

Bringing out of our storehouse the flesh and blood of our tradition in such a way as to feed future generations . . .

The Prophetic Heart (1994) — Joseph P. Chinnici OFM

THE RULE PROJECT

Metanoia and Mercy

“Whoever will observe these things shall be filled with the blessing of the most high Father in heaven, and on earth with the blessing of the beloved Son, with the Holy Spirit, and with all virtues and with all the saints.

And I, Brother Francis, your little servant, in so far as I am able, confirm to you within and without this most holy blessing.”

Testament 40-41; TOR Rule 9:32

1967 - “French Document ... Dutch Rule ... **1969** - “Go To My Brethren” (USA) ... **1974** - “Madrid Statement” ... **1976** - Creation of International Franciscan Bureau (BFI) for supervision of a revised Rule ... **1979** - Assisi Congress: creation of International Franciscan Commission (CFI): nine-members for the organization of the Rule Project ... **1980** - naming of the “Working Group” of nine members from eight countries (Margaret Carney OSF and Thaddeus Horgan SA for the USA) ... **September, 1980** - Reute, Germany (new Rule draft written) ... **April, 1981** - Washington D.C., Franciscan Federation Research Committee processes American response to Reute Draft (59 of the 73 congregations represented by the Federation responded) ... **May 1981** - Brussels: new revision formulated ... **August, 1981** - Indianapolis IN: Federation Annual Conference (AFC), Margaret and Thaddeus present Brussels Draft... **March 1-10, 1982**- Rome General Assembly of 200 Major Superiors from around the world - approval of Rule by a vote of 188- 2 ... **April 30, 1983** ... Pope John Paul II confirms Rule in the Brief, *Franciscanum vitae propositum* with papal approval dated **December 8, 1982** ... **October, 1985** - First Assembly of the new International Franciscan Conference (IFC) held in Assisi.

“The spirit of an Order has been referred to as its soul; it is what informs it, gives life to it and all its elements, giving it a distinctive character.

Living a Tertiary spirituality is a particular way of living Franciscanism. Our Rule is our common bond as Franciscans reminding us of our spiritual heritage. This must ever be in our lives - a dynamic force.”

James Mungovan OSF - General Minister, Brothers of the TOR of Penance, Ireland



The TAU

From the time of Ezekiel the sign of the TAU, marked on the forehead of those turning to God in faith and repentance has long represented faithfulness and wholehearted love. It was used for healing and victory.

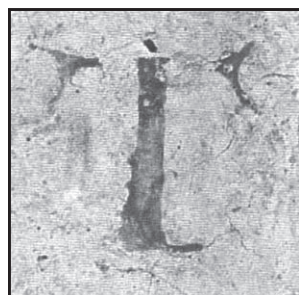
Pope Innocent III, evoked the sign of the TAU from Ezekiel when opening the Fourth Lateran Council in 1216 calling for the renewal of the Church, “Mercy will be granted to those to bear the TAU, a mark of a life of penance and renewal in Christ.”

And so Francis, who was present at the Council, wanted to sign himself with the TAU, and his brothers along with him. The TAU became the sign of the little Band’s mission: the preaching of faith and repentance (Rule of 1221:23).

Thomas of Celano, writing in 1252, notes, “The TAU symbol had, above all others, his preference. Francis used it as a signature for his letters, and he painted a drawing of it on the walls of all the cells.” One of these paintings, believed to be created by Francis, is found in the little chapel of Mary Magdalen at Fonte Columbo in the Rieti Valley where Francis wrote his Rule.

Another very precious document, housed in the Basilica of St. Francis, is Francis’ own handwritten blessing for Brother Leo — signed with the TAU.

Above all else, the TAU meant mission for Francis: a mission to proclaim the Goodness of God by a wholehearted following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ because of whom all life is sacred.



“The French Document”

Franciscan Sisters of Apostolic Life



“By their whole-hearted observance of the commandments and loving practice of God’s counsels the sisters will proclaim the goodness of God and extol God in all they do.” [9.32]

- Begun in 1976 and published in 1972, this Rule arose from the meetings of Major Superiors and Novice Directors of 25 congregations of Franciscan women in France and French-speaking Belgium.
- Under the direction of the Friars Minor and the Capuchins, the French Document emerged as the most prominent among the various statements proposed on the new Rule and it becomes the “Working Document.”
- Addressed to “Sisters” only, this Document was mostly an adaptation of Francis’ Rule of 1223 and thus it did not completely represent the entire Order; nor, did it address the penitential spirituality of the T.O.R. charism.

“The Dutch Rule”



“To all who believe in Christ, the gospel is the first and highest rule of life and love is the summation of the law ... This imitation of Christ binds us together into a community of Sisters and Brothers. Each one is personally called to this; bears responsibility for the whole, and has his or her particular worth and personal task ... according to the Gospel, proposed to us in particular by St.Francis.”

- Published in 1967 as the work of 19 congregations of Dutch origin, this Rule presented the Franciscan identity for clarity among the whole Church in Vatican II language.
- This “Holland Draft” did address both the Brothers and the Sisters.

“Go To My Brethren”

A Spiritual Document for Apostolic Communities of Franciscan Women in USA



“Bound together with Francis in a professed attachment to Christ, to the Gospel way of life and to our companions in this call, we will continue to create the Franciscan mission as we search for its meaning... The Franciscan is called to experience the indescribable self-giving of Love poured out in Christ Jesus... Like the sign of the ‘Tau’ by which Francis wanted his brethren to be known, his family continues to be a remnant elected to a prophetic covenant of faith. Their conversion to life in the spirit brings a faith marked by:poverty, penance of realized obedience, gospel brotherhood/ sisterhood, prayer, and peace.”

- Commissioned by the Franciscan Federation in 1969, this Spiritual Document was based on the Sources used for the re-discovery of the Penitential Charism; most especially Francis' *Letter to The Faithful* and "*The Testament.*"
- As a non-juridical presentation of Franciscan principles, this document was seen as a possible springboard for the practical work of writing constitutions.

"The Madrid Statement"

"A Statement of Understanding of Franciscan Penitential Life"



"With a joyful spirit and with undivided hearts the sisters and brothers are freed for a universal love expressed in a life of conversion and dedication to God and work among the People of God [1Cor7:32-35; L.G.42].

Let them especially bring to those in sorrow the joy of God and to broken humanity the healing of Christ.[L.G.46] The friars and sisters of this Order of Penance are called to be messengers of peace ... They are to share each other's sorrows and joys and by prayer and work are to support one another in fraternity as an expression of their love." Chapters 3:7;5:14-15; 6:18

- In 1973 Thaddeus Horgan S.A. and Roland Faley T.O.R. composed the initial document, and presented it to the Fourth Franciscan Tertiary Interobediential Congress in Madrid, Spain in 1974. **Decision:** need for a new T.O.R. Rule that would express the Franciscan *Tertiary* charism of penance and *metanoia*.
- The "Madrid Statement" is translated into Italian, Spanish and German and becomes "A position paper, an interim step towards a new rule" (Louis Secondo T.O.R. - Minister General)
- A Study Guide on the Madrid Statement is compiled and edited by Rose Margaret Delaney SFP and Thaddeus Horgan S.A. and published in 1974 by the Franciscan Federation.
- The Document offers a clear notion of *penance* in the biblical concept of *metanoia* or ongoing conversion while it also accents the witness of life as Franciscans in being messengers of peace and reconciliation. It gives expression to continuous conversion as that of a grateful response of a joyful heart to an All-Good God.

International Franciscan Bureau, 1976

In 1976, given the energy and presence of all the various Documents, Statements, and Rule Drafts after Vatican II, a new Organization was created in Western Europe to communicate with the more than four hundred different congregations and monasteries belonging to the T.O.R. tradition. The **goal** of this communication was the *approval of a NEW TEXT for the ancient Rule* that would incorporate:

- * A post-conciliar theological perspective and
- * the riches of recently re-discovered Franciscan sources.

June, 1980 - International Franciscan Commission(CFI): Assisi

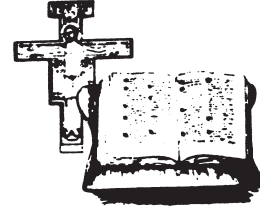
- The “**Work Group**” appointed for the actual writing of the Rule:

- S.Isabella Ciruzzi, *Italy*
- S.Elena Echavarren, *Spain*
- S.Ignatia Gomez M.S., *India*
- S.Marianne Jungbluth F.H.S., *Germany*
- S.Marie Benoit Lucbernet S.F., *France*
- S.Margaret Carney O.S.F., *United States*
- Thaddeus Horgan S.A., *United States*
- S.Maria Luiza Piva C.F., *Brazil*
- S.Honoria Montalgo F.M.I., *Colombia*



Work Group Members await the papal audience in Clementine Hall at the Vatican, March, 1982. l to r: S.Odette Huron, translator; Honoria Montalgo FMI, Margaret Carney OSF, Jean-Francois Godet OFM, animator; Thaddeus Horgan S.A., Marie Benoit Luebnet SF, Maria Luiza Piva CF, and Marianne Jungbluth.

September, 1980 - REUTE DRAFT of RULE
The first of three major Drafts of the Rule



- Work on this FIRST Draft demonstrated a deep desire for unity and for carrying out the Work Group's common responsibility to the Franciscan Family as well as the desire to bridge cultural barriers.
- Decision made at Reute to cast the Rule in the words of *Francis* himself and to make adequate use of *contemporary* Franciscan scholarship in the use of the primary texts.
- The Reute Rule experience addressed several needs:
 - For careful study of the role that aggregation to a male branch of the Franciscan Family has played in the formation of the *identity* of women's congregations;
 - To grapple with the cultural and linguistic differences of the various nations;
 - To wrestle with the differences in history, method, and conviction about T.O.R. Identity;
 - For a clearer grasp of what *penance* as a way of life meant to Francis and Clare.
- Decisions were made to:
 - Use the structure of Francis' **1223 Rule** for style and sequence;
 - Consider Francis' **Testament** as a model for the work since it begins with what many recognize as the *propria indolis* of the Third Order Regular, "*The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way ...*"
 - Honor the primacy of *metanoia* as a specific characteristic of this gospel response while also emphasizing the mutuality of Franciscan spirit and life which the T.O.R. sisters and brothers share with the Friars Minor of all branches, the Poor Clares, and the Secular Franciscans.

“A Note of Gratitude”
“Report from Reute, September 21, 1980”

From: Sister Margaret Carney OSF
 To: Members of the Council of the Franciscan Federation, USA

“Before concluding this report I would like to express my *thanks* to you for the privilege of being your representative. The meeting was physically and psychologically demanding, but like any gathering of true Franciscans it held its own abundance of blessings. I also want to acknowledge the *great support given to me in this role by Thaddeus Horgan. His impact upon the proceedings in Reute cannot be overestimated. By reason of his role in the authoring of the Madrid Statement and his facility with languages he played a crucial part in bridging many gaps. He eased my way in many situations in which communications were cumbersome and supported my interventions - as I did his - in every way possible.*”

SOURCES: “Towards A New Rule for Tertiary Franciscan Religious? - Thaddeus Horgan S.A. **The CORD**, January, 1981. pp.10-15.
 “Problems and Possibilities: The Third Order Rule in Progress” - Margaret Carney OSF and Thaddeus Horgan S.A., **The CORD**, June, 1981. Pp.164-170.

May 10-20, 1981 - BRUSSELS DRAFT of RULE
The second of three major Drafts of the Rule



- The purpose of this Meeting was the collation of responses to the **Reute Draft** of the Rule, and continuing work toward a final version of the new Rule. Two hundred and eight congregations, sixteen provinces of international congregations, and the research committees of the American and Great Britain Federations responded. These returns represented thirty countries in ten languages. With *approval given by 105* Congregations from a possible 430 T.O.R. groups worldwide, *this was the most extensive collaborative effort ever undertaken in the entire history of the Order.*
- The new *Brussels Text* made greater use of Francis’ 1221 Rule as well as the Letter to The Faithful I and II. It was written almost entirely in the words of Francis, and as such was a *radical departure from all past Rules.*
- As a result of the extensive collaboration, convictions among the Work Group emerged that the *four primary characteristics of the charism of Francis* that should be foundational for the revised Rule are: **penance (*metanoia*), prayer, poverty and minority.**
- This *Brussels Draft* was presented to the Major Superiors at the Annual Federation Conference (AFC) in Marian College, Indianapolis IN, August 22-23, 1981 by **Margaret Carney OSF, Thaddeus Horgan SA, Roberta Cusack OSF and Ann Carville OSF.** It was at this same conference that a sixteen-year tradition was *changed*, and the Franciscan Federation welcomed all the *friars* of the Third Order Regular tradition as members.

March 1-10, 1982 - ROME ASSEMBLY

The last of the three major Drafts on the Rule

- Nearly two-hundred Superiors General (of approximately 430) participated in this Assembly. These sisters and brothers represented thirty-seven countries and five continents: nearly 200,000 Franciscan Tertiary Religious.
- The Members of the “Work Group” gave presentations on *contemplation, poverty, minority and conversion*. They prepared outlines of the **content** of each Chapter in the proposed text from which the participant, meeting in *language groups*, studied and proposed amendments.
- The **Rome Draft** was approved by the Superiors General - **188-2!** Following the vote the entire Assembly was received in a private audience by Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Pironio, Prefect for the Sacred Congregation.
- Once presented to the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (SCRIS) the only change made was the addition of Chapter Four, articles 14-17 on *Life of Chastity for the Sake of The Kingdom*. Lothar Hardick OFM of Germany was instrumental in writing this chapter. Following the example of Francis in his Rules, the “Work Group” had chosen not to create a special Chapter on Chastity but rather to weave the understanding of this Vow throughout the Rule.
- On **April 30, 1983** Cardinal Pironio informed the **Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular** of the papal approval of the new Rule with the Brief, *Franciscanum Vitae Propositum*. to be dated **December 8, 1982**. The Members of the International Franciscan Bureau (BFI) received the word, “*We receive it, confirmed by the Pope, as a precious gift, an inestimable treasure entrusted to our fidelity*” **May 11, 1983.**
- In the September 14, 1983 USA Commentary to the new Rule, **Margaret Carney OSF** writes, “*The new Rule engenders renewed life. It gathers us in a new place between the monuments of our past and the horizon of the future towards which we move in alternating passages of light and dark. Our Amen! To this Rule binds us together for a new stage of the pilgrimage of penance and peacemaking in our time,*”

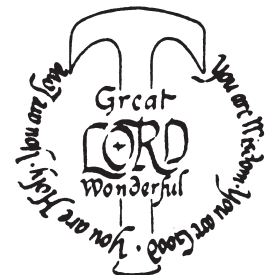
Sources: Carney, Margaret OSF. “The Proposed Third Order Rule: Information to Reformation” Editorial. **The Editorial. The CORD** 32.9 (1982): 257-58.

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_____. Resources for the Study of The TOR Rule. Washington, DC Franciscan Federation, 1994.



“A New Stimulus for a Life of Generosity”

Edward Cardinal Pironio, Prefect SCRIS. 4.30.83



The audience with Pope John Paul II in Clementine Hall at the Vatican - March 1982, for the members of the Rome Assembly which approved the new T.O.R. Rule.

“While they were going along the way, they talked with one another about the number and the quality of the gifts the most kind God had bestowed upon them, and about how they had been received most kindly by the vicar of Christ.

About how they might be able to fulfill his counsels and directives;

About how they could sincerely observe the rule they had taken upon themselves and keep it without failure;

About how they should walk in all goodness and reverence before the Most High, And finally, about how their life and conduct might be an example to their neighbors by an increase of holy virtues.”

1Cel XIV:34

SOURCE: This resource was originally part of the *Rebirth of the Charism* Program sponsored by the *Franciscan Federation TOR*, Washington, DC, 1997. It is in the *Resource Manual for the Study of the Third Order Regular Rule*. ED. Kathleen Moffatt OSF for the International Franciscan Conference – TOR, Rome, Italy (2013) pp. 136-144.

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