successive Chapters of the Fraternity without serious cause and dispensation by the Superior.