



**2015**  
YEAR OF THE HOSPITALER VOCATION

“CONSECRATED  
LIFE”

Prayer of the month  
**February 2015**

## 1.- Introduction

God’s invitation is first to live a Christian vocational experience, by which we all have a specific place in the task of proclaiming and building the Kingdom. In formation for consecrated life, vocation is a grace by means of which God consecrates the life of whoever decides to follow Him and prepares him to live his faith in community. Consecrated life and ordained ministry are the result of a vocational process that reaches maturity. You listen to God’s call and respond with fidelity and obedience. Jeremiah was the living example of that prophetic vocation that God placed in him with the call, and circumstances and limits do not matter, the only thing that matters is to believe in God’s promise that He will always be caring for and guiding the person He has chosen, and who responds with obedience.

John of God was called, and God consecrated him as the agent of hospitality. He lived the commands of the Gospel as hospitality within him and expressed it through deeds and words. He did not write a reflection on the meaning of hospitality. His service lay in the work he did daily in

favour of the sick, poor and needy of God. His charism is above all a charism of action and contemplation and it is practised in his work and mission, bequeathed to the Hospitaller Order. Thus, since the Hospitaller Order is a religious community, it must be a living witness to its founder, who welcomed each sick person with love and respect, bearing witness to his charism and mission, living the gift of hospitality.

## 2.- Hymn

## 3.- Psalm: Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart

O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

<sup>7</sup>Where shall I go from your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me. If I  
say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light about me be night,"  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light with you.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I

am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!  
If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!  
O men of blood, depart from me!  
They speak against you with malicious intent;  
your enemies take your name in vain.<sup>[a]</sup>  
Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?  
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred;  
I count them my enemies.

Search me, O God, and know my heart!  
Try me and know my thoughts!<sup>[a]</sup>  
And see if there be any grievous way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting!

## 4.- Biblical reading:

*Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, 5“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” 6Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” 7But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, 8Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.” 9Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. 10See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”*

*11The word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” 12Then the LORD said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.” 13The word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, tilted away from the north.” 14Then the LORD said to me: Out of the north disaster shall break out on all the inhabitants of the land. 15For now I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, says the LORD; and they shall come and all of them shall set their thrones at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its surrounding walls and against all the cities of Judah. 16And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. 17But you, gird up your loins; stand up and tell them everything that I command you. Do not break down before them, or I will break you before them. 18And I for my part have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. 19They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the LORD, to deliver you.*

JEREMIAH 1, 4 – 19

## 5.- Reflection

Jeremiah's vocation is a prophetic one (Nabi-call), characterised by his vocation and being sent. It includes being chosen, which preceded existence, consecration, or appropriation of something for a mission, and appointment, which has a universal dimension, going beyond the borders of one's own land. The word plays an active role, because it is the word that chooses, consecrates and sends forth. The objection raised by the prophet is his difficulty with the word, but he will have to go as an envoy and speak in God's name: to discuss, denounce, console and build.

In the original experience of hospitality, we perceive a vocation similar to Jeremiah's, rooted in a strong feeling of being welcomed by God. Limits, needs, previous life, are of no

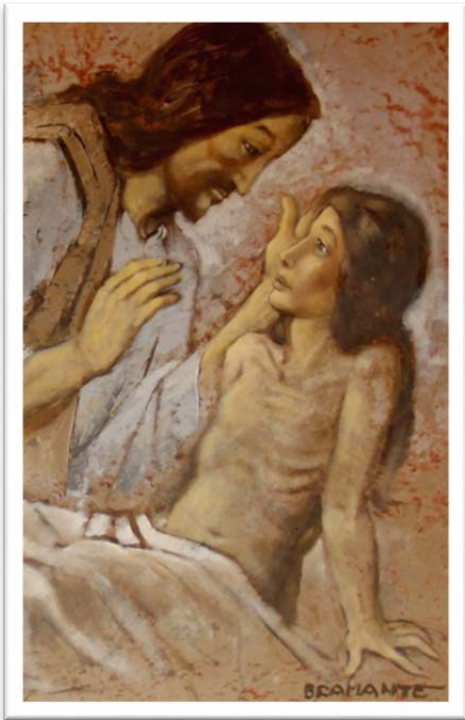
importance, because God calls, even where life is being formed. Jeremiah felt that God was close to him, would accompany him always in his mission. John of God had the experience of having been God's guest and having been protected and loved by Him through no merit of his. This welcome, which is of course spiritual in nature, is turned into a driving force moving outwards from hospitality. The feeling of being nothing is also a trait of St John of God spirituality. St John of God experienced it when he entered into an intimate relationship with God. He even considered himself to be "the least of the brothers", and never saw any merit in his own actions, because he was aware that the driving force lay not in him but came from outside him.

## 6.- Prayers

1. **so that we may leave everything beh Almighty Father, we ask that your call to live the gift of vocation in consecration to the charism of hospitality which we have received, become the strength to continue to be witnesses to your word.**
2. **Almighty Father, our hospitaller charism demands that we respond to the special care and dedication of the sick and needy. Give us the grace to be true examples of obedience to your call and witnesses to your charity in our communities, through proclamation of the Word and celebration of the sacraments.**
3. **Almighty Father, may our hospitaller vocation become for us all the core of John of God spirituality and the basis of all action linked to our father St John of God. May his great witness of compassion nourish our vocation, ind to welcome and help the sick, poor, and those in need, with love.**

## 7.- The Lord's prayer.

## 8.- Final prayer.



### **PRAYER FOR THE HOSPITALER VOCATION**

Lord Jesus, you who passed through the world doing good and healing,  
And sent your disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of God,  
With words of peace on your lips,  
Offering healing and life:  
We ask that your call to Hospitality  
Continue to meet with acceptance in our world  
So that the sick may be healed in your name  
And the Good News announced to the poor,  
And all those who suffer  
May experience your tenderness  
And the mercy of God our Father.

Amen