

The development of our Constitutions step by step

The Directory of 1850

In 1851 we have the First Directory as a document. This was to guide the spirit and life of the Tertiaries in a new stage of development. 14 sisters, the Corrector Fr. Bonaventure Nesti and the Provincial Minister Fr. Serafino Luccesi subscribed in it.

In the introduction of the Directory it reads: *"Your activities which you have chosen, should correspond to the religious condition, rather you should grow continuously of perfection to perfection, to unite always more to Jesus Christ...and to become cheerful witnesses of grace and justice."*

The Directory offers important information: the sisters already wear uniform dress and have community life but had not taken the religious vows.

1906: 1st Constitutions

In **1906**, the Regular Franciscan Tertiary Sisters had their first Rule, which was substantially the same as the one which was approved by Pope Leo XIII for the Regular Third Order. And they had also the first Constitutions given by Fr. Razzoli, Provincial Minister and approved by the General Minister Fr. Dionisio Shuler OFM, besides the approval of the Bishop. The new legislation would lead the Institute in its successive stage of development while it attains its complete spiritual and juridical form.

The article 285 of this Constitution says: *"let us command that the present Rules and Constitutions carefully be observed, repealed to the old Directory."* Therefore the year 1906 marks, "the beginning of the real **reform**" so much so that the article 291

tells: "*if any sister doesn't feel to remain in the Institute with the present reform, would be dispensed after relevant practices, from making of the simple vows, made into a status of laity and sent into her own family.*" Such reform assures the full spiritual and juridical configuration of the Tertiaries that will guide in the following phase of growth.

1229: 2nd Constitutions:

In 1921, the Institute is being passed to the dependence of the Minister General OFM who nominates the Minister Provincial Fr. Searfino Serafini as the General Commissioner of the Institute. At the interest of the new Commissioner a new (second) text of constitutions was given in 1929. In this text it appears for the first time about the **perpetual vows** to be done after 15 years of simple vows.

1938: 3rd Constitutions:

The Institute opened communities in many parts of Tuscany with different apostolate. This obtained the decree of appreciation from the Holy See on 17th May 1938 and the approval of the new text of the Constitutions (III) "Ad Experimentum". In this text it was included the **Rule of the Third Order Regular** of St. Francis approved by His Holiness Pius XI in 1927.

On **14th June 1948** the Church definitively approved the Constitution and sanctioned the name "*Institute of the Regular Franciscan Tertiary Sisters of Ognissanti.*" With this our Institute became **Pontifical**, with the possibility of expanding till the ends of the earth. Now the Institute is autonomous and no more depending the Superiors of Friars Minor. Yet we remain aggregated to them for the spiritual help with a decree of Minister General on 17^b November 1953.

1972: 4th Constitutions:

The legislation of the Institute is again updated according to the documents of Vatican Council II and there came out the Constitutions "Ad Experimentum" in 1972.

1983: 5th Constitutions:

This text is approved definitively on 2nd February 1986. The Rule approved by Pope John Paul II is included in it.

The General Chapter of 16th July 1996 revised and added articles to the new Constitutions and got approval from the Church on 19th October 1996.

2010: 6th Constitutions:

Now the Institute extended its branches to other Continents: Asia, South America and Africa. We had to change many things regarding the life and work as religious. Now as the result of elaborated study and with the help of experts from outside we have the new Constitutions approved in 2010.