



An Introduction to

The CONFRATERNITY OF ST PETER

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Our blessed Lord has bestowed the Catholic Church with a treasury of all the graces and all the means necessary for salvation. She is rich in spirituality that fills every page of Scripture and is transcribed in the annals of Tradition. Having all the means necessary to Salvation, there is no limit to the aspects of spirituality that are within the Church. Devotion to the Eucharist, poverty, devotion to our Blessed Mother, either in honor of Her sorrows, or in honor of Her purity, and so on. We can go on forever enumerating all of the holy devotions that can be found in the bosom of the Church.

And that is why, within the Church, there are so many Congregations, Religious Orders, Associations – both lay and of clerics, etc., each taking either a virtue, or an exhortation from the Gospels, or some other aspect of spirituality to fulfill in a special way and thus work out their salvation.

And so we find the Franciscans, who work out their salvation by the practice of Holy Poverty. Or the Benedictines with their faithful observance of *ora et labora* (*work and prayer*). There are those who dedicate their lives to contemplation, others to acts of charity, for instance working in hospitals, or teaching the youth, or aiding the poor. And the list goes on.

When St Francis began his Order, he had no intention of founding the Franciscans. He wanted to live a life of poverty, and save his soul by renouncing the things of this world. But soon he had several men come to him and desire to unite themselves to his observance in order to save their souls by living the holy life that he was living. Thus was born the Friars Minor. Soon St Claire approached St Francis desiring to share in this holy way of life, and after ironing out the details an order of nuns was born, the Poor Claires. The Friars Minor came to be known as the *First Order*, and the sisters were then known as the *Second Order*. Finally, families and other lay people desired to unite themselves to the spirituality of the Franciscans while still remaining in their lay vocations, and for them St Francis instituted the *Third Order*.

Not only did the Franciscans have a third order, but almost all religious congregations have lay people of all walks of life who desire to bond themselves to the spirituality of the congregation and sanctify themselves by that unity. Some orders have oblates, others have third orders, others have associations, whereby the faithful can attach themselves to the order and sanctify themselves by that spirituality and the graces flowing from that unity.

For some time now, laity from all over the world have expressed their desire to unite themselves to the Fraternity of St Peter and to share the Fraternity's spirituality in order to facilitate their sanctification. In each of our parishes there are those who dedicate many hours of their time to cleaning the church, or keeping the grounds, or training servers, or playing the organ, or cleaning the linens, or buying the flowers, or cleaning the rectory, or maintenance, and so many other ways to aid the priests of the Fraternity and make the Traditional Mass possible and readily available.

Besides those who donate their manual labor for the love of Our Blessed Lord, there are so many that donate their hard-earned money, often times depriving themselves of small luxuries, in order to help fund the work that the Fraternity does. Then there are others who are the Fraternity's most faithful benefactors: those who make the work of the Fraternity possible by their prayers.

For all of these good people and for all those who desire to unite themselves to the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter while continuing their many walks of life, the Fraternity has instituted a sodality whereby lay people may unite themselves to the Fraternity by the holy bonds of prayer. This sodality is called the *Confraternity of St Peter*.

The Confraternity is for any person of any walk of life over the age of 14 who desires to unite his or herself to the Fraternity by the bonds of prayer.

The duties of the Confraternity consists of reciting a decade of the Rosary for the three main intentions of the Confraternity each day, together with the prayer of the Confraternity, and of having a holy Mass offered once each year for the same intentions.

If you pray the Holy Rosary as a family, one of the decades of that Rosary will suffice to fulfill the first part of the Confraternity's obligations, and you may desire to include the prayer of the Confraternity among the prayers that you may already pray after the Hail Holy Queen. But one Rosary does not fulfill the obligation of one decade for five days. A decade should be said each individual day.

To fulfill the requirement of having Holy Mass offered for the intentions of the Confraternity each year, you are free to request any priest to celebrate it at any time during the year. Preferably it should be offered by a Fraternity priest or at least be a Traditional Mass. In order not to forget whether or not you have had the Mass offered any particular year, you may wish to choose a date each year that will mark as a reminder, for instance your birthday, or the date of your first Holy Communion. When you request the Mass, simply ask for it to be celebrated on that day, or on the closest available day. The intention of the Mass would be simply *the intentions of the Confraternity of St Peter*.

The three intentions of the Confraternity are:

1. The sanctification of the members of the Fraternity
2. For vocations to the Fraternity
3. For the fruitfulness of the Fraternity's apostolic labors.

The duties of the Confraternity do not bind under sin. They are voluntary acts of charity that bind you to the Confraternity and the Fraternity by the bonds of prayer. Nevertheless, you should make the effort not to become negligent in the recitation of the decade of the Rosary and the prayer of the Confraternity on a daily basis. Each year, on the Feast of the Chair of St Peter (February 22nd) the membership and commitment of the members of the Confraternity is renewed tacitly. It would be a good practice for you (although not necessary) to assist at Holy Mass on that day and at some moment of the Holy Mass, to offer a prayer uniting yourself to the other members of the Confraternity and the Confraternity's intentions.

The benefits that you receive from being a member of the Confraternity stem from the spiritual bond that the Confraternity has to the Fraternity. You will be among the particular recipients of the Fraternity's priests' and seminarians' daily prayers. Also the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered once a month for all the members of the Confraternity by the Chaplain of each area.

It is furthermore foreseen that in the future there will be recollections, retreats, instructions and similar spiritual benefits for the members of the Confraternity.

To join the Confraternity you must first know its duties and be willing to commit yourself to fulfilling them. Fill out the enrollment form that you may find at the back of a FSSP church or chapel, or request a form from any FSSP apostolate. After you have completed the form, send it in the the address provided, and you will receive a certificate in the mail, formally admitting you into the ranks of the Confraternity. Each region of the Confraternity will have a enrollment book listing all of the Confraternity's members. There is no stipend attached to membership. Simply fill out and send in the enrollment form. The Fraternity does not seek money from you by your membership in the Confraternity, but rather the much more valuable donation of your prayers. Nevertheless, there will be expenses attached to the Confraternity, and if you are interested in helping fund this holy cause it would be greatly appreciated.

These beginnings of the Confraternity of St Peter are small, and while the benefits are great, the obligations are few. Only time will tell what God wills the Confraternity to grow into, and what may blossom forth from this holy Work.

PRO DEO — PRO ECCLESIA — PRO ANIMIS