

**CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS  
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER, U.S.A.**

**Ritual Ceremony: INSTALLATION OF A SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT**

*The one presiding at the ceremony is, ideally, the provincial spiritual assistant of the friar province to which a local fraternity is bonded or by which a spiritual assistant is appointed. In lieu of this, the spiritual assistant of the higher level would preside. The new spiritual assistant stands before the community. The one presiding begins by proclaiming:*

In the name of the Lord! Amen!

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order states:

*(Reader #1) “as a concrete sign of communion and co-responsibility, the councils on various levels, in keeping with the constitutions, shall ask for suitable and well-prepared religious for spiritual assistance. They should make this request to the superiors of the four religious Franciscan families, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries” (Art. 26).*

**Presider:** The General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order state:

*(Reader #2) “To be a witness of Franciscan spirituality and of the fraternal affection of the religious toward the secular Franciscans, and to be a bond of communion between his Order and the SFO, the spiritual assistant should be a Franciscan religious, member of the First Order or the TOR. When it is not possible to give a spiritual assistant to the fraternity, the competent major superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to: (a) religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes; (b) diocesan clerics or other persons, specially prepared for such service, who are members of the SFO; (c) other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious” (Art. 89.3& 4).*

**Presider:** The Statutes for the Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order, drawn up by the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants and approved by the Union of Ministers General, say:

**(Reader #3) (Option #1 for Local Assistants)**

*“The local assistant is appointed by the Minister Provincial according to the law proper to his own Order and after having heard the council of the fraternity concerned. The local assistant is to promote the communion within the fraternity and between it and the First Order and TOR [and] to see to it that a true vital reciprocity between the religious fraternity and the secular fraternities is established. He/She is to promote the active presence of the fraternity in the local church and its sincere communion with it” (Statutes, # 27-28)*

**(Option #2 for Regional Assistants)**

*“It belongs to the regional assistant to collaborate with the regional council in the work of the spiritual and apostolic animation of the SFO in the region and, in particular in the formation of the secular leaders; to coordinate the service of spiritual assistance to the SFO at the regional level and promote the interest of the friars, and the superiors with respect to the SFO; to provide for the pastoral visit of the local councils of the SFO and for the presence at the local elective chapters. The regional assistants are a bond of communion between the SFO regional council and the religious superiors... [and] promote the active interest of the SFO in the pastoral concerns and plans of the Church” (Statutes, # 47-48).*

**(Option #3 for National Assistants)**

*“It belongs to the national assistant to collaborate with the national council in the world of the spiritual and apostolic animation of the SFO in the nation and, in particular, in the formation of the secular leaders; to coordinate the service of spiritual assistance to the SFO at the national level and promote the interest of the friars and the superiors with respect to the SFO; to provide for the pastoral visit of the regional councils of the SFO and for the presence at the regional elective chapter. The national assistants are a bond of communion between the SFO national council and the religious superiors [and]... promote the active interest of the SFO in the pastoral concerns and plans of the Church” (Statutes, # 41-42).*

**Presider:** I now ask the minister of this fraternity to read the letter of appointment for the spiritual assistant.

*(The minister of the fraternity now reads the letter of appointment.)*

**Presider:** I, therefore, as the provincial spiritual assistant of the Friar Province of N. N.

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**(or, if the one presiding is not the provincial spiritual assistant):**

I, as the delegate of N. N., provincial spiritual assistant of the Friar Province of N. N.,

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**(or at the installation of a national assistant):**

I, representing the President of the *[insert the name of the friars' conference]*

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do hereby install you as the spiritual assistant of the local/regional/national fraternity of N. N.

Now let us share with our new spiritual assistant the Word of Life from the Gospel of St. Luke:

**While the one presiding lays hands on the kneeling spiritual assistant,**

**(Reader # 4):** *“Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:*

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,*

*to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.*

*Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

**The one presiding then says:**

Let us pray for your new spiritual assistant: *(momentary pause)*

All praise be yours, O Lord, for you yourself

and for the love and concern you show to our Franciscan Family.

Look kindly upon N. N., your servant, our brother/sister here before us,

who will serve this Secular Franciscan Fraternity of N. N. as its spiritual assistant.

May the gifts of wisdom and understanding, knowledge and counsel,

inner strength and honest holiness, with awe and wonder in your presence

be his/hers in abundance as he/she assists this community

by the working of the Holy Spirit

and in the name of Christ the Lord.

Amen.

*(All come forward to greet the new spiritual assistant. A festive hymn may be sung.)*