Let us serve like Jesus - Let us Journey together

**Suspension**

1. Suspension is an action of the local Council in response to matters involving a member that cannot be allowed to continue without harm to the fraternity. The process is based on the General Constitutions (GC 58) and The Rule (R 23).
2. All references to Council in this article are to the Local Fraternity Council, of which the Spiritual Assistant is an integral member, who must be included in all discussions. If the fraternity lacks a Spiritual Assistant, the Regional Spiritual Assistant or a designated alternate person may substitute for consultation purposes but without a vote on Council.
3. Council, mainly through the Minister and Spiritual Assistant, must always seek dialogue with the member in difficulty or considered for possible sanction, and evaluate the considered action or request with love and prudence.
4. Fraternal dialogue is fundamental in the OFS and permeates every aspect of the Order’s life. Dialogue must be effective and concrete, with personal meetings, not simply formal correspondence. Documentation in Council Minutes is important as well.
5. It is a fundamental responsibility of the Council, however, to protect and safeguard the fraternity (GC 50, NS 18.9) lest a disruptive member cause harm to the whole.
6. If the action to change a member’s status is taken, the person is no longer permitted to attend fraternity functions or have a voice in fraternity matters (GC 56.3).
   1. If not professed, the Council may ask the member to return materials given him/her by the fraternity, including any official symbol.
7. A Suspension may be considered by Council after the repeated and prolonged default in the obligations of the life of the fraternity, disruption of the cohesiveness of the fraternity, conduct in serious opposition to the Rule (GC 56.2), or other serious causes only after these are discussed by Council in dialogue with the person at fault. This status is only for Candidates or those who are Professed. Alternatives to suspension should be considered by Council. Only in the case of obstinacy or relapse may Council decide, with a secret vote, to suspend someone. This suspension must be for a specified period, and Council must communicate its decision in writing to the person concerned (GC 56.2). This period may be shortened if the member applies to return to the fraternity, leaves, or takes steps to withdraw. The period may be extended by Council. During the period of suspension, the member is excluded from the gatherings and activities of the fraternity, including the right of active and passive voice, but membership in the Order itself is not affected. Since the purpose of suspension is for the member to change his/her conduct or fulfill obligations of life in fraternity, Council should maintain regular contact with the member.
8. A member whose status is Suspended and who desires to return to active life with the fraternity must make a written application to Council, who will discuss the request and its reasons with the member, then review the request, evaluate it with charity and prudence, and, by secret ballot, vote whether or not to accept the request. If not accepted, the member is informed in writing, preferably with a reason for the action, and the member remains suspended. Council may either extend the suspension period or consider Dismissal.
9. If the request is accepted, the member is invited to rejoin the fraternity and participate in fraternity life for a period of time set by Council. During this probationary period, the member will faithfully attend all fraternity gatherings and participate in fraternity life. If a member has been suspended for more than 12 months, Council will, in addition, direct the member to undergo an appropriate formative process using the current formation materials recommended by OFS-USA and the Regional Fraternity.
10. At the end of this period, Council will once more, after fraternal dialogue with the individual and discussion among themselves, vote in secret to determine whether the member’s request should be accepted, extended, or declined. If accepted, the suspension is totally lifted and the member is lovingly welcomed back; if extended, the probationary period is extended for a period of time set by Council; if declined, the member remains suspended and is once more not permitted to attend any fraternity functions. In all cases the member is informed in writing of the decision.