*The Physical and Pastoral Care of the Brothers*

**Introduction**

Throughout its history, the Institute has always shown a special regard for its senior Brothers. Recognizing that modern society has means whereby provision is made for retired persons, the Province wishes to update its policies and practices with regard to its retired Brothers, while at the same time assuring them of the esteem and respect which have always been a part of our tradition.

As Brothers we are committed not only to the mission of the Province, but also to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_way of life to which we give assent at Profession through the words "for all my life" and from which one never retires. We also recognize that aging is a fact of life and that the human person represents an integration of spiritual,

psychological, and physical dimensions. It is no   
different for us as Brothers. In fact, because of our way of life, aging presents us with some difficulties that others do not face. The purpose of these policy statements is to enable us to meet these difficulties by seeing in them opportunities for growth in the Lord.

Many spiritual challenges face the senior Brother. Because of aging, his faith in God may be tested in new ways, his hope in what is unseen may be tried as never before, and the ability to love his neighbor may become burdensome. The Province stands

with the senior Brother as he comes to grips with these challenges. And they do so as a community of faith, hope and love proclaiming the Good News to its own members as well as to others. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ affirm that the occasions for Christian witness are not diminished by age but they merely exist in a new way because of it. Even the most senior Brother has an important role in the mission of the Province and the Institute.

The stresses impinging on a Brother as he approach­es his senior years can be many, hence the necessity of preparing for them successfully. A senior Brother may have to deal with questions of personal identity, self-worth, emotional insecurity and group belonging in ways that have never occurred to him. At this time he needs to know that he is recognized as an important and cherished person within the total community of the Province, no less valuable to or a part of the whole for reasons of age. We affirm that our senior Brothers are a living example of our belief that who we are is as vital as what we do.

We recognize that aging Brothers, as do all persons, eventually experience a declining energy level and tend to have an increasing number of medical problems. Every senior Brother will, therefore, have an adequate place to live, suitable to his needs, and such medical assistance as may be required. At the same time, the Province desires that the Brothers remain active in some form of mission as long as feasible.

*Definitions*

For the sake of clarity, the following explanations are given:

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*Retirement:*

A means of departure from one's ordinary mission into another stage of life.

*Pre-Retirement:*

The period during which a Brother might develop attitudes, insights, skills and interests that make for gradual change toward senior Brother status.

*Partial Retirement:*

Consists of freedom from having to accept positions of full responsibility and a gradual diminution in the quantity of service normally performed. It grants new leisure and freedom to take on other interests apart from those that heretofore had centered primarily on concerns of the Brother's mission.

*Full Retirement:*

Consists of freedom from accepting all positions of responsibility and obligatory assignments.

*Disability Retirement:*

Understood to be the cessation of all or part of normally required duties as a result of mental or physical illness.

*Implementation of Retirement Policies*

1. *Age of Retirement*

As a Brother approaches the age of 65, he will be encouraged and expected to begin a discernment process on the subject of how long he should remain fully active.

Many factors are involved in determining the age at which a man's activities and responsibilities in the Province should be reduced or cease entirely. The common experience is that the evidence of aging becomes marked between 65 and 75 years or beyond. Prior to 65, the presumption is that a man will be able to remain active. After the age of 75, the presumption is that full activity is less likely.

A Brother who seeks a partially reduced mission assignment prior to age 65 should be prepared, after exploring available opportunities, to present a plan to the Wellness Coordinator or his delegate for approval.

1. *Senior Brothers in the Province*

Senior Brothers by their very presence help to give perspective to the here and now while also constituting an inspiration to those who must translate the Lasallian character into today's idioms. A Senior Brother may request retirement and need not hold any work assignment; however, he may volunteer as he

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chooses. If the Senior Brother does volunteer for full or part time activity, the Wellness Coordinator is free to accept or refuse such a request, as he deems expedient.

Senior Brothers remain full members of the Province in every sense. The Director of the Office of Senior Brothers and the Wellness Coordinator will oversee programs to provide for the educational, recreational, and needs related to the mission of senior members. They should take care to see that counseling is available to those approaching age 70 and offer them encouragement to take advantage of it.

1. *Living Arrangements for Senior Brothers*

Senior Brothers may need special living arrangements. It is the desire of the Province that such needs be approached realistically (e.g. independent living, assisted living or long term nursing care). These shall be given in such places that do not alienate the Brother from the rest of the Province. Normally, the senior Brother will live in a place where he will have easy and frequent interaction with the other Brothers of the Province. The Wellness Coordinator is recognized as having the freedom to approve individual living arrangements as dictated by special pastoral circumstances.

The Senior Brother, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Senior Brothers and the Wellness Coordinator, will begin planning for retirement and for

determining the community in which he wishes to reside. The Director of the Office of Senior Brothers shall act as a special advocate for the Brother.

If a Senior Brother wishes to reside in a particu­lar community, he shall make his request known to the Wellness Coordinator. He, in turn, should evaluate the re­quest in the light of the needs of the Brother, the suitability of the prospective community and other pastoral considerations that may be involved. Before finalization, the Wellness Coordinator should consult the Director of the projected community as well as its members to be assured of a welcome that is supportive, warm, and fraternal.

*Life Stage Guidelines*

The Life Stage Guidelines are designed to assist the Brother and the Wellness Coordinator in responding with fairness and consistency to one of the most difficult ministry transitions that face all members of the congregation as their aging process unfolds. Implementation of these Guidelines will create a template for evaluation and for community placement based on matching the individual Brother to the most realistic and appropri­ate level of care. It is important that the Guidelines be understood in the context of the Province's fraternal com­mitment to each Brother and its ability to be responsive to individual needs within the framework of fairness, consistency and compassion.

In general, the Wellness Coordinator or his delegate will look at thefollowing areas with the Brother:

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*Cognitive/Behavioral Status*

*Mobility*

*Community/Faith Life*

*Nutrition*

*Finances*

*Personal Hygiene*

*Health and Wellness*

*Independent Living in Community*

Independent Living is active or retired life in a local community. These Brothers are engaged in full or part-time ministry, or, when appropriate, may choose volunteer service.

A Senior Brother living independently in community must meet the following criteria:

* He must be able to be left unattended in the community.
* He must be able to dress himself.
* He must be able to perform his own personal care.
* He must be able to feed himself and meet his own basic nutritional needs.
* He must be able to ambulate unassisted, or, if in a wheelchair, must be able to transfer himself unattended

*Assisted Living*

Assisted Living is the living situation appropri­ate for actively retired Brothers whose health care needs are minimal. The community is one that has the facilities, structure and resources necessary to provide the kinds of support that enable men to live lives of prayer, consecration and ministry. This is the living situation that provides assistance for the Brothers whose wellness needs are minimal, and in which their holistic health care needs can best be met.

A Senior Brother requiring Assisted Living will meet at least one of the following criteria:

* He cannot be left alone in a community, due to falls or moderate cognitive loss.
* He needs assistance with personal care and dressing himself.
* He needs assistance with meals.
* He needs assistance or cueing with his medications.

A community may, with the Wellness Coordinator's approval, keep in their community a Brother who has needs that exceed the criteria for community living, if the members of the community elect to do so. The community must be able to collectively meet the Brother's needs and may utilize Home Health Care or Hospice Care. This level of care in the community will be monitored by health care professionals.

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*Long Term Care (Nursing Home)*

*Skilled Care and Convalescent Care —* The Province provides professional nursing care and other special services on a 24-hour basis. There is a need to provide for the spiritual, social, intellectual and psychologi­cal needs of residents, who remain as long as they need full-time care and convalescent care.

A Senior Brother requiring Nursing Home Care will exhibit some of the following needs:

The Brother is incontinent and requires personal care.

* The Brother is unable to ambulate and cannot perform an unassisted wheelchair transfer.
* The Brother needs to be fed or monitored closely at meals.
* The Brother's cognitive loss puts him at risk in an Assisted Living Community.
* The Brother requires extensive assistance with personal care and dressing.

The Brother's illness requires skilled or chronic care.

A community may, with the Wellness Coordinator's approval, keep in their community a Brother who has needs that exceed the criteria for community living, if the members of the community elect to do so. The community must be able to collectively meet the Brother's needs and may utilize Home Health Care or Hospice Care. This level of care in the community will be monitored by health care professionals.