Article 25

“Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity . . . all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means.

All the brothers and sisters mean all active professed and all candidates  
According to their means: This is “fair share.” Not dues!! We may not assess anyone a set amount!  
 Fraternity members give what they can.

“Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher fraternity councils.”  
 Contribution to the region comes from the fraternity, not from individuals.  
 The regional council is not a fraternity; they have no means of income.  
 We do not assess individuals the $40 for each active member that goes to the region.

Precedent in scripture:  
 “Some thought that since Judas kept the common purse, Jesus had told him, ‘Buy what we need for the feast.’” Jn 13:29  
 “All who believed were together and had all things in common.” Acts 2:45  
 “. . . they brought the proceeds of their sales, put them at the feet of the apostles, and they [the proceeds] were distributed to each according to need.” Acts 4:35

Will we have enough? Fair share necessitates FAITH!! Faith is the willingness to RISK!!

* TRUST that the fraternity will be able to cover expenses.
* Income can fluctuate monthly depending on each person’s ability.
* When people are not told how much to give but see what is needed, they are frequently much more generous.

“Thy Kingdom come” means my kingdom goes! Two kingdoms can’t be in the same place at the same time!  
  
Clare is our model: St. Clare’s request for the “privilege of poverty” meant that the sisters would not accept dowries to make the monastery financially independent.  
  
 FAITH is the willingness to take a RISK!!

A fictitious example: Lady Jacoba Fraternity

* 8 professed + 2 candidates = 10 active members
* They meet monthly.
* Four people have been coming to the gatherings and may well come into formation.
* Question for the council: How much money do we need to operate this year?

The council or the budget committee meets to make a list of the anticipated expenses: Contribution to region: $40 per active members $40 x 10 = $400. Formation: anticipate 4 people but plan for 5 Books: 5 @ $20 each = $100 Welcome gifts: 5 @ $20 each = $100 Rite of Admission: 5 @ $10 each = $50 Copy expenses: $50

Total formation expenses: $300

Spiritual assistant stipend: $25 x 11 = $275

Facility rental: $50 x 11 = $550

Miscellaneous: $100

They added the projected totals for each category and the TOTAL came to $1,725

Since the fraternity meets 11 months out of the year, they determined that the monthly needed income to meet their projected expenses was about $160.00, ($1725/11) = $157.00.

Share anticipated expenses (budget) with the fraternity:

* We are an organic union – ALIVE!
* We cannot request a set amount from each member.
* When people see what’s needed, they will plan accordingly.
  + 2 members give $10 a month ($20)
  + 1 member gives $5 a month ($5)
  + 3 members give $20 a month ($60)
  + 2 members give $25 a month ($50)
  + 2 members give $40 a month ($80)
* Total monthly income = $215 The fraternity has exceeded the needed $157 by $58!! Yeah!! TRUST!

The treasurer needs to give a report to the whole fraternity frequently.

* This provides transparency
* Report income and expenses regularly.
  + Nothing fancy
  + Income was $215.00 “Thank you.”
  + We spent $97.20 on …..
* Ask permission to spend for new unexpected expenses.
* Thank the members for last month’s income.
* The more the membership is involved, the more they understand the needs and they will contribute!!

The council needs to prioritize! And formation needs to be a priority!!

* Meet the needs of the fraternity first.
* Extra activities come out of excess.
* Charitable giving comes out of excess.
* We like excess!!
* Consider the parable of the unjust steward. Jesus praises the man for taking care of himself and his family first. Remember the stewardess who tells you to put your own mask on first before helping someone else. You are no good to anyone if you faint when the airplane loses pressure! And your fraternity is no good to anyone if it does not have the resources to provide good programs for its members, principally initial and ongoing formation.

IMPACT drives INCOME

* If you have quality programs, people will give.
* If people feel welcomed and part of a community, they will give.
* If your program is worth driving across town for, people will give.
* If you share a brief financial report each month, people will see what the needs of the fraternity are and may give more.

Formation is critical!

* Formation needs to be a priority in your fraternity. Initial formation AND ongoing formation
* Those entering formation do not buy their own materials.
* When the fraternity invests in formation, every member of the fraternity has a part in the formation program.
* The formation director does not pay for formation materials out of his/her pocket.
* “Extra” money can be used for scholarships for retreats, to pay registration for all your members to attend the Q, and for speakers for your ongoing formation programs.
* Formation for your members needs to be your first priority!! As formation goes, so goes your fraternity.

Keep good records.

* Secretary – maintain accurate attendance records.
* Treasurer – maintain accurate contribution records for each fraternity member.
* Active member status is determined by Attendance and Contribution
* The treasurer must maintain confidentiality about individual contributions.
* Good attendance records allow you to check on those who are not in attendance.

**All these procedures are spelled out in our Constitutions and Statutes.**

**“But we’ve never done it this way!!**

Maybe that’s why some of our fraternities are floundering!

When we want something we don’t have,  
we may have to do something we haven’t done!  
  
“Fear not!” Take a RISK and give it a try. Don’t be afraid of change. We have to let go of our egos and open ourselves to the opportunity for conversion.

Our fictitious Lady Jacoba Fraternity assessed their financial situation, prioritized their needs, explained Article 25 to their membership, committed themselves to good stewardship, and now they are a strong, vibrant, welcoming, healthy community -- a life-giving union in the Franciscan family. (Rule, art. 1)

M.E. Stewart, ofs 11-2020