

# Building Relationships with the help of Jesus

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Relationships is the third aspect of our national focus for 2022-2025. The Gospel and our Rule call us to be in relationship. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt 18:20 NAB

Reflecting on Jesus’ reminder from Matthew 18:20 – if two or three are gathered in his name, then He is there, we recognize that relationships with our Franciscan family members are especially important.

From August 22, the National Fraternity Council experienced our fraternal and pastoral



relationship is strained a bit? What happens if there is conflict?

Of course, none of us are perfect. We are called to live the Gospel. We will fall short at times. However, there is no place for racist attitudes or remarks in living the Gospel. Respectful dialogue is critical for our fraternal way of life. However, as we know from OFS Rule Article 7, we are called to

daily, ongoing conversion. Thus, we must never lose hope that our transgressions can be overcome. We must take it seriously and be committed to start again each day.

For council members encountering these situations, they may need to implement Jesus’ teachings referenced earlier in Matthew 18 (verses 15-17) which are also woven into the procedures specified in our General Constitutions Articles 56.2 and 58.2. If our members don’t feel they have the skills to effectively address the issues, then please reach out to the other council members or the members of the next higher council level for assistance.

Let us be encouraged to look for opportunities to build relationships:

- within or outside the Franciscan family (OFS Rule Articles 1, 2, 12, 17, 19),
- with other members of the Church (OFS Rule Articles 5, 6, 8),
- with people in our communities (OFS Rule Articles 13, 14, 15, 16) or
- with the non-human part of creation (OFS Rule Articles 11, 18).

I am challenged to embrace the opportunities for perfect joy, so that God’s glory can shine. May the Holy Spirit lead us as we listen, discern, and go forth to build up the kingdom of God.

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visitations as required by Article 26 of the OFS Rule and Articles 92-95 of the OFS General Constitutions. We are connected with our fourth fraternity – the international fraternity. Through this process, we continued to build relationships with our international family. Although the official report is not expected for several months, the initial feedback was overall positive. The visitation identified areas for us to work on which fit in with our priorities and theme.

Over the last year, the National Executive Council (NEC) has worked on building or enhancing relationships with the Regional Executive Councils (RECs). We learned that some of our RECs have grappled with issues. Relationships are strained. Some relationships are wounded because of harsh behavior. We received a report of blatant racist behavior.

When relationships are good – it is easy for them to flourish. What are our reactions when the