Let us serve like Jesus - Let us Journey together

Ecclesial Witness at Fraternity Elections

CIOFS Spiritual Assistants Manual: Chapter 4

5.6. In the elective chapters

The SFO Rule says very little about elections. In Art. 21 we read: “On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister (or president) who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions.” The General Constitutions of the SFO say in Art. 76: 2. The elective assembly, or chapter, will be presided over by the minister of the immediately higher level, or by his or her delegate, who confirms the election.... The spiritual assistant of the immediately higher level or his delegate is to be present as a witness of the communion with the First Order and the TOR.... 3. The president of the chapter and the assistant of the higher level do not have the right to vote. The assistant (or assistants) of the fraternity that is holding an elective chapter does not enjoy active voice, as explained in the Statutes for Assistance, Art. 12.3: “Only in economic matters and in elections at any level does he or she not enjoy the right to vote.” It is necessary to keep in mind: - In the local fraternity this right belongs solely to the professed members of the same fraternity.65 - At the other levels, “the secular members of the outgoing council” have active voice.66 The assistant of the next higher level does not act as president of the elective chapter, nor does he vote. He is present as witness of the communion that should exist between the lay leaders and the friars, and between the fraternity and the First Order and TOR. On the occasion of the chapter he shall carry out his specific duty, which is that of spiritual and apostolic animator and formator of the lay leaders, stimulating the chapter’s interest in the pastoral problems and plans of the Church. In order to present himself as a witness of communion, the assistant shall live it in his attitude, words and actions. He must be convinced that the Franciscan vocation and charism, lived by both religious and laity, demonstrate the vitality of the Franciscan Family. His service as witness of communion is of great help, but he must not take the place of the president of the chapter, to whom belong the guidance, coordination and animation of the chapter.