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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The LXVI General Chapter of the Order, with the title **“Passion for the Hospitality of Saint John of God in the World Today”** came to a close on 21 October in Rome. It was attended by 82 brothers and 22 co-workers from all the provinces of the Order, in addition to the Secretary, the Chapter Moderator, the sister who animated the discernment process in the elections phase, the team of interpreters and the co-workers who gave their support in the Secretariat, for a total of 129 persons.

We lived an intense experience of God, characterized by fraternal encounter, openness to the Spirit, universality and the hospitality proper of the Order of Saint John of God. We analyzed and evaluated reality with peace of mind and objectivity, observing the many positive prospects that exist in our Order, without however overlooking the limitations and weaknesses which we must address. We look to the future, open to the Spirit of the Lord and under our Founder’s gaze, strongly determined to respond to the new challenges posed by the Church, the world around us, and especially those who suffer.

The following is a list of documents and of the main highlights of the General Chapter:

- Opening address of the Superior General
- Instrumentum laboris of the General Chapter
- Summary of the report on the State of Formation in the Order.
- Statement of the co-workers who attended the Chapter.
- Discernment and election of the new General Government.
- Priorities of Hospitality for the next six years.
- Approved proposals.
- Closing address of the new Superior General.

They are all important documents and statements, which I urge you to study carefully, for they are the point of departure of this new phase of the Order, which is full of hope, opportunities and challenges. The General Counsel took them into due account when it developed its plan for the next six years, and they should be an indispensable point of reference for the provinces, as they plan the next Provincial Chapters.

The Instrumentum laboris was the basic working document of the General Chapter. It was drafted by a pre-Chapter commission made up by brothers and co-workers, on the basis of the contributions received from the regional meetings held in early 2006, and the international young hospitallers' congress held in Granada in November 2005.

This document analyzes the reality of the Order and provides criteria and alternatives, some of which were taken on board by the General Chapter. By virtue of its clarity, large acceptance and relevance, we felt it would be appropriate to include it in these statements to inform the provinces. If they deemed it appropriate, they could use the document as a support for the preparation of the upcoming Provincial Chapters.

Summary of the Report on the State of Formation in the Order. This was a sociological survey performed by the Department of Sociology of the Salesian Pontifical University. It was presented at the Chapter, and is truly a tool of great interest which we should study and analyze carefully to make decisions and take the appropriate steps. Formation is a pillar of our life, from its beginning to its very end. The vocations pastoral ministry, as well as initial and ongoing formation, have revealed a number of shortcomings which we must tackle with determination. In the statements, we have enclosed a summary of the extensive report which, once translated, will be sent out to all the provinces.

Priorities of Hospitality. With this title, we refer to the final document approved by the General Chapter, following the structure proposed by the *Instrumentum laboris*. It sets forth the broad lines of action and the main goals that should guide the life of the Order over the next six years. Though it does not go into detail, it does raise very specific issues which concern us directly. It is on this basis that the General Council developed the plan for the next six years for the whole of the Order. The General Council hopes that it may also be of use to the provinces and regions, to which we would like to give greater space in future, by means of the different scheduled meetings.

Presence of the Co-workers. This Chapter was attended by the greatest number of co-workers ever. For the first time, there were co-workers representing every province of the Order. Together with the brothers from all continents, their presence was a strong sign of the universality and global dimension of the Order. Their participation was very active, and at the same time a witness of love and service to the Order and to its plan of hospitality in the manner of Saint John of God. They told us that above and beyond other terms and qualifications, they feel that they are living and active members of the Institution, united with the brothers, available and committed to the Order's plan of hospitality.

We are beginning a new six-year term. A time of grace and hope to grow and renew our lives, as brothers and co-workers, at a personal, community and institutional level. A time of Easter, therefore, to be born again and to renew and rekindle the charism of hospitality which one day inspired Saint John of God, and which today is calling and inspiring us. Let us open the door of our heart to it, so that it may overwhelm us with its light and energy, thus allowing us to live out and express with passion the hospitality of Saint John of God in the world today.

*Brother Donatus Forkan
Superior General*

SECTION 2

OPENING ADDRESS

Rome, 2 October 2006
Brother Pascual Piles Ferrando, Superior General

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 66th General Chapter. Welcome to you, Capitular Brothers, General Counselors, Provincials, General Delegates and Vocals who are here to participate in the celebration of this event, which we are called to live under the gaze of God, the Virgin Mary and all our Saints and Blesseds, especially our founder, Saint John of God.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Coworkers who over the next few days will be with us to share the work of this Chapter, and with them, our moderator. I also would like to welcome those who are going to contribute to these proceedings from the Secretariat and the group of interpreters who will make it easier to communicate by providing simultaneous translation.

We thank you for your work over the past six years. I especially would like to thank the Preparatory Commissions who have worked on two fronts, preparing the “Instrumentum Laboris” while organizing the logistics to make sure our work goes smoothly over the next three weeks.

Six years is a fairly long time, one that was characterized by a variety of activities.

I was able to experience a great variety of situations, in my visits throughout the world and in Rome, with the General Council, the Community at la Nocetta, of which we are a part, and the other two communities of the General Curia, namely Tiber Island and the Vatican Pharmacy.

I thank you all for the support you have given me and the confidence you have shown on innumerable occasions. I have tried to be faithful to the plan of Saint John of God as the one directly responsible for the animation and government of the Order, applying sound criteria and my own personal style.

With the General Council, we drafted a program of activities at the beginning of the six-year term. We have tried to follow most of your activities, even those that for some reason were not implemented, and we shall give you an account of all that when we look at the report for the period in question.

I am happy about the way in which we lived out these past six years. I have had many reasons to feel satisfied, though there have been some difficulties. If I may have caused some of you suffering because of my limitations and fragility, I ask for your forgiveness; I do believe that I acted in an upright manner and in response to what the Lord asked of me or of us in every circumstance. We lived what the Lord had foreseen for us from the very beginning, and for this I thank God.

2. TITLE AND MEANING OF THE CHAPTER, “PASSION FOR THE HOSPITALITY OF SAINT JOHN OF GOD IN THE WORLD TODAY ”

During the preparatory meetings for the Chapter, in the course of that devoted to young hospitallers in Granada and in the four regional meetings, we had several opportunities to reflect on the title and meaning of the Chapter.

The title was a decision of the General Council, following the trend set by the Congress of Consecrated Life celebrated here in Rome, in November 2004 “Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity”.

The Chapter should be for us a time of passion. Without exaggerating, but it should truly be so.

The wish to live out intensely the fact that today in the world we are the followers of Saint John of God, is something that I have always perceived in the way we pursue our ideal, in the way we promote the life of our communities and apostolic works, in the renewal we have brought about, in the refoundation we have sought.

However, actually being capable of incarnating this ideal is quite a different challenge.

We want the Chapter to be a time in which we confirm our passion for Christ, the Church, humankind and Saint John of God.

As capitulars, we are called to reinforce the foundation of our mission and its significance, on the basis of which we can then define the lines of action in the concrete reality of each Province, Delegation, Community and apostolic work. We are to assert our presence with courage and determination, to the extent possible, and progress in our task of incarnating this ideal.

The times dedicated to the preparation of the Chapter, both at the International Young Hospitallers' Congress in Granada, and the four regional meetings in Divinópolis (Brazil), Agoe-Nyivé (Togo), Dam-yang (South Korea) y Warsaw (Poland), were moments filled with passion.

They were meaningful experiences for which we must strive to find a place in our everyday life.

Our passion must be rooted in the principle of reality, but it must believe in the ideal, in the meaning of the Church, and in the hospitality of Saint John of God. It must strive to do all that is possible to be alive in the world today.

This Chapter must be a meaningful experience for all of us. It is very important for us to live our Assembly in a climate of faith and hope.

We know that our life, like that of Christ and that of Saint John of God, is a paschal mystery, theologically speaking. However, God manifests His presence in the two elements that make up this life, both in the aspects that seem to be expressions of life and those that might seem elements of death.

Thus, we are all called to live out the Chapter as an experience of grace, which will become evident in what the Lord wishes us to live here and decide for the future.

3. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST SIX YEARS

At the opening of this Chapter, I wish to present to you what I think were the positive achievements of the Order.

Being able to publish the **Order's Charter of Identity** was a great challenge and achievement. Many people were involved in its development, although it was a small group that was more directly responsible for its drafting.

The 65th General Chapter approved its drafting, and from then on, on many occasions we have made reference to its text in our meetings and in life.

Certainly, we have a long way to go, but I thank God for the good he has granted us through the Charter of Hospitality.

A bit later, another great achievement was the publication in 2004 of "**The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of Saint John of God: the Spirituality of the Order**".

This work was much more laborious. We wanted to do it with care, and it took several years for us to be able to finally produce the final version. I think that we ought to feel satisfied in this respect as well.

We were able to deliver and present it in almost all the Provincial Chapters held in 2004. This too is a document which we should strive to incarnate.

I don't know whether we are excessively pretentious, but in one of the regional meetings I heard some brothers say, "we don't need more documents, we have enough doctrine. What we need is to be able to live by it".

This calls for a journey of human and spiritual growth, for our identification with the merciful Christ and with Saint John of God. Taking this commitment seriously, fostering it among ourselves and promoting it in others is going to do us, the co-workers, the sick and the needy a lot of good.

A highlight for me have been the **Spiritual Exercises** which I have preached in this past six-year term.

There were eight such occasions, in which I drew inspiration from the Letters of Saint John of God, six in Rome for the brothers who prepared for solemn profession, and two in the Polish province.

I directed five other sessions of spiritual exercises, two in the Lombardy-Veneto province based on the Charter of Identity and Starting Afresh from Christ, one in the province of Aragon, using the texts from the Congress on Religious Life applied to our life, and two others in Portugal on the theme "Journeying with Saint John of God" in celebration of the 400 years of the Order's presence in Portugal.

These thirteen sessions of spiritual exercises have enabled me to deepen a number of themes, pray, rest, nurture silence, be with the brothers, and in certain cases also with some co-workers.

An important event for the Church and for us, I think, was the **illness and death of John Paul II**, with all the echo that it produced throughout the world. He was considered to be a great prophet, a great leader, a shepherd who visited the world with a deep experience of God and the great wish for Him to enter the heart of each person.

His death had a tremendous impact. A huge number of people came to be near him, to see him, to pay their last respects, to participate in the prayer vigils and in his funeral service. Every day people line up in great numbers to visit his grave.

Subsequently, the Lord granted to us Benedict XVI as John Paul's successor. A simple person, a theologian, with the ability to bring the mystery and theology closer to people, with the great wish to bring salvation to all people. Pope Benedict XVI is a reserved and humble man, who is able to be personally close to those he meets, though they are fewer than the people who came into contact with John Paul II.

His wish is to cleanse the Church and society of its scourges. Perhaps it will remain a mere wish, but at least he is struggling to make this happen.

Little by little we are discovering him as an indefatigable man. He is one who seeks the truth, and who is trying to incarnate this truth in the life of people, in himself, in the Roman Curia, in the Church, and in the universe.

4. ATTITUDES I HAVE WISHED TO ADOPT IN MY SERVICE AS GENERAL

I have been in the General Curia for eighteen years, of which twelve as General. I am now thinking about my last six-year term, to which I shall refer, connecting it with my two previous terms of office.

I began my responsibility with the slogan, "**Fortitudo Caritatis**", the power of charity. I have always believed in it, have always tried to live it in a serene and balanced way, cordially and with patience.

At the end of this six-year term, I wish to proclaim that charity is the most important part of our life, and that I always wish to live it out intensely.

I give thanks to God for always making me feel that **He was by my side**. My contact with God through prayer and life has been a real gift to me.

I have tried to be faithful each day to my moments of prayer, normally regular when I was at la Nocetta or in the communities, less so when I was travelling or was involved in some activity that made it impossible.

Both circumstances have helped me encounter God in the mystery, in the sacraments, in personal and community prayer.

They have helped me to capture the essence of His presence in life, in what may seem like very trivial events, in others that are deeper but that are experiences and feelings related to persons and circumstances.

Certain conferences dedicated to a reflection on the mission, certain meetings between the sick and brothers and co-workers who care for them, have helped me to capture God's presence in real life, to see Him in the eyes and faces of certain people.

I give thanks to God for such manifestations. Each day I have felt the presence of God and Saint John of God by my side. I continue to feel His closeness here and now and hope to do so for the rest of my life. Thank-you.

I have always tried to maintain a **spirit of discernment**.

Contemporary life is not as regimented as it once was. We start out with an ideal and certain criteria in mind, but applying them to each circumstance and situation requires a time of reflection, prayer, and sharing with others so as to give them concrete shape in our decisions.

I have often asked the Lord to give me wisdom. Not the wisdom that leads one to know many things, but that which is defined as biblical and is characterized by common sense, which leads us to do the right thing while seeking to be faithful servants of the cause of Christ and His Church.

As I have mentioned before, on two occasions I asked to meet with officials from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to shed light on very specific cases concerning our practice in the field of bioethics.

I have endeavored to be faithful to my task of providing **Spiritual Direction** with a prudent frequency. On certain occasions I have dealt with exclusively personal issues, while on others I have devoted these moments to subjects concerning the Order and the brothers, for which guidance was needed.

All this has helped me to provide a **service to the truth** based on the objective truth which integrates existential truth, that sheds light on reality and lets itself be enlightened by it.

The service of animation and government, each one at its level, require a quest for the truth, starting with the Revelation, the Magisterium, theological and philosophical reflections, and the contrast with reality.

Our reality is extremely varied, because of the places in which we operate, the people whom we serve, the cultures and legal systems in which we are inserted.

Like John of God and Jesus of Nazareth, we are to provide an evangelizing service to this world. We must take care not to impose anything, to respect others and their way of being, but believing in what we are and what we are called to witness.

In our regional meetings, not just those of this year but also those we held in 2003, the issue of bioethics came up as a reality which we must deepen, for which we are called to have adequate training, and with which we must deal according to the teachings of the Church, our conscience and the situations in which many people find themselves.

Our challenge is to continue to provide a true service to truth in defense of life.

My effort to follow this attitude, has helped me to provide a **service of mediation** in many circumstances.

In fulfilling our responsibility, we have come up against canonical elements which have required a decision on my part or on the part of the General Council. On the other hand, I was confronted with other situations whose seriousness and urgency demanded an immediate decisions. But in many cases, you have to try to mediate between conflicting positions, while trying to respect the parties involved.

I have always sought to be a good mediator. It is impossible to make everyone happy. I have tried to maintain an evangelical and charitable attitude, to behave with balance and peace of mind. Perhaps not always have I succeeded. I have tried to work for Christ, I have always tried to speak with the example of my life, a life that I have not made revolve around myself but around others, in the attempt to let go of the “I”. I have tried to make this attitude a truly liberating factor.

I have made it a point to generously devote myself to **ordinary work**. Sometimes I have felt overwhelmed by activities, and I have felt anxious about being unable to participate in activities that were taking place at the same time. Nevertheless, I have done my best to respond to the various demands, and I thank the Lord because he has given me the health and strength to do it all.

For all this, I thank God humbly.

Some people may need a team to draft texts which they have been asked to deliver. In my case, speeches, homilies, periodical letters, the presentation of books, my contributions to commissions, opening or closing remarks at conferences or even Chapters, the preparation of outlines for Spiritual Exercises, my personal correspondence, are all things that I have tried to prepare on my own with the utmost pleasure.

I have always tried to keep a **positive spirit** in the face of reality, and to be a true animator. However, I know that I have not been able to reach out to all in the same way.

At the universal level, I presided over the provincial chapters, paid the canonical visitations according to schedule and went on a few additional ones, visited almost all countries and most houses, though I must confess that I have failed to visit about 30 houses and have not been to four countries, namely Israel, New Zealand, Cameroon and the Ukraine. For some of them, the scheduled time did not seem appropriate so the visits were postponed, but I just never made it. I regret it, but I did my best.

I have always tried to maintain a positive spirit in what might be called a service of animation, though in certain circumstances I have had to act with clarity and determination.

5. FROM THE “IMAGINATION OF CHARITY” TO “DEUS CARITAS EST”.

Our life must be evangelizing, we must proclaim God’s love to all peoples, especially those in difficult situations.

In the last years of John Paul II’s Pontificate, emphasis was placed on many basic themes of Christian life, though charity was the one which received the greatest attention.

In various documents, the late Pontiff spoke about the imagination of charity (CC 4), creativity in charity (CC 36), imagination in charity (NMI 50, CC 36), the power of charity (VC 88), and of the fact that our life should be an epiphany of charity (CC 36).

For us, for me, this is a formidable challenge. God has never ceased to love us, Christ has never ceased to love us, John of God revealed himself to us as the saint of charity. It is a great call.

Benedict XVI decided to devote the first encyclical of his Pontificate, “Deus caritas est”, to the theme of love. In it, he reminds all Christians about the depth of Christian love, **eros: affective, sexual love; philia: expresses the relationship between Jesus and his disciples; agape: the love of fraternity (DCE 3).**

He has given us insight on how we are to operate in the institutions through which we fulfill God’s charity by our gift of self to others. He has reminded us that charity itself is an element of evangelization (conf. DCE 3 | c), that although evangelization requires the joint Celebration of Faith, of the Word and of Charity, there are moments in which each one on its own makes sense. In our case, it is very revealing that he has reminded all that charity in itself is an element of evangelization.

I was greatly struck by the clarity of such expressions, and would like them to live inside me and in the Order so that, like John of God, we may be witnesses through charity and our service to others.

I am very happy to have chosen “The power of Charity” as the slogan of my service to the Order as General.

6. FUTURE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The Chapter is a time to analyze and evaluate the experiences we have lived over the past six years.

Without wanting to be exhaustive, just as I reviewed some of the aspects characterizing I now wish to say something about the challenges that I think the Order will be facing in the future.

First of all, I wish to mention three that concern the life of the brothers. They are not new, but we cannot forget them. We must respond to the call that God continues to address to the Order today and face them with specific strategies:

- The element of **spiritual life** should be appreciated and always be borne in mind as something essential to our life. We always emphasize this aspect, and yet I continue to see the need to grow in our belief and as deeply prayerful men.

To live a healthy life as men religious, it is fundamental to maintain a deep personal relationship with Christ. We must know Jesus deeply. We cannot endure the demands of our life without a sound spiritual basis. Based on my knowledge of the Order, I can say that there are many brothers who are filled with the spirit of God, and who are a witness of spiritual life which they reflect in their everyday life. By the same token, I have also observed shortcomings in others.

- Our sense of **community** is something that we are called to improve: knowing, accepting, respecting, loving one another, and being reconciled whenever necessary, is part of a process in our life. We must be able to remove any obstacle hindering a good relationship between brothers in the community.
- Today we are greatly concerned with **new vocations** and our ability to provide them with **adequate**

formation. We are not the only ones in this situation, but we are definitely called to live out our ideal effectively, and to attract new people. The Order is faced with a major challenge which must be considered a priority. The future of the Order largely depends on the new vocations that we shall be capable of promoting, welcoming and forming. In this task and responsibility for the future, a fundamental role is played by the spiritual, personal and community life of the brothers, the experience of a family life characterized by a brotherly spirit in community and an intense sense of the hospitaller mission.

The challenges and demands of our **mission**, on the other hand, are different.

There are places in the world where the Order is present in which we continue to grow. However, in many we are called to expand our services while the number of brothers continues to decrease and their age is constantly increasing. We must be capable of facing the challenges posed by this situation:

- Everywhere, we are called to promote positive **interpersonal relations between brothers and co-workers**, between the Order and its members, within the framework of the Social Doctrine of the Church and according to the spirit of Saint John of God, depicted in the Charter of Hospitality.
- As envisaged in the “Instrumentum Laboris”, I think that it is absolutely necessary today to develop a strategy to **pass on the values** of our tradition.
- Everywhere, we are called to live in such a way that we promote the **culture of life** and reject the **culture of death** with courage and audacity. We must thus receive adequate formation in the field of bioethics, and try to live in an attitude of service to the truth, as I mentioned earlier.
- The Order has always seen **charismatic management** as a major challenge, but we should not lessen our commitment simply because it is a difficult goal to attain. Benedict XVI has reminded us of the need to be professionally competent in our service; however, according to the Holy Father we also need a “formation of the heart” (DCE 3 I a), so that “our heart commands” whatever it is to command and our intelligence and creativity produce the necessary criteria to this end.
- With common sense, we must always seek to promote **evangelization**, by exercising charity at all times and on other occasions the other two elements which complement it, namely the proclamation of the Good News and the celebration of our faith, which we shall promote adequately in the pastoral care services in each of our centers.

7. MY FEELINGS IN THIS PERIOD OF GOVERNMENT AND ANIMATION.

A six-year term is drawing to a close. Let us thank the Lord one more time.

Personally, I thank God for having placed His confidence in me for this service and for having helped me each day over the past twelve years. He wished me to live them as He had planned. Sometimes it was more difficult for me to accept it than others.

Governing requires the capacity for discernment and decision-making, as I stated earlier. We must govern according to a charismatic dimension. I have tried to give my answer, by combining the harshness of certain approaches with the goodness that I felt our being sons of Saint John of God required of us.

Animating requires one to be animated in the first place. One does not always feel in the same way. Though I may not have always succeeded, in the past six years I have made the human and spiritual effort to attain a certain balance and peace of mind. To me, this was one of the great traits of Saint John of God. I made the effort to take a distance from and not be excessively affected by both positive and negative things. I have striven to have my state of mind depend more on my inner strength than on positive or negative feelings.

For what I was able to achieve, I give thanks to God and to our founder Saint John of God.

I thank the General Council and the Secretary. Together we have shared our life in the effort to animate and govern the Order, together we have journeyed, sharing moments of happiness, joy, hope and difficulty. We have succeeded in working in a way that has allowed us to maintain unity in diversity. We are very different and have different cultural backgrounds; some are from Europe while others come from other continents. But this has not been the source of differences as much as our respective way of living and our personality.

I thank the entire Order and particularly you, capitulars. I have worked with some of you in the General Council in the course of these past six years; with others, in your capacity as provincials or brothers with other responsibilities. With all, I have worked and shared our life in different moments. A special thanks goes out to the brothers, co-workers, the sick and those who have been involved in our programs and services, with many of whom I have had the opportunity to come into contact. You have helped me in one way or another.

I feel that this time has been one of great personal growth. I would like it to be so for all of you. I would like it to continue being such, whatever God's will. My canonical time is up. There may be another logic at work other than that of Canon Law. Whatever the case, we have to engage in a sound process of discernment in an environment of brotherhood and prayer, to discover God's will for the Order in the future.

Of course, I am not expecting anything. When these moments come, we tend to talk a lot. It is normal. In his second letter to the Duchess of Sessa, Saint John of God said, "... for he knows much better than we can imagine what he is doing and what is god for us" (5). Saint Ignatius, who lived in his time, also said something very meaningful, "it is best not to wish or desire more than He wishes or desires for us".

We are all in the Lord's hands. Let us live this Chapter in a climate of peace. He shall manifest His will to us in due time.

8. CONCLUSION

I have made many references to charity, and I wish to end by making yet another reference to this subject.

In chapter 14 of his biography, Francisco de Castro, the first biographer of Saint John of God, tells us that so great was the charity which the Lord brought about in his servant, that some people were not aware that the Lord had sent him into the wine cellar to have access to His charity and therefore become inebriated with His love. May the Lord send us into the wine cellar, so that we too may become inebriated with His love.

The Congress on Religious Life held in Rome in 2004 was inspired by two fundamental images. One was that of the Samaritan woman at the well to whom God gave living water to drink, and the other was the parable of the good Samaritan, which was explained to the lawyer so that he may do the same.

I also ask the Lord to help us all be good Samaritans, like Saint John of God.

May Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, who accompanied the apostles during the last supper while expecting the Pentecost, be with us. May she preside over this 66th General Chapter, and may this Chapter be, for us and for the entire Order, a time to grow in our passion for Christ, for humankind, and for the hospitality of Saint John of God in the world today.

Thank-you.

SECTION 3

LXVI GENERAL CHAPTER

“Passion for the Hospitality of St John of God, in the world today”
Rome 2-22 October 2006

INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS

“...special importance attaches to “Chapters”
whether particular or general,
at which Institutes are called to elect Superiors
according to the norms set out in their Constitutions,
and to discern, in the light of the Spirit,
the best ways to preserve and adapt
their charism and their spiritual patrimony
to changing historical and cultural situations.
(Vita Consecrata, no. 42)

PRESENTATION

The present working document, INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS, is intended to help participants study and reflect upon the issues to be discussed at the Chapter. It was drafted by the Preparatory Commission and is based on the results of work done by the General Government of the Order, the International Congress of Young Hospitallers (Granada, November 2005) and the four regional conferences held during 2006 in America, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Europe. Proposals and ideas also came from meetings of the *Saint John of God Fundraising Alliance*, the results of the ‘*Survey on the state of Formation within the Order*’ and other sources.

The text is made up of four sections which deal with the four main themes that will be the subject of capitular reflection, divided up into different parts:

I. LIFE OF THE BROTHERS

- A – Pastoral ministry of vocations promotion.
- B – Initial and on-going formation
- C – Fraternal life and new forms of community

2. MISSION OF THE ORDER

- A – Charismatic management
- B – Integration of Brothers and Co-workers
- C – Transmission of the Order's values

3. COLLABORATION (NETWORKING)

4. LEGAL ASPECTS

The reflections conducted in a General Chapter are on the one hand the result of the state of the Order at a particular moment in time, and on the other in the light of the specific charism of the Founder preserved within the Church. In the spirit of “return to the sources” (*resources*) urged by Vatican Council II, we have proposed some references to our principle “sources” of inspiration for each of the topics:

- the *Word of God* as revealed in the Holy Scripture;
- the *Magisterium of the Church* that safeguards and interprets it;
- the life, works and writings of *Saint John of God*;
- the Constitutions and General Statutes, and the Code of Canon Law for the *specifically legal aspects*;
- the documents of the Order, in particular the *Charter of Hospitality, The Path of Hospitality in the manner of Saint John of God*.

I LIFE OF THE BROTHERS

REFERENCES



“How good, how delightful it is to live as bothers all together!” (*Psalm 133*)

15, 15)

“I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business; I call you friends, because I have made know to you everything I have learnt from my Father.” (*John*

“With one heart all these joined constantly in prayer, together with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers..” (*Acts 1, 14*)



“ The consecrated life can certainly be credited with having effectively helped to keep alive in the Church the obligation of fraternity as a form of witness to the Trinity by constantly promoting fraternal love, also in the form of common life, the consecrated life has shown, sharing in the Trinitarian communion can change human relationships and create a new type of solidarity. In this way it speaks to people both of the beauty of fraternal communion and the ways which actually lead to it. (*Vita Consecrata n° 41*)



“Everybody was pleased with the example left by John of God and many men were inspired to imitate him and follow in his footsteps in serving the poor. They sought to serve God alone in the way of hospitality.” (*Castro, Ch. XXIII*)

“The house is open to you. I should like to see you go from good to better, as a son and brother.” (*Letter to Luis Bautista, n° 11*)



“The great schools of philosophical thought must be the fundamental pillars of all formation and training, in which the charism of the Order and thorough familiarity with it must always inspire attitude to and dealings with the poor and the needy”.
(*Charter of Hospitality, 6.1.1.*)



“We are called by Jesus to live with him as friends and thus we encourage one another to fulfil the Lord’s command to love one another as he loves us and strive to maintain the unity which the Spirit creates in the bond of peace.” (*Constitutions, n° 36*)

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PROPOSALS

A – PASTORAL MINISTRY OF VOCATIONS PROMOTION.

New vocations

The issue of new vocations, a matter of concern to the Order for many years now, has become particularly urgent and has to be given absolute priority. In a global context, the number of religious is dropping constantly year by year and the new candidates are too few in number to replace the Brothers who die or leave the Order. The average age of the Brothers is significantly on the increase, albeit with differences in different parts of the world. There could be a somewhat “fideistic temptation” to say that everything depends on God’s will. Although it is true that a vocation is a divine call, this does not exempt us from seeking new pastoral strategies in vocational promotion, and to make the vocation to the consecrated life in the Hospitaller Order an attractive proposition, while recognising the fact that the best and most compelling instrument of attracting new vocations is the witness of a joyous and fulfilled hospitaller life given by every Brother of St. John of God.

With respect to specific strategies, we should:

- give greater prominence to the pastoral ministry of vocations promotion and to those who carry out this ministry, especially in the Provinces where this is lacking;
- set up vocational commissions and appoint animators for this purpose;
- become involved in the world of youth (schools, associations, volunteer groups, etc.);
- use mass media;
- promote the possibility of vocations promotion even in countries where the Order has no presence as yet.

B - INITIAL AND ON-GOING FORMATION

Formation

1.2. Formation is an absolute necessity for living hospitaller consecration and responding to the mission of evangelization on which we are sent. All the Brothers need to be convinced of this and open to the renewal that formation may provide. The Order, and each Brother, must be committed to achieving, and putting into practice, a sound human, theological, pastoral and professional formation. With regard to theological formation, it is particularly important that it be in accordance with the ecclesiology of Vatican Council II. It is most important that we commit ourselves to the provision of a solid initial formation to new candidates, to enable them to achieve the specific level required to be able to inculturate and bear witness to the hospitality of St. John of God in the context of today, while remaining open and knowing how to communicate in a competent manner with the Co-workers in our Centres. We must undertake to put into practise what is written in the Order’s document, “Formation Programme for the Hospitaller Brothers of Saint John of God”. In particular we should:

- find ways to organize exchanges of formation staff among the various Provinces and establish interprovincial novitiates;

- promote the appropriate “formation of formators”;
- evaluate whether the present formation of the brothers is suitable for the role to which they are called in terms of mission, that is, to be credible partners, animators, companions and leaders in hospitality/mission of the community together with the Co-workers;
- demonstrate a style of leadership “of service” rather than one of power and control;
- identify *lay leaders* in top positions who could also be involved in formation;
- make adequate tools available, such as: formation plans and programmes (general ones for all the Order and specific ones for each Province); specific texts, greater use of internet.

C - FRATERNAL LIFE AND NEW FORMS OF COMMUNITY

1.1. 1.3. *Fraternal life* constitutes one of the essential foundations of our hospitaller consecration. We are called to be a sign of communion and evangelical hospitality in the midst of a world where often disunity and hostility prevail. Taking account of the varied situations of the Order, we highlight here some aspects of community life that need to be revitalized:

Fraternal life in community

- the fundamental condition for the development of vocations is to nurture the *spiritual life*. We need to live it with greater profundity, and not at a minimum level, with particular attention to personal and community prayer. On this basis it will be possible to grow in brotherhood as indicated in: “*The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of Saint John of God: The Spirituality of the Order*”;
- to live our own *hospitaller consecration* in a responsible, complete and radical way; and have a sense of being co-responsible in building a fraternal community;
- to welcome, understand, care for and accompany elderly brothers without neglecting the *creative contribution of the young*, so necessary to keep the Order alive in our time, and vice versa;
- to grow in communion through dialogue and communication among brothers on life, faith and the experience of God, the hospitaller mission etc;
- to revitalize *the role of the superior* as animator of the community, and/or apostolic work by drawing up a profile indicating the essential requirements.

1.4. Bearing in mind the statistics of the Order, the magnitude of the hospitaller mission, the Church’s directives with respect to the consecrated life and the present state of every region of the Order, it is both necessary and advisable to be open to and willing to experiment with or recognize *new forms of community life* that, based on our General Statutes (cf. n° 49), would allow an updating and adjustment of community life to the requirements of the day. Since the community is for mission, it should be defined by the “hospitaller mission of the Order” in the broadest sense, and not exclusively by its link with a particular Centre. It follows therefore that there could be:

New forms of community living

- communities that are open to sharing various aspects of their life with those co-workers that wish to, as well as the patients, residents and guests: these aspects could be, for example, “religious experiences” organized and prepared in a special way:
- *Intercongregational* communities (with religious from other Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life) or ecumenical communities (with members from different Christian confessions);
- Temporary communities established for the animation of specific projects both in and outside of the Order which would conclude once the project ends.

- 1.5. Within the context of such an innovation, we should consider the possibility of a *temporary commitment* on the part of those people who would like to share our community life. *Temporary commitment*
- 1.6. The apostolic mission of a community in a Centre is *evangelization, in the spirit and following the example of Saint John of God*. Every brother should be a witness to the hospitaller charism in his attitude towards work, his professional competence and commitment. It is from this that the community principally receives its moral authority. *Evangelisation*
- 1.7. In order to ensure the active involvement of the brothers in the mission of the Centre or Service, it would be advisable that *they be kept informed of important events or directives by the management of the Centre* to which the Community gives its help and support in safeguarding the principles and values of the Order, while respecting the fact that management is responsible to the Provincial for the Centre/Service from whom it receives its mandate. *Communication - information sharing*

2 MISSION OF THE ORDER

REFERENCES



“Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you; cure those in it who are sick, and say, “The Kingdom of God is very near to you.”
(*Luke 10, 8-9*)

“The Lord replied, “Who then is the wise and trustworthy steward whom the master will place over his household to give them at the proper time their allowance of food?” (*Luke 12, 42*)

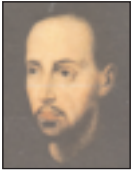


“In the image of Jesus, beloved Son, “whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world” (*John 10, 36*), those whom God call to follow him are also consecrated and sent into the world to imitate his example and to continue his mission. Fundamentally this is true of every disciple.

In a special way, however, it is true of those who, in the manner that characterized the consecrated life are called to follow Christ “more closely”, and to make him “all” of their lives. The task of *devoting themselves wholly to “mission”* is therefore included in their call; indeed, by the action of the Holy Spirit who is at the origin of every vocation and charism, consecrated life itself is a mission, as was the whole of Jesus' life. The profession of the evangelical councils, which makes a person totally free for the service of Gospel, is important also from this point of view.” (*Vita consacrata, 72*)

“ *To institutes of active life*, I would recommend the immense opportunities for works of charity, for the proclamation of the Gospel, for Christian education, cultural endeavours and solidarity with the poor and those suffering from discrimination, abandonment and oppression. Whether they pursue a strictly missionary goal or not, such institutes should ask themselves how willing and able they are to broaden their action in order to extend God's kingdom. In recent times many institutes have responded to this request, which I hope will be given even greater consideration and implementation for a more authentic service. The Church needs to make known the great gospel values of which she is the bearer. No one witnesses more effectively to these values than those who profess the consecrated life in chastity, poverty and obedience, in a total gift of self to God and in complete readiness to serve humanity and society after the example of Christ.”
(*Redemptoris Missio, 69b*)

The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (*kerygma-martyria*), celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*), and exercising the ministry of charity (*diakonia*). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable. (25a) Love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind is as essential to her as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel. (22) For the Church, charity is not a kin of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being. (25) For this reason, it is very important that the Church's charitable activity maintains all of its splendour and does not become just another form of social assistance. (31) It is the responsibility of the Church's charitable organizations to reinforce this awareness in their members, so that by their activity – as well as their words, their silence, their example – they may be credible witnesses to Christ. (31c). (*Deus caritas est*)



“Many others came along too and he helped them all according as they had need. He never once sent anyone away disappointed. He gladly gave at once what he could, others he cheered up by his words telling them to have confidence in God's providence.” (*Castro Ch. XII*)

“Since we all share the same aim (even though each person should follow his own particular path according to God's wishes) it is a good thing if we encourage one another.” (*II Letter to Gutierre Lasso, n° 11*)



“One of the mottos of our Centres could be this: showing our capacity to work by correctly allocating available resources, giving pride of place to the aspects which are most specific to each of our institutions”. (*Charter of Hospitality, 5.3.1.1*)

“ It was for this very reason that within the Religious Order that has made hospitality its specific charism, the dimension of service becomes absolutely essential and expresses the very *raison d'être* of the works of the Order and the interior attitude of its most committed Co-workers. Different vocations exist in this regard, and so pluralism becomes a source of charismatic wealth, and individual existential events, states of life and the working environment become so many opportunities and commitments to “ministry” and “service.”(*Charter of Hospitality, 7.3.1.*)

“Our benchmark has always been Canon Law. At the same time there are other formulae that make it possible to introduce new forms of management, delegation and participation”. (*Charter of Hospitality, 5.3.2.5*)

“But what is important is that the gift of hospitality received from Saint John of God should establish a bond of communication between the Brothers and the Co-workers so that it can act as a stimulus and an incentive to both develop their Christian vocation and to be a visible sign of the merciful love of God towards men and women, the poor and the needy.” (*Charter of Hospitality, 7.3.2.2*)



“We feel that we are the responsible custodians of the gift of hospitality, which gives our Order its characteristic identity. This binds us to live our charism with fidelity, preserving, deepening and constantly developing it within the Church. Our openness to the Spirit, to the signs of the times, and to people's needs, will show us how we are to incarnate it creatively in any given time or situation. The very richness of the charism we have received presupposes that it can be expressed in different forms according to specific circumstances of time and place. And this is why we live in an attitude of discernment and conversion, so that our mission in the Church may always correspond to God's will for us and express our sense of unity.” (*Constitutions, n° 6*)

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PROPOSALS

A – CHARISMATIC MANAGEMENT

- 2.1.** The *charismatic management* that we have been speaking about for many years has not always been achieved in our Centres/Services. Both brothers and co-workers in some of our Provinces and Centres have difficulty in managing their activities according to the fundamental criteria contained in the *Charter of Hospitality*. The main difficulties appear to be with regard to administrative aspects, human resources management, problems with care and the participation of co-workers. This is why a specific “*formation of the heart*” (*Deus Caritas Est, n° 31a*) is necessary, as is *management training for brothers and/or the involvement of co-workers* who have competence in that sector. In addition, we need an evangelical spirit, calm self-criticism, and an overall approach to the mission in which all, brothers and co-workers alike, feel encouraged to offer their contribution through objective criticism and to propose solutions to overcome difficulties as they arise. *Charismatic management*
- 2.2.** It is important that we combine the needs of management with the work of evangelization in our Centres. To be truly evangelical, the management of our Centres has to demonstrate a *clear preferential option for the poor*. Therefore the Order will have to play an active part in the defence of people who are, for example, mentally ill, suffer from AIDS, elderly, the terminally ill, immigrants, etc. *Option for the poor*
- 2.3.** To this end, we might make provision for *new forms of hospitality* in order to respond to the new challenges and needs of care in today’s world. It might be a good idea to set up specific models for each of the many and varied kinds of hospitality, ranging from a simple “street unit”, a sort of modern version of what St. John of God used to do when he collected the poor from the streets, palliative and hospice care, right up to the more sophisticated structures of excellence such as highly specialized hospitals or research institutes etc. *New expressions of hospitality*
- 2.4.** *Brothers should not consider themselves as the “bosses” or “proprietors”* of a Centre but should always feel that they are “at the service of the mission”. They should be true animators and living models of hospitality, in the manner of St. John of God, and work in partnership with the Co-workers in the fulfilment of the mission. Brothers need not necessarily exercise an administrative role, although of course they should not be excluded from this if they are professionally qualified to fill it, but with “a heart which sees” (*Deus Caritas Est, 31b*) they will fit into any situation that calls for the presence of a Brother of St. John of God either inside or and outside our Centres or Services. To guarantee fidelity to the mission, managerial responsibility should be given to people with proven capabilities, whether they be brothers or co-workers. This will make for greater efficiency, better team work and a more dynamic and uniform approach to the mission. *At the service of the mission*

2.5. Each Province should draw up a medium term strategic plan, and follow it when making actual operational choices. It is important that:

*Strategic
planning*

- there always be full administrative transparency, this to be guaranteed and verified with the aid of external auditors; should such external assistance not be available or difficult to obtain, this management check should be carried out by persons entrusted with the task by the Provincial and his Council;
- there be a clear separation between the administration and management of our Centres and Services and that of the religious Community;
- should a Centre become “unproductive”, not from an economic point of view so much as from the point of view of its effective charismatic management, it should be closed down or given over to another activity;
- we seek benefactors (either individuals, companies etc) to support the Centres of the Order and missions financially, thereby rediscovering the ancient practice of asking for alms, albeit in a new way.

2.6. Moreover, we should not forget that in some of our Centres (homes for the elderly, psychiatric institutes, homes for the disabled, etc..) there are people who live in them all their lives without having any say as to how they are run. We need to be more attentive to this therefore, and with caution and a careful approach, attempt to have the residents participate in the decisions taken by the Centres in which they live. In some countries residents in such homes already have major input and control with respect to their living conditions, recreational needs, work etc

*Participation by
residents in
management*

B – INTEGRATION OF BROTHERS AND CO-WORKERS INTO THE MISSION.

2.7. In every case there remains the goal of *more effective forms of cooperation between brothers and co-workers* that will enable us to overcome reciprocal distrust and suspicion, that sees the co-worker solely as a “paid employee” and the brother as “owner and employer”. To journey together towards a common goal is not possible without a more direct form of involvement of the Co-workers in the management and administration of the Centres/Services. It is precisely because of this that perhaps we ought to redefine better and re-launch the concept of “Hospitaller Family” or “Family of St. John of God” whose members share the one charism and are equally responsible for its transmission.

*Brothers and
co-workers
journeying
together*

2.8. Without wishing to form a kind of “club or inner circle”, the Chapter could consider the possibility that certain co-workers, whether they work in our Centres or are benefactors that contribute to the mission of the Order through prayer and/or financial support, might like to enter into deeper spiritual communion with the Order. There are several ways in which this could be made possible, an example of this, they could be invited to form part of the ‘*Spiritual Family of Saint John of God*’ and other forms of association, as exists in some parts of the Order.

*Spiritual Family
of Saint John of
God*

- 2.9.** To this end we could think about *more binding forms of commitment* for certain co-workers who are more involved and aware of the charism of the Order. We could consider the establishment of a special “Saint John of God Movement” (SJG Movement) for them, based on a temporary and/or permanent commitment that would allow those interested in living the charism of the Order in the spirit of the Founder, to do so. It would entail special formation of the person concerned, in addition to the preparation of clear guidelines, criteria and “statutes” to regulate the affiliation. Clearly, this would be only for those who are familiar with our mission and spirituality and who desire to have a deeper bond with the Order in order to express their personal vocation, commitment and life style. *A form of commitment, linkage with Order*
- 2.10.** An enormous effort will have to be made by the Order to adequately *transmit the charism*, principles and values of our identity. The future of the mission of our Centres depends to a great extent upon this. To this end, apart from personal witness, it is important: *Transmission of Charism*
- that the Centres, and especially the Provincial Curiae pay particular attention to the criteria for the selection and contracting of staff in which the Prior of the Community should be involved since his role is important in the accompaniment of new members and the on-going formation of staff, etc. In Centres where there are no brothers, the Provincial should still assign a brother to it as chief adviser on all matters pertaining to the Order’s charism, philosophy and ethos;
 - that leading positions be given preferably to people who are more aware of the charism of the Order, although this should not be the only criterion, and certainly not a priority;
 - that the transmission of values not be seen as the exclusive responsibility of brothers, especially in Centres where there is no brother present;
 - that the General Curia establish a Commission to draw up fundamental guidelines for the transmission of the Order’s values; the Commission should bring the plan up to date periodically in line with developments and new requirements,
 - that the values of the Order also be publicised outside of the Centres through a carefully designed marketing strategy that would promote and transmit the mission and image of the Order, the charism of St. John of God and the way of life of our brotherhood, in a certain sense we could say: the St. John of God “brand”.
- 2.11.** It is a reality that in some Provinces there are *Centres without a brother’s presence*. In such cases it is the co-workers who are responsible for safeguarding, bearing witness to and transmitting the values of the Order and its mission. With the continuous expansion of the Order’s services, it is possible that, following the example and spirit of St. John of God, this trend will increase and spread throughout the Order, to allow its mission to respond to the needs of the many people who find themselves in difficulty. *Centres without Brothers*
- 2.12.** It is important to acknowledge that nowadays our co-workers are taking on a leading role in carrying on the mission of the Order. This being so, the General Definitory could appoint a *group of advisers* composed of brothers and co-workers to deal with matters of consequence for the mission of the Order. *Groups of Consultants*

C – TRANSMISSION OF THE ORDER’S VALUES

- 2.13.** The transmission of the charism and the work of evangelization should be extended to the families of the people we serve in our Centres and Services, and co-workers. This should be seen as a necessary duty by the brothers. The witness they bear to society and the Church through their charitable works and the way they live, as persons consecrated in hospitality, should find in these family members a further transmission of the gift received after the people who avail of our services, who are the first recipients, and our co-workers. *Families*
- 2.14.** Works must be managed in a way that is mindful of the challenges of *modern times*, both in general and in relation to the specific aspects of local realities. Moreover, if we are to remain faithful to the innovative spirit of our Founder, we must also be prophetic. This means that we must be able to predict the trends and evolutions of the socio-health care realities in which we operate, so as to prevent and meet new emerging needs. All this requires us to promote research activities in our centers, according to the indications provided in the Charter of Hospitality. *Challenges of modernity*
- 2.15.** Whenever a new work or service is established, the brothers are strongly recommended to *tap into the long-standing history of the Order* and the experience gained in the specific field. This should apply especially if the standard of services available in the country and in the specific field is lower than that provided by the Order in other parts of the world. Hence, information and support must be requested, especially in terms of planning, implementation criteria, training and research. This will enable the creation of a service that not only caters to the needs of the targeted group of people in need, but may serve as a “model” of reference for governments or other local authorities in the future. *Historical models of the Order and new works*
- 2.16.** To avoid dissipating the wealth of experience acquired by the various centers, it may be very useful to set up an easily accessible online *data bank*. Such a data bank, which would have easy access through the Internet, would collect all the information and operational guidelines that may be of use to the other centres/services. *Data bank*
- 2.17.** *Spiritual and religious assistance to those in our care* is an integral part of our hospitaller mission, as well as a veritable “right” of the people we serve. A pastoral care service must thus be provided by duly skilled pastoral care agents, who may offer spiritual assistance to patients/clients, their families and co-workers, regardless of their religious beliefs. *Pastoral care*
- 2.18.** An area that definitely deserves greater attention and development is bioethics. The ethical implications of health care, experiments, research and interventions on the unborn and the dying are indeed growing. Moreover, the relations between the activity of our institutions and the legislation in force in the various countries often become problematic. It is necessary therefore, to have specific training of individuals and bodies specifically skilled to advise on such issues. Due consideration should be given to the possible establishment of a group of consultants or an office at the General Curia that would function as a bioethics “observatory”. *Bioethics*

2.19. Contemporary society is characterized by an increasingly multiethnic and multicultural structure. Accordingly, our centers should participate in intercultural programs and special initiatives and our brothers and co-workers to develop a deeper understanding of and a greater appreciation and respect for cultural values and religious differences. On a specifically religious plane, concrete signs of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue should be encouraged. Hospitality lived out in the manner of Saint John of God is, by definition, open to welcoming and serving men and women of all religious beliefs, and none, irrespective of their cultural and ethnic background. Furthermore, given the fact that the Order is now present in many countries where even the Church itself is in a minority position, the incorporation and inculturation of our charism into other cultures and religious traditions, it is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Order.

*Intercultural
dialogue*

2.20. For a global evaluation of the way in which our Centers and Services are actually responding to the demands of charismatic management, we could set up a quality assurance systems, similar to those employed to assess health care services. In this case, the way in which the values of the Order are applied would be assessed.

*Quality
assurance*

3 NETWORKING

REFERENCES



“The churches of Asia send their greetings. Aquila and Prisca send their best wishes in the Lord, together with the church that meets in their house. All the brothers send their greetings.” (1 Cor 16,19)

“I can testify for him that he works hard for you, as well as for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Greetings from my dear friend Luke, the doctor, and also from Demas. Please give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church which meets in her house.” (Col 4, 13-16)

“But now I have undertaken to go to Jerusalem in the service of the holy people of God there, since Macedonia and Achaia have chosen to make a generous contribution to the poor among God’s holy people at Jerusalem.” (Rm 15, 25-26)



“Finally, it is reassuring to mention that, at the Synod, not only were there many interventions on the doctrine of communion, but great satisfaction was expressed for the experience of dialogue conducted in a climate of mutual trust and openness between the bishops and the men and women religious present. This led to a desire that “this spiritual experience of communion and cooperation be extended to the whole Church”, even after the Synod. It is my hope too that all will grow in the understanding and spirituality of communion.” (Vita Consecrata, no. 50)



“When Antón Martín left, other brothers stayed on at the hospital and I intend mentioning them later on (because being disciples of the holy man they went forth doing as he did, so their lives and works are well worth knowing). They carried on running the hospital just as their leader did.” (Castro, chap. 22)



“Creating a culture of membership of the Centre, Province, Order.” (Charter of Hospitality, n. 5.3.3.9) “If the Order wants to have a meaningful presence in the next century, it must work jointly and in coordination with the Church.” (Charter of Hospitality, n. 5.3.6.5)

“We must continue in this path of relating to and communicating with the authorities. This will demand honesty, clarity and transparency on our part.” (Charter of Hospitality, n. 5.3.6.6)



“Within the universal Church, our Order forms a single body, composed of local communities, provinces, vice provinces, general delegations, provincial delegations” (Constitutions, no. 77)

“The attitude of service and openness which are features of our mission lead us to collaborate with other organizations in the Church or society in the field of our specific apostolate”

(Constitutions, no. 45d)

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PROPOSALS

A -COOPERATION IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

3.1. The generic theme of “collaboration” in the context of today’s globalization, the different socio-ecclesial needs, and the development of mass-media (internet, e-mail, etc.) require new and more concrete forms of mutual exchange both within the Order and between the Order and external bodies. The main ambits to be considered are as follows:

- Interprovincial within one and the same region;
- Interprovincial within different geographic regions;
- With other Church institutions;
- With other institutions such as public administrations, socially engaged private institutions, (provided that they share the interests and respect the fundamental principles of our health care approach).

3.2. Collaboration between centers, between provinces and between the latter and the General Curia does not only constitute an operational tool to improve the effectiveness of the work performed and to optimize resources, but is also provides an opportunity to project in a uniform way the Order vis à vis society. Its universality is its great strength and the fact that it is incarnated into different local realities is an additional resource that does not dilute the charismatic reality but actually enriches that which the Order preserves and to which it bears witness.

*Uniform
protector of the
Order*

3.3. The General Curia plays a very important role in that it promotes and coordinates such relations, especially within the Order. This is why it is necessary to evaluate and revisit some of the projects that are being implemented, so as to improve and possibly revitalize them or bring them to an end. Furthermore, it would be desirable to promote opportunities for exchange and in-depth discussion on issues like pastoral care, bioethics, formation, and charismatic management also in cooperation with other specific institutions.

*Role of the
General Curia*

3.4. For several years now, the Order has operated through interprovincial, interregional and intercontinental Commissions. These Commissions provide the opportunity to reflect, share, coordinate and stimulate projects in the various areas in the lives of the Provinces. The General Chapter is an appropriate time to review, evaluate and plan interprovincial cooperation efforts, either through the existing Commissions or in any other way. Where appropriate, foundations must also be laid and the necessary awareness be raised to the possibility of the merger of some Provinces. (cf. also part 4 of this document).

*Cooperative
bodies*

3.5. Increasingly we see clearly the differences that exist within the Order in relations to the various regions and continents. For this reason, in the past six years regional meetings were organized to study and solve concrete problems. We now have a good chance to take stock of what has been done and deepen our understanding of such operational trends for the future.

*Evaluation of
regional
meetings*

B-INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- 3.6.** In spite of this, the Order is one and we are called to *encourage universal communion*. We are convinced that we can all help each other by sharing our resources, and thus be mutually enriched. It is thus necessary to define concrete ways to achieve such cooperation between the different regions of the Order: human resources (brothers and co-workers), material resources (financial and health care), training as well as spiritual, religious, pastoral, and professional formation, exchange of experiences, etc. All this should not be improvised, but duly prepared on the basis of special programs.
- 3.7.** The establishment of *twinning* between various centers or between the latter and works outside the Order may prove to be an interesting initiative. Such initiatives may increase the health care activities of the Order and at the same time become a tool to gain a deeper understanding of its charism. *Twinning*
- 3.8.** Special emphasis should be placed on the various forms of *international cooperation* and the necessary *fund raising activities*. In some cases, fund raising activities may be centralized for a better management and transparency, and should be distinguished from *fund-spending*. The brothers and co-workers should be encouraged to support such initiatives. *Internal Cooperation*
- 3.9.** The Missions Office will change its name to *Saint John of God Solidarity Office*. Such an office will be coordinated by a General Counselor or another person specially appointed by the General Definitory, and its tasks shall include the following:
- Missionary animation of the Order;
 - Promotion and coordination of the various cooperation initiatives;
 - Information on the management of the “mission fund”, which will hitherto be called *Saint John of God Solidarity Fund*;
 - Working together with the “St John of God Fundraising Alliance” and its coordination office
- 3.10.** The Order should manifest its belonging to the Church by *being more directly involved and cooperating with the local church*. Though they may not be subjected to Episcopal jurisdiction, individual centers are located within a specific local and national ecclesial context. As such, their activities are necessarily closely related to the pastoral activities of the local church. *Cooperation with local churches*
- 3.11.** At a central and local level, the Order may also work with other Church institutions to promote joint projects and to defend and promote the rights of sick and needy people. Special importance will also be attached to *intercongregational cooperation* for health care projects carried out by our works and other institutions. *Cooperation with other Church institutions*
- 3.12.** Finally, the network of cooperation will necessarily have to include *all other non-Church bodies* (civil hospitals, universities, volunteer organizations, NGOs, political bodies, etc.), which are involved, in one way or another in caring for sick and needy people. This can be mutually enriching, enabling all concerned to improve the quality of their assistential services. It is both an important challenge and opportunity which calls us to open up to inter-religious dialogue and the dialogue between faith and science, to which the Church is insistently calling us, while remaining faithful to the fundamental principles of our identity. *Cooperation with non-Church bodies*

4 LEGAL ASPECTS

REFERENCES



“Enlighten them in regard to the decisions and regulations, showing them how they are to live and what they are to do”. (*Ex. 18,20*)

“This led to disagreement, and after Paul and Barnabas had had argument with these men it was decided that Paul and Barnabas and others of the Church should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the question with the apostles and elders...(...) When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and by the apostles and elders, and gave an account of all that God had done through them. But certain members of the Pharisees’ party who had become believers objected, insisting that gentiles should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses.(...) The apostles and elders met to look into the matter, and after a long discussion, Peter stood up and addressed them.(...) The apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose delegates from among themselves to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They choose Judas, know as Barsabbas, and Silas, both leading men in the brotherhood, and gave them a (this) letter to take with them. These two spent some time there, and then the brothers wished them peace and they went back to those who had sent them” (*Acts,15, 2-6, 22, 33*)



“Institutes of Consecrated Life are thus invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders and foundresses in response to the signs of the times emerging in today's world. This invitation is first of all a call to perseverance on the path of holiness in the midst of the material and spiritual difficulties of daily life. But it is also a call to pursue competence in personal work and to develop a dynamic fidelity to their mission, adapting forms, if need be to new situations and different needs, in complete openness to God's inspiration and to the Church's discernment. But all must be fully convinced that the quest for ever greater conformity to the Lord is the guarantee of any renewal which seeks to remain faithful to an Institute's original inspiration”. (*Vita consecrata, 37*) “A fundamental principle, when speaking of the consecrated life, is that the specific features of the new communities and their styles of life must be founded on the essential theological and canonical elements proper to the consecrated life.” (*Vita consecrata, 62*).



“ Letters from Peru, Panama and Nombre de Dios were sent to the House in Grenada from the hospitals founded there... The superiors insist that the rules and constitutions of the brothers as well as the Bull granted be sent to them.” (*Castro, Ch. XXIII*)



“The 'New Hospitality' must be expressed in two directions: in innovative centres in the community and offering new responses where care is not being provided by others.” (*Charter*, 3.2.2.) “We therefore have to review the way we think and act, so that we can transform our existence as Brothers or Co-workers to become truly 'transparent' living witnesses of the merciful love of God.” (*Charter*, 8.3.)



“The General Statutes contain the practical norms most necessary for the application of the principles contained in the Constitutions. Any changes which may, in time, seem opportune are the responsibility of the General Chapter, which must, in each case, express its wish with at least two-thirds of the votes.” (*Const.* 107)

“The setting up and suppression of Provinces, Vice-Provinces and General Delegation and any alterations in their respective demarcations, fall under the jurisdiction of the General Definitory, which must first ask the opinion of the Provincial Definitories concerned.” (*Const.* 78a).



“It is for the competent authority of the institute to divide the institute into parts, by what ever name these may be called, to establish new parts, or to unite or otherwise modify those in existence, in accordance with the constitutions.” (*CIC, can, 581*)

“Other norms which are established by the competent authority of the institute have to be properly collected in other codes, but these can be conveniently reviewed and adapted according to the needs of time and place.” (*CIC, can, 587*)

“Superiors are to be constituted for a certain and appropriate period of time, according to the nature and needs of the institute, unless the constitutions establish otherwise for the supreme Moderator and for the Superiors of an autonomous house. An institute's own law is to make suitable provisions so that Superiors constituted for a defined time do not continue in offices of governance for too long a period of time without an interval.” (*CIC, can, 624 § 1-2*)

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PROPOSALS

- 4.1.** The first point to discuss is the possible *integration of provinces*. Here we are considering the situation in certain parts of the Order characterized by a decrease in the number of brothers, their ageing, the scarcity of vocations and the complexity of many apostolic works. It is therefore suggested that the government of the Order establish a commission to study the possibility of such integration. *Integration of provinces*
- 4.2.** A second point, based on the same general considerations, concerns the possibility of a different *structure for the General Curia*. Neither the Code of Canon Law, nor our own law, cover the structure of the General Curia. Over time, the General Curia has been structured in different ways. At the last General Chapter it was decided that the number of General Councillors, no less than four, would be as *proposed by the Prior General*, at the Chapter itself. The General Statutes, articles 113, 114 and 119 refer to offices, other bodies and commissions “to collaborate and assist the General Government in its guidance and animation of the Order” (GS 119). The new structure proposed for the General Curia focuses on a more functional utilization of human resources for the reasons explained above. Bearing in mind that our General Statutes state (111g) that the Prior General must reside in Rome, but make no mention of the place of residence of the General Councillors, and in light of the last few years' experience where it has been possible to stay in contact through modern technologies, the Chapter will have to study the new modalities for organizing the General Curia. *Structure of General Curia*
- 4.3.** An other point is related to the *two-thirds majority necessary to change the General Statutes*. The proposal was already discussed at the 2000 General Chapter. This specifically concerns number 107 of our Constitutions (quoted above). At the 2000 General Chapter it was proposed that changes to the General Statutes could be made with an absolute majority (more than half the votes). This proposal establishes a difference between the majority necessary for questions regarding the Constitutions and those regarding the changes to the General Statutes. The nature of the General Statutes being quite different. They are more flexible and more apt to change whereas the Constitutions present the essential elements and fundamental values on which the Order is based. Abolishing the two-third majority would only apply to the General Statutes. *Simple majority to change Gen Statutes*
- 4.4.** Another proposal is to *prolong the mandates of posts of responsibility*. This point was also discussed at the last General Chapter. Obviously the length of mandates in the Order has been linked to the three and six year terms, but it is also evident that “the needs of time and place.”(CIC, can, 587) and the present reality of the Order, as explained in the introduction, suggest the need to review the length of mandates of superiors, particularly those of the Provincial and Local Superiors. A three year mandate seems too short to handle the existing problems, and therefore it is suggested to extend the mandate to four years. *Prolongation of mandates*

Furthermore the limited number of brothers means that very often the same people are being repeatedly re-elected to the same positions. In addition, a longer mandate and less frequent changes would allow the person elected to work more effectively.

- 4.5.** A final element requiring discussion regards *the recourse to postulation*, as described in *Postulation* Canon Law 180 §1 dispensation from a canonical impediment which stands in the way of the election of a superior:
- regarding a brother-priest;
 - regarding two previous consecutive mandates.

These are two different situations which need to be dealt with differently. The reasons for which such changes are necessary in the first case are related to changes in ecclesiology since Vatican II regarding the nature of consecrated life, and in the second case are due to the administrative needs of certain Provinces.

SALESIAN PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Science of Education
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

THE HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF SAINT JOHN OF GOD,
FACED WITH THE
CHALLENGES POSED BY
SOCIETY, LOOKS AT ITSELF
AND PLANS THE WAY
AHEAD

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL
CHAPTER ON THE STATE OF FORMATION IN THE ORDER
BY Prof. D. Renato MION sdb.

Rome 2006

INTRODUCTION

THE VALUE OF OUR SURVEY AND HOW IT WAS CONDUCTED

We present a summary of the Report on the *State of Formation in the Order* which submitted to the last LXVI General Chapter of the Order. The report seeks to provide a thorough and accurate picture of some aspects relating to *Formation and the Vocations Pastoral Ministry*. A survey, conducted on the basis of scientific parameters, can be very useful in every area of social life in general, but it is especially valuable when it is applied to religious life for it provides very useful elements for assessment and judgment that can help leaders to make their decisions. Indeed, this type of research guarantees objective results and leaves no room for subjective and biased interpretations.

The main objective of the survey was to look at *how to improve the quality of formation and vocations pastoral in the Order*. Seven areas of analysis were identified, each dealt with in a separate chapter. Each of the *seven chapters* includes sections that summarize some interesting suggestions volunteered by the Brothers. The seven chapters address the following topics:

1. Analysis of the structure and organization of the Order by age, geographical areas, roles covered;
2. Identity of religious Consecration: vocation, motivations, separations, vows;
3. Charismatic identity of the mission: new roles, pastoral care of the sick, Co-workers;
4. Religious community: lifestyles, interpersonal relationships, integration of young members;
5. Formation of the masters of formation: preparation, formation plan, ongoing formation;
6. Vocations pastoral ministry: how the charismatic values are presented, selection, accompaniment;
7. Vocations pastoral and the new challenges of Hospitality: innovation/integration.

Thanks to this work, the purpose of which was to gain a deeper understanding of the overall situation, it was possible to develop more accurate reflections on the various issues examined.

The present text, therefore, offers a summary of a much more detailed picture. The full text of the survey report is available at the General Curia of the Order - should the Brothers wish to consult it - in a 260-page hard copy, as well as on the computer and on a CD rom, with all the charts prepared by the University cross-referencing the individual items. This will be sent to every Provincial Curia and General Delegation as a necessary tool to study issues and make decisions at the next Provincial chapters and over subsequent years.

All of the sections of the survey report suggestions and personal comments made by the brothers. Due to the brevity of this summary, we can only provide highlights of the chapter which deals with vocations pastoral ministry.

We acknowledge the great work done by Brother Luis Aldana, under whose leadership this survey was performed, as well as the effort of the ad hoc committee, which drafted the questionnaire. Finally, we wish to thank the Department of Sociology of the Salesian Pontifical University, which developed and performed the survey that we have presented in the following pages.

Chapter One

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE USED

The 1012 questionnaires examined were sent from all of the Provinces of the Order in the following percentages - which add up to 100% of the replies - distributed as shown below:

- **37.5% (380): Southern Europe (SE)** (Rome, Lombardy & Venice, France, Portugal, Aragon, Castille, Andalusia);
- **18.4% (189): Central Europe (CE)** (Poland, Silesia, Bavaria, Rhine, Bohemia & Moravia, Austria, England, Ireland);
- **8.4% (84): Africa** (B. Menni, R. Pampuri, Our Lady of Mercy)
- **17.1% (172): Latin America (LA)** (Mexico and Central America, Colombia, Brazil, Northern South America and Southern South America);
- **12.6% (127): Asia** (India, Korea, Philippines, Vietnam, Japan);
- **6% (60): USA** (United States, Canada, Australia).

More than half of the respondents *carry out their apostolate* in Europe, both southern and central (52.3% = 535 Saint John of God Brothers), 20% (=202 Saint John of God Brothers) in the Americas, 8.5% (= 86 Saint John of God Brothers) in Africa, and 15.3% (= 155 Saint John of God Brothers) in Asia and Oceania.

As regards age, one fourth of the respondents are under 36 years of age, and half are under 52. 806 Saint John of God Brothers (equivalent to 79.64% of respondents) are under 70 years of age. 55 are under 80. In Africa there are no Brothers over 74, while in Asia there are only 2.

Saint John of God Brothers in Southern Europe are aged between 56 and 74 (47.4%), the Brothers of Central Europe are aged between 36 and 55 (36%), the Brothers of Africa are aged between 18 and 35 (46.4%), along with Asia (44.1%) and, to a lesser extent, Latin America (36%). Half of the Saint John of God Brothers in the US is between 56 and 74 years of age.

Most of the Brothers who are currently working in formation and vocations promotion (70 Saint John of God Brothers) are young: 44.3% are under 35, while 37.1% are between 36 and 55 years of age. They have educational qualifications, most in advanced studies in humanities and theology, such as diplomas or degrees obtained from church institutes. However, 35.9% of the Brothers only hold a professional or technical qualification diploma. It is worth noting that 25.9% of the respondents (= 262 Saint John of God Brothers) stated that they are willing to undergo training in order to work in the area of formation or vocations promotion, especially in Latin American (LA), Asian and African countries; half of the young Brothers aged between 18 and 35 and one third of the ones aged between 36 and 55 have stated the same.

Some of the problems observed are that there are few vocations, especially in SE, few Brothers holding certificates of advanced studies, especially in humanities and education, and overlaps in the work carried out by the Brothers engaged in formation and in the vocations pastoral ministry.

Chapter Two:

THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY OF CONSECRATION

In order to be faithful to one's vocation and to deepen one's consecrated life, one must constantly defend them and verify their quality, consistency, scope and religious orientation in order to keep one's spiritual journey constantly on track. It is the "dynamic fidelity" to one's charism that, in the face of the challenges posed by contemporary society, allows one's religious identity to mature progressively.

I. The most difficult aspects

The survey reveals that the difficulties met in one's effort to strengthen one's consecration and charismatic identity involve **five main areas**.

1. First of all, there is a need to **strengthen the identity of consecration** in order to live the evangelical counsels and the hospitaller mission consistently. Indeed, the latter is often threatened by a **series of difficulties** that were clearly indicated by the Brothers and are summarized in the table below.

Religious identity is threatened especially by an **insufficient human (22.7%), Christian and religious formation (20.2%)**. This has a negative impact on personal and community lifestyles and causes serious difficulties when it comes to practicing the evangelical counsels, especially **chastity**, which is challenged by affective immaturity (33.9%, pointed out especially by the younger Brothers), the inability to live interpersonal relationships authentically (33.9%, observed by Brothers aged 36-74) and to integrate the affective sexual dimension adequately (32.7%, pointed out especially in Africa and by the younger Brothers) into the special life of consecration. Indeed, there is an urgent need for one to sincerely question oneself in order to understand how one relates to the religious charism of the Order (15.6%) and to what extent one is capable of taking on the commitments of hospitaller consecrated life.

2. **The most serious difficulties met in developing one's vocational identity are considered to be the poor life of faith and prayer (26.5%)**, as observed especially by the Brothers in Asia (51.2%), Africa (28.6%), and SE (24.5%), as well as by the younger Brothers (31%). In particular, one feels that there is a tendency to **neglect spiritual life (55.1%)**, which is the main cause for abandoning the vocation, according to half of the Brothers, especially in Asia (65.4%), the older Brothers (65.2%), the formators (58.1%), the local superiors (59%), and also the younger Brothers. It is therefore **necessary to nurture one's inner life through individual and community prayer, an intensely deepened liturgical life, and a personal internalization of the spirituality of the Order**.

Some of the other causes for abandoning the vocation mentioned are difficulties in interpersonal relationships in community life (37%), losing the motivations underlying one's vocation (33.7%), activism which stifles one's identity as a consecrated person (20.8%), and affective problems (18.3%).

3. **All of this requires great care in initial formation** in order for it to truly be a time of intense preparation aimed to discover and strengthen the reasons *why one is entering into religious life*. Many Brothers state that they were first inspired by the encounter with a poor or sick person (42.3%), by the example of a Brother serving the sick (38%), or by the fraternal life of the Brothers (18.1%).

It is also necessary to identify and address the **personal weaknesses** of the candidates and Brothers in formation through **actual and effective accompaniment**, which is now considered to be an indispensable tool that helps especially the younger Brothers to persevere. This is confirmed by the strong recovery in spiritual direction, provided by both the **spiritual director** (39.9%) and the confessor (38%), but also by the simple and direct guidance that comes from the friendship of a Brother (30.8%, up to 59.5% in Africa). Indeed, the urgent need for and appreciation of the **spiritual director** as a spiritual guide and accompanier seems to be strongly felt today, especially in the areas where there are more younger Brothers, like in Asia (59.8%), in Africa (42.9%) and in LA (59.8%).

4. The improper use of means allocated for the hospitaller mission (38.2%) and the failure to separate the assets of the community from the assets of the center (18.3%) is currently one of the most frequent difficulties met in living the vow of poverty correctly, especially in Africa (63.1%) and in Asia (62.2%).

Problems relating to fidelity to the **vow of obedience** instead are somewhat more complex. In theory, this vow does not seem to pose any problems, although in practice there are some difficulties, as one can see from the table below.

What are the difficulties that religious experience today in living out the vow of obedience?	%
1. Lack of in-depth communication with the superiors	29.9
2. Inability to give up one's personal ideas in favor of the community project	24.1
3. Strong search for one's autonomy	23.3
4. The concept of authority as service is not understood	23.3
5. The community meets infrequently to engage in discernment on its life project	21.3
6. Attitudes of pride and personal arrogance	18.3
7. Not much readiness to meet the requests of the Superiors	17.4

These highly individualistic and disruptive aspects must now be dealt with in formation, both initial and ongoing.

5. The analysis on the **vow of hospitality** brought to the fore some problems involving the boundary between tradition and innovation, sensitivity and professionalism, the Brothers' self-esteem and managerial positions taken over by Co-workers. The new circumstances that are arising **cast doubt on the way in which the centers were run in the past as compared to the present situation, where the laity often cover managerial and expert roles (17.4%)**. In some cases, the formation received in the past is considered to be inadequate to the current needs of hospitality (16.1%).

Indeed, the health care sector in contemporary society, as well as a progressive decline in the number of religious staff, especially in SE, have made it necessary to hand over to the laity the managerial roles that were previously held by the Brothers, who have had major problems in adapting to the new situation. Therefore, there is an urgent need to work on this aspect, also by employing the resources that are offered through ongoing formation.

Chapter Three

THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY OF THE MISSION

In consecrated life, the mission represents one of the two poles of identity. One becomes religious within an institute with the purpose-mission of consecrating one's life to God in the service of the Brothers. In the century-old tradition of the Church, such a service is rendered in two major areas: education and charity. The mission translates consecration into action and expresses its particular identity, distinguishing it from all other Orders and Congregations of the Church. The Brothers of Saint John of God work in the area of health care.

I. THE "NEW ROLE" OF THE BROTHER IN THE MISSION

The new role of the Brother in the mission is characterized by five fundamental factors which are **to become and be more explicitly a critical conscience, moral guide, and prophetic presence, open to new needs, in a renewed spirit of integration with the Co-workers.**

In relation to the charismatic identity of the mission, the results obtained in some regions are very good, as is revealed by the survey. Many Brothers feel they are moral guides, a critical conscience, and a prophetic presence.

Around 20 % of the Brothers believe that, generally speaking, the assimilation has been "great", as is also confirmed by the percentages recorded in the "fair" column, which are higher (more than one third of the Brothers) especially as regards integration with the Co-workers (41.9%). However, between 25 and 30% of the Brothers feel that the effort made so far has been "small."

It appears that there are difficulties with the new role that the Brother of Saint John of God must play in the mission today. The main reasons for this are due especially to the lack of adequate formation (41.6%), fear of change (30.4%), strong traditionalism (29.2%), little formation and preparation to the new roles (20.8% + 18%). To rectify this situation it is essential to identify strategies and methods aimed at furthering **ongoing formation** in order to overcome, above all else, the **poor charismatic vision that is sometimes present.**

2. PROMOTION AND CENTRALITY OF THE CHARISM AND LIFE OF THE FOUNDER.

Given that **Saint John of God is a source of motivation for 88.2%** of the Brothers, it is urgent and necessary to **promote him, his life, his charism and his work** among the Co-workers, in society and in the Church. Indeed, he still represents one of the core and most attractive values within the framework of the vocational proposals that we must present to young people and to our Co-workers. His charism is in fact greatly appreciated especially in the regions of Asia (90.5%) and Africa (90.5%), followed by LA (88.4%), SE (87.9%), CE (87.8%) and, lastly, the US (83.3%). It is likewise popular among very young people (91.2%), high school graduates (88.3%), and 87.8% of college graduates.

3. PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK.

Pastoral care of the sick is a very important part of our mission. However, **it does not appear to be very positive** due to the fact that the various components of the hospitaller community are not very involved in promoting it within society and the church at the local level. The Brothers are not very involved, and the Co-workers and outside staff are involved even less. The answers given by the Brothers seem to suggest

that so far only half of the work has been done to become integrated at the local level. Here the Brothers' opinions lie midway between what has already been achieved (enough; for 1 Brother out of 8, integration is already well underway) and what still remains to be done. Quite a bit of work has been done at the Church level, but further efforts are required at the level of the local society.

More work and further efforts are required, for evangelizing is a fundamental aspect of our mission in the Church. That is why it is necessary to provide **more formation and education in this area**. Some encouragement may come from a phenomenon which is significant for vocations today. Indeed, the survey reveals that the very young Brothers and the Brothers responsible for vocations pastoral refer more to the *pastoral care of the needy*. This special attention is not isolated or a mere coincidence. If we look at the motivations that have brought young men to join the Order, we see that this experience of care and encounter with a poor and needy sick person is one of the strongest driving forces that have led a young person to pursue the vocation of special consecration in the Order.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CO-WORKERS

The relationship with Co-workers is one of the most problematic issues to be addressed, for it generates some unease which requires special attention. All the more so because today the help of the co-workers has become urgent and indispensable, and we must encourage their leadership.

Two sets of problems arise here: problems that the Brothers attribute to the Co-workers and problems that come from the Brothers themselves. The first set of problems includes the difference in values, which are not in line with the values of the Order, and the wariness towards the Brothers who are seen as the owners of the works.

As regards the second set of problems, the Brothers admit that they have little knowledge of and appreciation for the vocation and identity of the laity (57.3%), and especially that they are not trained to work with the laity (56.8%), that there is some resistance on their part to accept the laity in managerial positions (56.4%), and that the Brothers are unable to work in a team (54.4%). This reveals a lack of adequate formation of the brothers' personalities, hence the need to organize formation initiatives focusing on specific contents, values, and relational skills.

5. DIFFICULTIES IN STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN ACTIVISM AND INNER LIFE

The absence of such a balance is reflected in two serious situations. Firstly, not enough care is devoted to personal prayer (29.1%, especially among young people, the Brothers in Asia and in Africa). Secondly, spiritual life has grown weaker, remote or has even lost its meaning (28.4%, especially in SE, LA) as a result of the shift to bourgeois values, secularism and laicism.

One should not disregard the importance of an adequate plan for one's personal life (23%), which helps the individual to develop as a whole. However, it is also important for spiritual life that the community be stimulating and positive (23%), in order to offset the excessive activism (22%) and too many professional engagements (21.5%) that the very young Brothers often complain about. There appears to be a sense of chaos and general disorder in one's life, which seems to have lost sight of the ultimate purpose of one's actions. One gets caught up with practical matters that run the risk of crushing even the most beautiful ideals: a situation built around present needs, with no future prospects, almost at the mercy of events that one must keep up with for fear of being left behind. Such a situation is registered especially in LA and in Africa, among the very young Brothers, the Brothers with a university degree, the Superiors of the General

and Provincial Governments and the Brothers engaged in the vocations pastoral ministry (34.5%), equivalent to 13 points above the average.

6. THE CARE OF INITIAL FORMATION

Commitment in the area of initial and ongoing formation is a fundamental and substantial part of the life of the Order in general and of each brother in particular, as set forth in our Constitutions (nn.53-73)

One of the aspects that is most challenging, inasmuch as it relates to the perseverance of vocations, has to do with the insertion of the young Brothers into the working communities and especially the care that must be given to their process of formation. Indeed, one must bear in mind the **fragility of young people (58.4%), who find it difficult to make long-term commitments (66.7%)**. It will therefore be necessary to clearly identify the religious motivations underlying one's choice (59%) and to overcome a series of obstacles which are identified as being the Brothers' individualism (62.9%), little accompaniment (55.6%), lack of a charismatic vision of the mission (50.1%), poor formation of formators (50.1%), excessively hasty insertion of the young Brothers (49.5%) and negative witness of the Brothers (45,2%) and/or of the religious community (41.2%).

In order to help in this area, a series of factors must be brought on to facilitate the insertion of young Brothers into the Order. Among the factors which facilitate the insertion into the mission, the ones considered most important are: **the accompaniment of a person who will follow the insertion of the Young Brothers into the mission (81.6%, USA, CE), the constant reinforcement of the motivations underlying one's vocation (80.5%, USA, CE, Africa), good communication between younger and older Brothers (80.1%, Africa, USA, CE) and lastly the time devoted to prayer which is well prepared and fixed (79.6%, USA, Africa, Asia, CE)**. All this will be backed up by effective planning on the part of an orderly and well-organized community (74%), an interesting and very meaningful job (62.5%), a good introduction of the Brother into the team of Co-workers (67.4%), as well as the friendship and trust developed with some Brothers (68.1%).

In conclusion, we wish to underline the value of spiritual accompaniment as the basic requirement for vocational discernment, for by means of it a unique relationship in faith and in charity is developed between two people, one who lives maturity of faith and one who instead is *journeying* towards it.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF ONGOING FORMATION

The survey reveals that there are serious shortcomings such as little interest on the part of the Brothers (55.3%, especially in SE, CE, LA), lack of an efficient ongoing formation program (35% especially Africa), perhaps adapted to the various stages of religious life (28.4%, Asia).

In conclusion, although many Brothers appreciate the importance of ongoing formation, it seems that it has not yet been embraced in a profound, systematic and institutional way by the individual Brothers. It meets with various forms of resistance involving *quality* - such as little interest, a mentality which is still too individualistic, old age of the Brothers, the security of a peaceful and stable religious life – as well as *organization* – like the lack of effective planning, according to different ages, little attention by the local Superiors, the organization of work which tends to focus too much on efficiency and on the need to address the immediate and daily needs of a center.

Chapter Four

COMMUNITY STYLE OF LIFE

The **community** plays a central role in fostering vocations promotion as well as initial and ongoing formation. In the community, religious consecration and apostolic mission find a natural terrain in which to grow and develop.

1. COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND PRAYER

The Communities' faith and prayer life is considered to be very positive and intense by the brothers. In addition to personal prayer, there emerge three levels of participation in the community's life of prayer: participation in daily practices (with a very high rating of around 85%), monthly and annual practices (with a fairly high participation rate of about 70%), and involvement in the preparation of the liturgy, which leaves something to be desired.

The greatest difficulties were recorded especially in Eastern Europe and in the United States. The search for a balance between life of prayer and active life is a goal which the communities are striving to achieve. However, it is especially difficult in African regions and among brothers aged between 36 and 55, who are mostly responsible for carrying out daily activities and the apostolic mission.

2. COMMUNITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE AND CORDIAL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

It is important for the community to be **accepting, fraternal (73.1%), cordial (71.5%), that it live out joyfully its consecration in hospitality**, that it facilitate in-depth communication; that its style of animation be comprehensive (68.7%), open to dialogue (64.2%), based on friendship (57.6%), communion (63.3%), and participation (64.3%), that it be capable of creating a climate of openness (65.3%), of mature interpersonal relations, of care (60%), exchange, and open discussion. The ratings are not excellent, they are fair but not over-enthusiastic. The respondents are satisfied but not enthusiastic. Positive feedback comes from the Saint John of God Brothers from Latin America, Central Europe and the United States, and from very young brothers. The main problem instead seems to be individualism (53.5%), accompanied by indifference (38.2%) and conflict (28.1%). This especially emerges in the communities in the US and Asia, and among middle aged Saint John of God Brothers, though slightly over half the brothers do not yet feel that this is a major problem. All this calls for the development of the capacity to care for others and cooperate. It also requires that the brothers grow in terms of their co-responsibility in the community to build the common good and learn to respect different opinions.

3. THE COMMUNITY AS A BASIC VALUE TO WELCOME NEW VOCATIONS

The community of brotherly love and apostolic service has a substantial influence, significant for 56% and determinant for 19.1% of respondents, in welcoming new vocations and being projected into the mission. It is called to create and support the young in their discernment (65.6%) and those in formation in their sense of belonging, friendship and mutual trust. This is why it is highly *appreciated in its apostolic mission* by more than 2/3 of all brothers (68.5%), especially in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Southern Europe. However, most of the respondents expressed some difficulty when it comes to the individual and specific roles subjected to the review.

As to the roles performed by the community, some are viewed as positive, like that of *moral guide* (59.5%) and *prophetic voice* (54.5%, especially in Asia and Latin America, by very young enthusiasts and elderly

brothers). Others, instead, require a greater deepening and internalization. Its role as a *critical conscience* (51.4%) and *source of innovation* (45.3%) should be enhanced.

Chapter Five

THE FORMATION OF FORMATORS

This chapter and the one that follows are the heart of the survey, although over one third of brothers have stated that they are not in the position to address these issues (35.2%). This chapter stresses the importance of the adequate selection and formation of **Formators**, who are called to be **true witnesses**.

I. FORMATORS TOO ARE CALLED TO DEEPEN THEIR “NEW ROLE”

It is evident that there is a lack of **adequate formation to the “new role” of brothers proposed by the Order**. The same was observed about the **role of formators**.

The lack of adequate formation (41.6%) was the great difficulty perceived by a considerable number of Saint John of God Brothers, as many as 2 out of 3. This was especially true for half of the brothers in Asia (59.1%) and Africa (58.3%), the very young and young adults. There are forms of resistance and uncertainty vis à vis the future, especially in Africa (38.1%). 20% of respondents stated that they have not yet fully understood the importance of the new role (20.8%), and some do not feel sufficiently prepared to carry it out (18%). Both groups feel the urgent need for tools to help them further assimilate and internalize the new roles proposed by the previous General Chapters. **A new mindset is yet to be encouraged at a general level**. The statements of some vocations promoters are also of some concern.

2. THE POOR QUALITY OF THEIR FORMATION

Though the young express a certain fragility when it comes to their vocation, it should be observed that educators display a certain fragility or weakness when it comes to their formation. They are ill prepared to shoulder institutional responsibilities, have vague ideas about the purposes of religious life, and are unforgivably superficial in the face of the difficult challenges posed by contemporary society.

Half of all Saint John of God Brothers (49.8%) positively recognize that in their Province there are formators who have been chosen explicitly for that purpose, especially in mission countries. Reservations are instead expressed about the quality of their preparation. According to local superiors and young adult Saint John of God Brothers, **formation is fairly qualified at the level of the spirituality of the Order (67.1%), less so at the theological-spiritual level (56.1%), but it is absolutely deficient in human sciences and related skills (47.7%)**.

About one third of brothers feel that the contents of formation are deficient (dissatisfied). In particular, special care should be taken to foster the internalization of the “Formation Project”, as more than one third of Saint John of God Brothers (37.4%) do not know it and/or have not studied it in depth, while more than 40% have hardly assimilated it and/or implemented it. It is thus *necessary to work hard to deepen and put this document into practice*.

3. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE FORMATION AND SUPPORT BY THE COMMUNITIES

For a more accurate reflection on the formation of formators, it may be appropriate to examine the answers to the question ***“Do you believe that formators are promoting a type of formation suitable to the various dimensions identified?”***

The brothers do not think that formators are doing an excellent job as far as this question is concerned, and their rating is rather mediocre. Respondents feel that formators are doing a good job in educating youths to develop a sense of personal responsibility (59.8%), and to adapt to the requirements of the hospitaller mission (58.5%). However, their comments are less positive when it comes to educating youths to the obedience and mobility demanded by the hospitaller mission (52.3%), and those who are critical of this aspect are as many as 27.7% of the total.

Very few agree that formation takes account of the cultural specificity of youths (47.5%). In this case, as many as 33.3% of all respondents express a negative view and only a minor group (9%, the absolutely lowest percentage) feels that formation does consider the cultural specificity of candidates. Brothers are also dissatisfied with the issue of formation to the life of communities, now characterized by a multiethnic composition (49.1%).

Chapter Six

VOCATIONS PASTORAL MINISTRY – THE VOICE OF THE BROTHERS

We have come to the crux of our survey, where we shall address the **phenomenon of vocations pastoral ministry and describe the situation** in its different aspects. This issue is so important that we have reported some of the contributions and suggestions made by the brothers on different issues related to vocations pastoral ministry.

1. VOCATIONS PASTORAL MINISTRY

- Reach out to the young and let them know about Saint John of God, by opening our houses to those who wish to know us and organizing open houses. Try to establish a contact with youths by promoting experiences of community life with them, inviting them through the press, radio and television to celebrate the feasts of the Order and attend our conferences/symposia. A strategy should also be developed for catechesis.
- The employment of appropriate means accompanied by witness.
- Communities should be more open to the young, and communities which welcome candidates should be created.

2. YOUTH PASTORAL MINISTRY

The vocations pastoral ministry is the maturation of the fruit of youth pastoral ministry.

- Encourage vocations by being close to the young and their culture, so that they may come close to us; formators should fully understand young people's problems; they should reach out to youths of all social classes, even the poorer ones.
- Young people who wish to share the charism of the Order should be given the opportunity to form a community and live together for a certain period of time. Such a community might generate new brothers or volunteers.

3. FORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES FOR THE FORMATION OF CANDIDATES

- The vocations pastoral ministry will have to offer young people intense experiences, but it will first of all have to rely on the availability of brother priests to work in this area and develop a positive culture towards life and the future.
- Provide the brothers with adequate psychological and sexual formation during initial as well as ongoing formation, to avoid problems at a later stage.
- The pastoral ministry director should work with other vocations directors both at a local and national level, and the vocations formator should have enough time to accompany and listen to youths.

4. SELECTION OF CANDIDATES, DISCERNMENT AND ACCOMPANIMENT

- New candidates should be subjected to a rigorous discernment process, in spite of the shortage of new vocations (quality over number). We should be open to accepting young people who have a hard time in making a decision.
- Personalized and brotherly accompaniment up to the time of solemn profession.
- Get to know the family, the social and cultural context, and the degree of the candidate's active involvement in the local Church.

Chapter Seven

VOCATIONS PASTORAL MINISTRY – PHENOMENON AND PROSPECTS.

Let us now examine the issue in a more systematic way, according to a rigorously analytical and scientific approach. We shall do so in relation to the following seven problematic aspects:

1. **The factors responsible for the shortage of vocations in the different regions and Provinces** are indicated in the following table:

1. Hostile social environment (secularization,)	52.9 %
2. The loss of the religious meaning of life	42.7 %
3. The difficulty for young people to make long-term plans	35.4 %
4. Young people today have many other opportunities and alternatives	30.5 %
5. The lack of witness by some of the members of the Church	27.3 %
6. Family problems (divorce, absence of values, etc.)	22.4 %
7. The lack of viable and attractive proposals on our part	20.6 %
8. Decreasing birth rates	18.6 %
9. The lack of people dedicated to vocations pastoral ministry	16.7 %

Based on the brothers' answers, the main reason is not to be attributed to the lack of people involved in the vocations pastoral ministry, for only 16.7% believe that such a shortage really exists. Much more complex factors emerge, which have to do with *underlying socio-cultural problems*.

According to more than half the brothers, the first reason for the lack of vocations is the *secularized and consumerist social environment* (52.9%, especially in Southern Europe, Central Europe, Latin America and Asia). This in turn brings about the *loss of the religious meaning of life*, (42.7%, especially in the USA and Africa). The second-ranking reasons after these external sociological motives are internal and more specifically psychological, deriving from the fragile personality structure of today's youths, which is expressed in their difficulty in making long-term plans (35.4%, especially in the USA, Southern Europe, and Central Europe). In addition to this, today youths have *many other career opportunities and alternatives* (30.5%, especially in Asia).

If we look at the individual areas of origin, we can get a better idea of the difficulties specific to each region.

AREAS OF ORIGIN

	TOTAL response	Southern Europe	Central Europe	Africa	Latin America	Asia	USA Canada Austr.
TOTAL	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage of total	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
Did not Answer	2.5	3.7	2.1	1.2	2.3	8	1.7
Hostile social environment	52.9	65.5	56.1	28.6	47.7	41.7	35.0
Family problems	22.4	17.1	29.1	29.8	27.9	15.7	23.3
Decreasing birth rates	18.6	27.1	15.9	.0	4.7	32.3	10.0
Loss of religious meaning of life	42.7	47.1	36.5	36.9	46.5	33.9	50.0
Difficulty in making long-term plans	35.4	38.9	38.6	34.5	34.3	19.7	40.0
Lack of people in vocations pastoral min.	16.7	8.4	15.9	34.5	23.3	24.4	11.7
Lack of viable Proposals	20.6	20.5	14.8	26.2	18.6	26.8	23.3
Youths have other alternatives	30.5	28.7	31.7	19.0	27.3	41.7	40.0
Non-witness by the Church	27.3	17.4	22.8	50.0	29.1	45.7	28.3

2. EL COMPROMISO DE LAS PROVINCIAS POR LA PV

Interest and concrete involvement vary from Province to Province. First of all, slightly less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of Saint John of God Brothers believe that the problem of vocations pastoral ministry is addressed by the individual provinces **with some concern (72.9%)**. This is confirmed by the scanty 17% of all Saint John of God Brothers who believe that it is considered with **indifference**, as opposed to 67.3% who do not agree with such a statement.

In conclusion, vocations pastoral ministry today is generally entrusted to a team of brothers in 60.7% of cases, especially in Latin America and Southern Europe. In some provinces, however, only one brother is responsible for vocations pastoral ministry and in almost half the cases he is involved only on a part-time basis, or in 21.5% of cases he is called according to the circumstances. According to the brothers, only in 25% of cases is this vocations animator involved in the ministry full time.

At the *level of proposals*, all this suggests the need for a considerable and demanding quantum leap in generating a greater awareness of and interest in the vocations pastoral ministry on the part of the brothers. This, in turn, may contribute to reinforcing our image and religious identity vis à vis society, in addition to spreading and keeping alive an interest in vocations among co-workers.

3. THE VOCATIONS PASTORAL MINISTRY IS A REAL PROBLEM

This is recognized by most brothers. They attribute the cause to a variety of objective shortcomings, according to geographic areas. First of all, a very intelligent cultural background emerges, which goes to the core of the *nature of the vocations pastoral ministry*. It is primarily and rightly conceived especially as a constant and close accompaniment to the candidates' vocations, which urgently require adequate support in their development.

The main problem is indeed the **insufficient accompaniment of candidates** (37%), followed by the *lack of motivation of the brothers due to the poor results of their efforts* (33.3%). A table is presented below, which indicates the main shortcomings in vocations pastoral ministry according to geographic areas:

AREAS OF ORIGIN

	TOTAL response	South Europe	Central Europe	Africa	Latin America	Asia	U.S.A. Canada Austr
TOTAL	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentuale su N. Totale:	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Answer	10.0	13.7	11.1	3.6	6.4	5.5	11.7
Improvised responsibilities	31.1	27.6	29.1	32.1	47.1	29.9	15.0
Little accompaniment	37.0	33.2	23.3	58.3	43.6	51.2	25.0
Hasty postulancy	20.7	15.8	16.9	26.2	34.3	25.2	6.7
VPM= Recruitment	33.0	34.2	26.5	42.9	25.6	42.5	33.3
Non-integration local Ch.	26.2	22.4	25.9	35.7	29.7	31.5	16.7
Little openness local Ch.	33.0	32.1	31.7	29.8	32.6	42.5	28.3
Unmotivated brothers	33.3	41.6	30.2	20.2	18.0	35.4	48.3

In conclusion, if we were to summarize the three major problems in the different geographic areas, they would be broken down as follows:

	First	Second	Third
SE :	unmotivated brothers	VPM as recruitment,	little accompaniment;
CE :	closure of the local Church,	unmotivated brothers,	improvised responsibilities;
LA:	improvised responsibilities,	little accompaniment,	hasty postulancy;
Asia:	little accompaniment,	closure of the local Church,	VPM as recruitment;
USA:	unmotivated brothers,	VPM as recruitment,	closure of the local Church.
Africa:	little accompaniment,	VPM as recruitment,	non integration of local Church

4. THE ROLE OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR VOCATIONS PASTORAL MINISTRY AND FORMATORS

These roles have a crucial importance in the formation to religious life. The brothers' answers immediately reveal a couple of objectives that are deemed to be priorities, namely **presenting in a clear and comprehensible manner the values and style of life of the brothers of Saint John of God (62.2%), and disseminate the mission of the Order within the Church and society (63.1%)**.

Another set of commitments focus on the need for *appropriate selection criteria (46.6%) and provide adequate accompaniment to youths (49.5%), in cooperation with the local Church (47.1%), and making the brothers jointly responsible for vocations pastoral ministry*. To this end, it will be necessary to learn a series of educational skills to gain insight into the reality of young people (47.3%) and their families (31.3%), along with practical competences to use the mass media (46.2%).

5. REASONS FOR LEAVING THE ORDER

The following may be summarized as the main reasons inducing the brothers to leave the Order:

- difficult interpersonal relations in the community
- individualism of the brothers
- isolation and loneliness in one's work and in the community
- weakening of the Founder's charism,
- disappearance of vocational motivations and ideals
- lack of affective maturity
- inadequate human, Christian and religious formation
- loss of the religious meaning of life
- lack of spiritual sense, negligence in personal prayer, in addition to:
- premature assignment of responsibilities
- the lack of individual and communitarian accompaniment
- unclear identity of the hospitaller vocation
- inability to take on the commitments of hospitaller consecrated life
- activism, which overshadows the identity of consecrated men

6. THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY AS THE PRIMARY SUBJECT OF THE VOCATIONS PASTORAL MINISTRY

The community is the primary subject of the vocations pastoral ministry by virtue of the accompaniment with which it follows the younger brothers and encourages their insertion according to the charismatic values of the Order. In this process, what is indispensable and fundamental is the witness of the entire community in the candidates' formation process.

According to the brothers, **the positive factors** that can foster the springing forth of new vocations in a community include those reported below.

What emerges clearly is the great value attributed to the service of brotherly charity (80.7%) and prayer for vocations (75.1%), to a style of life that is sober, simple and accepting (73.3%), in a climate of intense spiritual life (69.9%), pervaded by the visible and infecting joy for one's vocation (64.8%), in a spirit of genuine fraternity (64.4%).

However, a better understanding of youths and their language, so as to better meet their pace of life and expectations, are complementary factors that are lacking and thus need further development.

7.THE ORDER'S CHARISMATIC VALUES THAT MAY BE PRESENTED TO TODAY'S YOUTH

Charismatic values were highly appreciated and obtained very positive feedback. The figure and charism of the Founder remain central (88.2%), along with the Order's mission to take care of people, especially the neediest (89%), without any distinction based on race, religion or nationality (89.7%). These three elements seem to constitute the Order's identity, the more direct and immediate image that it projects to society, in which great emphasis is placed today on the social value of the human person, especially the neediest. This is accompanied by the value of solidarity (80.7%) and other two traits that are characteristic of the Order, namely a genuine and joyful fraternal life (80.5%) and an intense spiritual life, both at an individual and community level (75.8%).

In conclusion, it may be asserted that the charism of the Founder and especially the visibility of his mission are directly expressed in the service of charity, and taking care of others. In a society affected by the malaise of individualism and interested subjectivism, it is still an evident, concrete and fascinating beacon for those who wish to place their life at the service of the community and the human person in a situation of weakness and need. The spirit of consecration seems to come later, but is actually the pillar sustaining the mission and is the very strength of the Order. Almost all brothers are fully convinced of this.

CONCLUSION

These values were indicated by almost all brothers as the most significant and important, and it is upon them that the visibility of the Founder and his specific charism of social charity seem to be concentrated.

A charism that was recently stressed also by Pope Benedict in his first encyclical "Deus Caritas est" in the section in which God's love for his people takes concrete shape. It has become incarnated in the charitable works of the Church, which were given concrete shape by its most generous children, the saints of charity, like Saint John of God. This is the image which today's world seems to recognize as distinctive of the Saint John of God Brothers: the service of charity especially to the sick most in need, sustained by a deep spirituality.

This is the image which for a long time has been dwelling in people's imagination and that has been widely internalized as the fundamental trait of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God.

In order for all this to bring great benefits and advantages to society and the Kingdom of God in the evangelizing mission of the Order, a **great impetus will have to be given to vocations pastoral ministry in conjunction with an effective overall youth pastoral care and, whenever possible, in fruitful and generous integration with other institutes and movements of consecrated life.**

SECTION 5

HOSPITALITY PRIORITIES FOR THE SEXENNIUM 2006-2012

This document is the result of the reflection and personal analysis, in groups and in plenary session, on the Chapter Document - the Instrumentum laboris - which was adopted by the LXVI General Chapter of the Hospitaller Order of St John of God as the working paper setting out the priorities, guidelines for action and the objectives to be used by the General Government to draw up the Programme for the Sexennium.

I THE LIFE OF THE BROTHERS

A - FOSTERING THE PASTORAL CARE OF VOCATIONS

1. Greater importance must be given to Vocations Promotion/Pastoral Care in every Province of the Order, especially where it is inadequate, using appropriate means, and entrusting this mission to properly trained and well-motivated persons, and drawing on the Study on the State of Formation in the Order, applying its criteria and guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Vocations.
2. Provincial and/or regional vocations commissions should be established to animate Vocations Promotion/Pastoral Care, and vocations promotion animators appointed who have been trained to assess the personality and psychosexual maturity and orientation of men wishing to join the Order. The vocations promotion animators must put across the vocation as a calling to live a life consecrated in Hospitality in the future.
3. The Hospitaller consecrated life must be promoted in terms of the Pastoral Care of Youth, reaching out to co-operate with other groups in the Church, particularly those devoted to Vocations Promotion at the parish and diocesan levels, and taking part in schemes to train health care personnel, and social action, charitable work and voluntary service.

B. FORMATION IN THE ORDER

1. Candidates must be carefully selected, tailoring their formation and accompanying them throughout their formation, to enable them to become Brothers with a balanced psychological and affective personality, as men of with integrity and competence.
2. Drawing up strategies for the exchange of formation personnel between different Provinces and setting up interprovincial, regional or international Formation Centres, and encouraging those already existing.
3. During the period of Initial Formation, Brothers should begin to learn one foreign language in addition to their own (English, Spanish or Italian) to improve communications and relations within the Order, particularly at international meetings.
4. Fostering appropriate Formator selection and formation, to help them, and enable them to devote themselves to handing on the ideal of the Religious Life consecrated to Hospitality, with an outreaching mentality in a multicultural society, with the capacity to dialogue competently with the secular world in our Centres and apostolic works.

5. Co-workers should be identified who can provide counselling and advice on formation in the Order, especially the formation of the Brothers.

6. Continuing Formation should be promoted by motivating and enhancing awareness of the need and importance of Continuing Formation as a means of remaining faithful to, and identifying with, the Order. Among other initiatives, courses should be provided at the general, interprovincial or provincial levels to prepare brothers for their Solemn Profession, and any other courses that may be necessary, particularly for the older Brothers, to help them to adapt to a life in which they will no longer be working, to prepare for retirement.

C - FRATERNAL LIFE AND NEW FORMS OF COMMUNITY LIFE

Fraternal life

1. We must deepen the spiritual life, implementing the book on the Spirituality of the Order.

2. We must live our hospitaller consecration with integrity, responsibility and consistency, all the Brothers feeling jointly responsible for building up the fraternal community.

3. We must welcome, understand, care for and accompany our older Brothers, appreciating and positively accepting the creative contribution of the younger Brothers which is indispensable to keep the Order alive and sustain its dynamism.

4. We must grow in communion through dialogue and exchange at all the events in Community life, including recreation time and holiday, sharing our life of faith (the origin and history of our own vocation) and our experience of God and the hospitaller mission, in order to supersede and prevent individualism in our communities.

5. We must review the mission of the Superior as the Religious-Hospitaller animator of the Community or the Centre, describing the essential qualities that the Superior should possess.

New forms of Community life

6. Communities must be more open and ready to share different aspects of their life with our Co-workers, and the Sick and Guests who wish to share it.

7. We must ensure that every Brother, whatever their apostolic mission, has a reference to a Community and is effectively linked to his Community, particularly in the case of Brothers with a more specific apostolic commitment outside the Centre and outside the Community, or because they live alone for some extraordinary reason.

8. Encouragement must be given to inter-Congregational Community experiences (with Brothers from other Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) or ecumenical communities (with members of other Christian denominations).

9. Temporary Communities can be established to animate specific projects inside and outside the Order, which are then wound up once the project is completed.

2 THE MISSION OF THE ORDER

A. CHARISMATIC MANAGEMENT

1. We must realise that in order to be truly "charismatic", management must make evangelisation its main objective and must be performed according to the values and the spirit of St John of God, seeking to strike a constant balance in our Centres between management criteria and charismatic substance.
2. A training course in charismatic management should be created for the Brothers and Co-workers, and the level of the Order and at the level of the regions or provinces, particularly for directors and middle management, so that they will subsequently be able to hande on this philosophy at every level of their Centres through the way they perform their duties.
3. A general reflection should be conducted, after several years' experience with charismatic management, within the Order and in the Provinces, to properly apply the principles of the Charter of Hospitality and to ensure that the Provinces of the Order appropriately use them, tailored to their local social, employment, legal and organisational situation.
4. A strategic plan should be implemented in every Province to help us move forward to achieve the objectives set out in the Charter of Hospitality. We have several instruments of our own for this purpose (Canonical Visitations, Provincial Conferences etc) and other external instruments including audits, which guarantee better levels of participation, transparency and viability in our Centres, striving for continual improvement.
5. The General Government of the Order should study some form of identification, or characteristic "branding" for the whole Order of St John of God.
6. There must always be administrative transparency which is guaranteed and proven - if necessary - by external audits. When these do not exist or are difficult to perform for some reason, the audit of the management must be in the hands of people appointed by the Provincial and his Council.
7. The administrative management of our Centres must be kept clearly distinct from the administrative management of the Religious Community.
8. We must appraise different possibilities before proceeding to close an Apostolic Centre for charismatic or economic reasons in order to ensure that we can continue to pursue the mission of Hospitality as part of the Church's evangelising mission:
 - a) by using it for some other apostolic activity depending upon the environmental needs, following the provincial criteria;
 - b) by setting up a new legal entity;
 - c) by offering the management to some other entity sharing the Order's fundamental criteria.
9. We should find benefactors (individuals or entities) to provide financial support for the Order's Apostolic Centres to work with the most needy, thereby restoring its ancient mendicant character.

10. A charismatic quality certification system should be introduced, to help us evaluate the charism and the values of the Order in the mission being performed in each Centre, consistently with the Charter of Hospitality.

B. OPTING FOR THE POOR, AND THE SICK AND NEEDY

1. Driven by our sensitivity towards new forms of hospitality, we must respond to the needs of the most deprived groups in our environment, particularly those who are abandoned or oppressed.
2. The management of our Centres must encourage our Co-workers to become sensitive, and to respond, to the unmet needs of the poor.
3. We must encourage people to come down on the side of the poor and the sick in our traditional apostolic Centres, and create others to cater for people suffering from new needs.

C. BROTHERS AND CO-WORKERS UNITED IN THE MISSION AND THE CHARISM

1. Incorporating Brothers and Co-workers at three different levels:
 - in terms of professional work well done
 - in terms of the commitment to the Order's Hospitaller project
 - in terms of the commitment of faith.
2. The General Curia should officially create a flexible hospitaller family entity and/or St John of God movement, based on the various experiences already existing in the Provinces.
3. The General Government should foster closer spiritual communion with the Order by certain Co-workers. Statutes or Regulations, and an affiliation protocol, should be drawn up to enable the Provinces to respond to requests from Co-workers to have the chance to live their Christian faith in the manner of St John of God with greater commitment.
4. Particular attention should be paid to the criteria for selecting and recruiting new staff in our Centres and Provincial Curias, particularly when filling executive posts. In this process, where the Provinces do not have any other indications, the Superior of the Community must take part in the selection process, or the candidate must be known to the Superior. For the Superior's role is important for accompanying new members of staff and providing them with continuing formation. In Centres with no Brothers, the Provincial must do everything possible to assign a Brother to the Centre as a member of the Board to address issues relating to the charism, philosophy and ethos of the Order.

D. TRANSMITTING THE VALUES OF THE ORDER

1. The General Curia should set up a Commission to draft guidelines and indicate the fundamental contents needed to hand on the values of the Order; they must be regularly updated to keep pace with the changes that occur across time and with new needs as they arise.
2. We must foster the transmission of the Order's values in terms of the commitment of the Brothers and committed Co-workers, above all in centres where there are no Brothers.
3. We must encourage the external transmission of the Order's values, paying great attention to the

dynamics of communication, with appropriate marketing techniques that are capable of promoting the mission, the image of the Order, the charism of St John of God and the lifestyle of the Brothers. We might define this as the St John of God "brand".

4. We must planning and hand on the values of the Order at the General, Provincial and Local levels, identifying the priority values, selecting and forming the agents to hand them on, identifying the beneficiaries and using appropriate and updated instruments.
5. Training should be given to "cultural mediators" or other initiatives of this kind which express hospitality and respect for multiculturalism, bearing in mind the present plurality of our apostolic Centres and our care models.

E - THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK AND SOCIAL CARE

1. We must develop the pastoral Care of the Sick and Social care in our Centres as part of the local and diocesan overall pastoral plan.
2. Where there are no pastoral teams or spiritual and religious accompaniment, we must create them, or enhance those that already exist, so that they can be incorporated into the care models and teams in our Centres.
3. We must disseminate the concept of spiritual accompaniment in the broadest sense referring to the spiritual needs of every person, whatever their religious beliefs or stances. It must be an inclusive term.

F. BIOETHICS

1. In all the Provinces, Bioethics Committees or Commissions should be established in order to promote reflection and ethical debate in every area of care and research in the Order.
2. At the General Curia a liaison, consultation or monitoring body should be established to be able to reflect at the level of the whole Order, to provide advice to the Provinces, and to gather information on everything that is being done on the Ethics and/or Bioethics Committees in the Order; this information should be shared with the largest possible number of people, particularly with those who do not have a committee of this kind and have to address similar problems.
3. Provinces and Centres needing support in respect of bioethical issues must be given advice and support by the Order's Bioethics Committees, or by other national and diocesan committees, ensuring that this is always done consistently with the values of the Order.
4. We must promote ethical and bioethical formation and make it an essential part of the Order's formation programme.

3 NETWORKING

1. Cooperation in the following areas of the Order must be encouraged:
 - Interprovincial cooperation, within one and the same region;
 - Interprovincial cooperation between different geographic regions
 - cooperation with other Church institutions
 - cooperation with other institutions: public administrations, private institutions with a social vocation (always provided that they share our interests and respect the fundamental principles of order).
2. We must weigh up the possibility of applying for recognition by and being present in the European Parliament, as an entity for the promotion of health care and to participate in the EU funds that are available in Europe.
3. We must continue with, and increase the number of, Regional Meetings so that we can gradually create a genuine regional identity, accompanied by a General Councillor.
4. The Interprovincial Commissions must be revitalised, reviewed and strengthened.
5. A data bank must be established with information on the Co-workers of the Order through which they can place their professional skills at the service of apostolic Centres with very specific needs.
6. We must intensify and encourage twinning between Centres or between Provinces: cultural and professional twinning between Centres providing the same type of health care; twinning in the form of humanitarian North-South assistance.
7. An updated databank should be instituted so that the whole Order can share experiences, research and information, and any other interesting matters which constitute our capital, to be shared, always in compliance with privacy and data protection legislation.
8. Fundraising for international cooperation should be decentralised, leaving certain initiatives to the Provinces. However, the Provinces must keep the General Curia informed of everything they are doing, so that it has a complete picture of all the projects that have been financed and supported by the Provinces, Centres and Associations or NGOs of the Order, and can offer that information to the whole institution.
9. The title "Missions and International Cooperation Office" is proposed for the general level entity of the Order responsible for addressing the issues of missions and international cooperation.

SECTION 6

MISCELLANEOUS PROPOSALS

Some of the Proposals submitted to Chapter were voted through, while others were given to the General Government for consideration to take whatever action it deemed appropriate, while others failed to attract sufficient support. Here are the Proposals set out in the first two parts. The parts that were not approved are not indicated.

1. To set up a Commission to revise the General Statutes and those aspects of the Constitutions affected by the changes made to the General Statutes.
2. To adopt the Italian, English and Spanish as the official languages of the Order.
3. To study the state of the Community and Hospital of St John of God in Nazareth (Israel) endeavouring to foster and renew the presence of the Order there.

SECTION 7

ELECTION OF THE NEW SUPERIOR GENERAL AND THE NEW GENERAL GOVERNMENT INPUT FOR DISCERNMENT BY THE LAY CO-WORKERS

At the request of the General Government the group of lay co-workers invited to attend the General Chapter were asked to provide some indications as a contribution for the discernment by the Capitulars for the election of the new Superior General and his Council.

We lay co-workers should like, first of all, to thank the Father General and the General Council for the opportunity given to us to attend the Chapter. It is the first time that so many lay co-workers have attended a General Chapter, and this is already a sign of outreach and hope. And indeed the issue of relations between lay co-workers and the Brothers has perhaps been the topic most debated at Chapter. We take note of this irreversible cultural change which will certainly leave its mark on the future of the Order.

Furthermore, the fact that we are here today and are sensitive to the issues that we are all facing, is thanks to those of you who, in various capacities, have been for us the mediators of the charism of St John of God. And we will also like to thank you for that as well.

After talking amongst ourselves, a few specific points of emerged. We should like to ask the new Superior General and his Council the following:

1) RECOGNITION OF THE CHARISM

We are request recognition of the fact that some lay men and women participate in the Charism of St John of God has already been present and topical. As someone has said, the Charism is a gift made to the Church by the Spirit who "blows where he will". There are therefore already a number of lay persons who participate in it. It is merely a matter of fully accepting, implementing and sharing it with the brothers in whatever way the new government of the Order deems appropriate, giving official recognition to the fact that there are some who have a full "vocation to hospitality" in the full sense of the term.

2) CONSULTATION WITH THE LAITY

As one of the most important documents on the theology of the laity affirms ("Consulting the faithful in the matter of doctrine" by Cardinal Newmann), consulting the laity on doctrinal issues, bad to an even greater extent on pastoral issues, is not an option or a concession, but a specific duty. It is a matter of recognising everyone to be the people of God, moving forward along the paths of hospitality, albeit with different vocations different vocations and states of life. A great deal of progress has already been made in the Order in this direction. We asked the new government to continue along this path, making it even more fruitful still.

3) A MESSAGE OF CONFIDENCE

We would like to offer the new General Government, which is quite rightly concerned about the future of the Order and the decline in vocations a message to set their minds at rest. Perhaps it is not simply the inability of humans to be able to identify inadequate form of vocations promotion/pastoral care, but the will

of God. This is precisely why we wish to send out a message of confidence and trust: the Order will not die out, even with the present and future shortage of Religious, so long as there are lay people who will responsibly participate in its charism, preserving and implementing it.

4) THE CO-WORKERS' GRATITUDE

The new government must certainly bear witness to the fact that the Order is close to the sick, but also to those who look after them, by showing them esteem, appreciation, reaching out to them, encouraging them, being near them in times of difficulty, etc. The lay co-workers can therefore see the face of charity not only in helping the needy but also close to their own lives which are spent very largely in their place of work. Co-workers and brothers, together, must learn to praise and not only to criticise one another or blame each other.

5) SHARING AND INTEGRATION

We ask the Order to move beyond the rationale of "proprietors", once and for all. St John of God wanted to have "his" hospital not for himself, but for the sick. We have to move away from the rationale of ownership to the rationale of sharing. All of those who, in one capacity or another, or at various levels of existential commitment, participate in the Charism of St John of God must feel duty bound to foster the progress of our work with a sense of true belonging to it. The time has come for the laity to be fully integrated into the life of the Order, albeit with a different degree of participation or involvement.

6) THE COURAGE TO TAKE RISKS

The Order must know how to recognise and to accept novelty, even if this means taking risks. Even though the hagiography only talks about the "successes" that St John of God had come there were also many failures in his life. Even unto the end, when he plunged into the Genil to save a boy who was drowning. Even that was a failure in human terms. He failed to save the boy, and he died himself. But he took the risk without thinking twice about it, even at the cost of making a mistake. The courage to take risks, to open up new paths, to be creative, is also a gift of God which we pray that He will give to the Order and the decisions that the Order takes, particularly the decisions which involve the lay co-workers.

7) APPRECIATING HUMANISATION

As someone has said, the co-worker who is close to the patient has to be particularly appreciated more than the co-worker who brings money into the centre, and together with the co-worker who is better trained. This does not mean underestimating the value of professional skills, which is the first requirement of any genuine humanisation. But it does mean showing appreciation for those specific humanisation features, if necessary by introducing assessment procedures, which must be the essential requirement in all our centres.

8) INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

it is important to institutionalise opportunities for international meetings for the lay co-workers, apart from these short exchanges in Chapter, where they can exchange their views and address the problems facing the order from the point of view of the laity, looking both at the international aspects of the Order and the specific regional features of our centres.

9) CENTRES RUN BY THE LAITY

As already occurs in several Provinces, the wholesale management of certain Centres throughout the Order should be handed over to members of the laity with the necessary preparation and participation in the Charism, to act in the name and on behalf of the Order. This will help to multiply the apostolic activities of the Order and we believe that in the long run it will be a fruitful vocational resource. This perspective not

only applies to the future of the Order. In some parts of the world there is already an urgent need to bring this about in the very near future. On the one hand we therefore need a general strategic vision, and on the other we have to set about it locally, now, in certain places.

10) SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY

Precisely to have a group of trained laity, who participate in the Charism who are able to give a unitary sense to the widespread dissemination of the Order throughout the world come as the Order has done hitherto, one might think in terms of setting up a fully fledged "School of Hospitality" at the central level (subsequently with regional schools) to act as a workshop for producing new lay co-workers you are able to manage our work in the spirit and in the name of St John of God.

What we are asking the Capitulars when it comes shortly to casting their votes is set out above. We shall shortly be leaving you to comply with the canonical formalities, but before we leave we would like to assure you, even as you vote, that we shall be in communion with you, accompanying you with our affection and in our prayers to the Holy Spirit.

ST. JOHN OF GOD CHAPTER, ROME, 13TH OCTOBER 2006

A SEASON FOR LEADERSHIP

“There is a season for everything under heaven” (Eccles 3)

Now is the time when... you will select and anoint your new leadership

What is the call, the challenge and the service envisaged? In this Season?

A time to plant?...a time to reap?; a time to pull down?...a time to build up?

A time to draw inspiration and power from the Spirit of God working in seasons past and in the present time, from tradition and from now.

LEADERSHIP AT THIS TIME

So we turn our minds to the topic of our consideration – Leadership. The role and nature of leadership exercises the minds of people everywhere: groups, businesses and nations across the world, and not least ourselves in a Church context. As leaders in our own fields, we are children of our time and are affected by the prevailing questions and perspectives. Today, individual autonomy is held in high esteem; those in authority are often looked on with suspicion; and such degrees of participation are expected, even demanded, that leadership itself often seems virtually incapacitated. And yet, in our saner moments, we all know that we require direction, action, cohesion, planning and decisions, and so look for, even cry out for, leadership in times of crisis or confusion.

At times of major unease and upheaval, leadership is critical. We are in such a Season. Your document “The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of St. John Of God” puts it very well – we are in a ‘change of age’ more so than we are in an age of change. As we experience it, change is often somewhere on the horizon but has not yet fully arrived. People can sense it, but can’t quite describe it. Tensions then arise between the forces for change, and the forces for stability. At such times, at such seasons, leadership is essential in that it is charged with dealing with these forces, and with the conflicting hopes and fears about the future which will inevitably beset people. If leadership fails in this task then maintenance will dominate over mission, and even death may prevail over life. Phrases like - leave things alone, nothing can be done, close your eyes and hope it will go away - these are the attitudes of weakness, lassitude, indifference and fear. When someone emerges who takes on that daunting challenge, and guides the boat through such difficult waters, that person stands out and will be experienced as a gifted leader. We are in such a season now, in religious life, in the Church and in the global family – one that calls for leadership that is visionary, strategic, empowering and compassionate.

RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP AND VISION

The many styles and modes of leadership have been the subjects at many conferences and much writing over the past ten years. I do not intend to describe them or select those most suited to our time. But I propose to focus on the underlying core of leadership in the Christian context beginning with the place of vision. Some form of vision is operating when a people calls forth persons to whom they will freely give power or authority in order to lead the group towards the fulfilment of its vision and goals. Where the

vision of the people is missing the ensuing authority will not be affirmed or appreciated or even effective. And where vision is missing the people perish (Proverbs 16). You have articulated the vision of who you are, and where you are called to be, in your beautiful documents and in your work at this chapter. It is a vision embedded in the power of love, of mercy and hospitality to make a difference and bring about a better world. Those given authority are understood to embody that vision with passion, to walk as friends of God, to have a capacity to interpret and narrate the sacred story of God's presence in the events affecting the group, and to inspire the members with a shared meaning that energises them and awakens their delight and hope in the faithfulness of God. Leaders now, as much as ever, are called to walk in the shoes of their group, to don their clothes, to echo their yearnings and to stand in their stead before their inquisitors. Leadership is a call to stand in the breach, perhaps in many unexpected ways, as the group journeys through a season that is a change of age. It is a Christ role. "Having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the end". This is the core and ideal of the Christian vision and tradition when naming and empowering authority; it is the ground of that sacred freedom of the people of God.

This is the season then when it may well be crucial to look at your founding Father – St John of God – in that frame. His vision, emerging out of his own sufferings, shaped and motivated by the sufferings of the neglected poor around him, nurtured and refined by his total love for God, making him a gentle leader of such inspiration that you are here, his brothers and co-workers, some 500 years later. Vision is like a general road map which does not necessarily give the details of the way ahead, or indicate the specific developments which might emerge in the future. Vision is a constant alertness to pain that enables the immediate opportunity to be grasped, and a capacity to see the possibility which may be created by that. Vision is the eyes of a deep passion which will not be quenched until pain is eased or eradicated.

STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP

Vision and strategy go together. St. James tells us that faith and action go together, and faith without action is empty. So too, true vision will lead to strategy. It may begin small by bringing those abandoned into the porches and doorways of Granada to care for them, or it may be upgrading to high level medical technology, or the up-skilling of many wonderful co-workers which enables the marginalised of today to experience shelter and hope in a modern doorway to healing and new life.

Perhaps the most critical and onerous dimension of leadership is that of strategy, of careful and discerning planning, of making decisions and sometimes taking risks, and of the deploying of resources in order to move towards the place of the vision. Most other areas of leadership (administration, pastoral, management) are capable of being delegated or deputed to others, but no more that the area of inspiration, strategy cannot really be off loaded. Those who hold key positions in any institution are those who have the greatest obligation with regard to strategy and decisions. Our global consciousness has made us keenly aware that the shape of tomorrow will largely result from the decisions, or lack of them, which we take today. If we were to critique our own times, on the political, social and even church fields, the element most glaringly absent from leadership is perhaps that of strategy. Because we are in a time of rapid and extraordinary change, strategy has become more vital than ever, to mission and ministry, to the good planning and management of that change for the sake of the Kingdom. Strategy, coming out of an informed awareness of today's reality and a hunger to share God's mercy and hospitality, will be effective and demonstrated in the reconfiguration of the Order and its ministries, a reconfiguration which will constantly beget new responses to the new ages of today and tomorrow.

EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

True leadership empowers, sometimes in amazing ways. Look at Jesus and his fickle apostles who were to become the evangelisers and proclaimers of the Good News even unto their deaths. All our Founders were people who gathered and motivated companions, who continued to encourage and form their co-workers. As an Order reaches its peak in the life cycle, it often happens that this dimension gets somewhat weakened and thinned out. Everybody thinks they know how to do it – no need to teach or form any more! This development can diminish and dilute the cohesion of the group, blur its vision, fray the strategy, and then we have to learn by the hard way that we need to motivate and empower each other all over again. A real love and appreciation by the leader for the members, together with good communication, provides the opening to empowerment. The Leader's conviction that the Spirit of God and the charism of the Order reside in the members, leads to many different efforts to release and encourage that Spirit so that each one according to their talents can be creative and responsive in promoting and effecting the vision and goals.

As we engage with the questions and struggles of our Season, members need to be engaged in a direct dialogue with them, to have an ability to read and interpret them and then, influenced by the Spirit, be enabled to see and imagine how to be more fully, more authentically responsive to with them. In listening to the Spirit (and like Mary asking the angel how it can be done!) it is vital for leaders to call forth the graced imagination of the members, especially in two paramount ways. One is in reawakening more deeply the passion for mercy and hospitality within each one and within the whole group. The second is to encourage the use of ingenuity in going with haste to the particular need areas, in conjunction with others, opening doors to freedom, enlightenment, peace, and life to those in pain.

This is definitely a 'hill country' trek which calls for graced and empowered imagination today. For a long time our ministry institutions were the platform from which we sought to be a leaven of compassion and a witness to a caring God in our midst. As we leave some of our ministry institutions behind us and create new collaborative ventures, the question and challenge is: how can we ensure that a voice for the 'deep-down things', for the heart/soul which is at the centre of human living, for the particular character of the St. John of God inheritance, will pervade the new endeavours? We need new platforms, new porches or new doorways. Where are they to be found - the new wineskins for the new wine? Could it be that we need to explore and gather our collective consciousness of the Gospel and present it with others in various new formats and in various settings in all the places we work and in the wider world of today? To try to walk this road is certainly a journey to the 'hill country' place, and will involve new competence, generosity, planning and resources. We need not doubt that the Spirit of St John of God is with you, his charism is alive among you, and the Spirit of the Lord is working through you, who are truly 'the beloved', despite faults and failings. It is from this perspective that the leader takes his confidence and sets out with the outline of a road map.

COMPASSIONATE LEADER

Never before was there as great a need for compassionate leadership. We live in a cruel, demanding and often crude world which shows little consideration or understanding of human struggle, weakness and aberration. In your story, St John of God, epitomises the Godly understanding for all forms of human weakness. Our membership, our Orders, have carried much of the heat of the day, have let go much of the scaffolding which held together the fragile walls of our often less than mature development, and so experience many limitations in our present capacity. This is the season for when the weak will confound the strong, when God will use what is small in order to fulfil his purposes. If we have anything to boast about it might be in the Pauline terms – we can boast of our weakness, our weak membership, our weak efforts. There is ample space for God-effort in that! Compassionate does not mean settling for less, or excusing what is wrong. But compassion is born of mercy – a key element of your spirituality (and mine) – a mercy

which is the source of forgiveness, healing and restoration; a power that is greater than evil, sin or death. It is God's loving kindness in action. Mercy opens the road to justice and peace; mercy is the fullest understanding of the nature of our God. John Paul 2 said that Mercy is God's other name! Meister Eikhert once said – you may call God love, you may call God goodness, but the deepest name for God is compassion. My congregation began on 24th Septemebr 1827, the feast of our Lady of Mercy or as called then Our Lady of Ransom. It commemorated the sacrifice of Christians who exchanged places with slaves in the muslim persecution in the south of Spain in medieval times. Mercy means to take the 'place of', to exchange one's life for the life and pain of the other, to be and re-present the Christ who took on himself our pain and sin. Mercy is a powerful word of recreation and redemption spoken in Christ. It is the tool available to the religious leader. We see that compassion is not a feature of leaders in business, politics, professions or commerce. The harshness of competitiveness does not tolerate it. A compassionate leader is a witness to another God and an enabler and restorer of many.

CONCLUSION

Finally, a Leader can take encouragement and inspiration from Moses who was called to be to serve and free his people at a great time of change and movement, an Exodus! Cardinal Martini wrote beautifully about this nearly 20 years ago and his meditations have still much relevant enlightenment. Moses is primarily the servant of the God of Mercy – 'I have seen the affliction of my people, I have heard their cry and I mean to deliver them'. All that Moses does from then on is about enabling this God dream. Martini speaks of five major ways by which Moses served as leader: 1) he led the people through the desert providing them with the basics of food and water; 2) he took on responsibility for them by bearing their pressure, cares and disagreements; 3) he prayed and interceded for them and dared so much; 4) he brought them the word of consolation that was more than human sympathy; and 5) he brought them the word of God with such conviction that they cried 'all that the Lord has said we will do'. Moses had found favour with God and was his intimate friend. Such a one was called to be a leader at a season of immense importance in the sacred story of God's people.

The foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, writing to one of her young delegates – be a good leader (mother superior) you could not be a better thing this side of the grave! There is food for thought for all of us in this change of age.

*Sister Helena O'Donoghue
Naas, October 2006*

SECTION 8

CLOSURE OF THE 66TH GENERAL CHAPTER

PREAMBLE

Our 66th General Chapter is about to conclude its work. The title under which we celebrated the Chapter, “*Passion for the hospitality of St. John of God in the world to-day*”, was like a beacon of light or a constant reminder to us during these days as to why we had gathered in Chapter. Certainly we felt the presence of our Holy Founder, St. John of God, among us and, on a number of occasions, events and people reminded us of the hard reality of poverty and suffering in the world of today in which so many people live and die in situations of great neglect.

The Chapter has been a Pentecostal experience for all of us – a grace filled moment, not just for the Chapter, but for the whole Order. I give thanks to God for enlightening and guiding the work of the Chapter through His Holy Spirit. I also give thanks to Him for bringing our Order into existence through St. John of God in order to continue His healing ministry in the Church. I thank you, Lord, for all the Brothers and Co-workers who are, or who were in the past, part of this great mission of mercy.

The work of the Chapter was made more fruitful, and focused, by having an INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS, a Chapter working document that guided its work. The IL was drawn up by a Preparatory Commission after it had received contributions from the Regional Conferences and from the Granada Hospitaller Youth Congress and some individuals. I want to thank the members of that Commission for their work, which has served the Chapter so well.

I now want to thank in a very special way all of you, Brothers and Co-workers, who have participated in the Chapter for the manner in which you carried out your work. The atmosphere of sincere and open dialogue, respectful listening during the discussions and exchanges, ensured that all were heard and were able to express various views and opinions candidly and without fear.

RECOGNITION OF BROTHER PASCUAL PILES

The affection with which the Order holds Brother Pascual could be seen in the prolonged applause that he received in the Chapter Room when he resigned his office as Prior General to allow for the election of a new Superior General. This was also evidenced when all of the Capitulars in turn warmly greeted him personally, expressing their gratitude and affection for him as a fellow Brother and for the great work that he had done for the Order as Superior General. The leadership that Brother Pascual gave the Order as Prior General over the past twelve years, and as General Councillor during the previous six years, was inspired by his deep faith, his love for St. John of God and his passion for hospitality.

The ability of Brother Pascual to articulate theological and spiritual insights – especially in the areas of our vocation and hospitaller mission and way of life as consecrated persons – in his letters, writings and homilies has greatly enriched the patrimony of the Order. His term as Prior General will long be associated with his having given the Order two very important and fundamental documents, the *Charter of Hospitality* and the *Path of Hospitality in the Manner of Saint John of God*. These documents will serve as a rich resource that will continue to guide the Order towards a renewal of itself and its mission of hospitality along the path of Saint John of God in a way that is consistent with its long history and traditions, and responsive to the needs of people of today.

Personally, in my long experience of living the religious life I can truthfully say that I have never worked so closely with any Brother. I have never experienced in another Brother such a capacity for work, such a keen intellect, and such an open, tolerant and compassionate disposition. There is much more that I could say, and would like to say, in praise of Brother Pascual as a Brother, a leader and a friend, but for now I would just like to have recorded the personal appreciation and admiration for him that I share with the entire Order. I wish you, Brother Pascual, abundant blessings, peace and joy as you return to your native Spain and the Province of Aragon, to continue your ministry in the service of hospitality.

RECOGNITION OF THE OTHER OUTGOING MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

I would now like to acknowledge and thank, on my own behalf and that of the entire Order, *Brother Emerich Steigerwald*, who has served in the General Government for more than 22 years as Councillor and General Bursar of the Order, for the long and faithful service that he has given to the Order and the manner in which he has done so. I wish you, Brother Emerich, many blessings as your return to your Province in Germany.

Brother Luis Maria Aldana has served in the General Government for twelve years and was responsible for the promotion of Formation within the Order. Throughout the Order Brother Luis is probably the best known Brother of the General Curia, after Br. Pascual. He has painstakingly arranged ten courses for Brothers as part of their preparation for Solemn Profession. He accompanied and gave brotherly care and guidance to the young Brothers that participated in these courses down the years.

The Study on the Pastoral Ministry of Vocations and Formation of the Order that was carried out by Prof. Renato Mion of the SALESAIN PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY, Faculty of Science of Education, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, was the main responsibility of Brother Luis who gave himself untiringly to ensuring that the project was carried out in the best possible way and shared with the Order during the Regional Conferences and these days with the General Chapter. The study was a rich resource in Chapter and will also be an important resource document to the Provinces as they prepare for the Provincial Chapters.

I thank Brother Luis on behalf of the Order and wish him every success and blessings on his future ministry in his native Province of Columbia.

Brother Pietro Ciccinelli has served in the General Council for six years. One of his many responsibilities, including being Vice-President of the Order's NGO, AFMAL, was to act as Executive Vice President of the St. John Calibita Hospital on the Tiber Island. He carried out this office with dedication, commitment and integrity. The Tiber Island Hospital, as it is known locally, has a long identification with the presence of the Order in Rome and we celebrated the 4th centenary of our presence there in 1984. It was the seat of the General Government of the Order for a very long time. In thanking Brother Pietro, on behalf of the whole Order, for his great contribution to the work of the General Government, we wish him many blessings as he moves back to his Province here in Rome.

Brother Leopold Gnami also served on the General Council for six years. Brother Leopold was the first African Brother to be elected to the General Government. During this time he also served as General Delegate of the St. Richard Pampuri General Delegation in Africa, an office he will continue to exercise. As an African of Benin, Brother Leopold brought to the General Government insights and experiences, needs, challenges and opportunities that the Order has in Africa. This greatly assisted the General Government when dealing with matters pertaining to the presence of the Order in Africa. We wish Brother Leopold every blessing as he continues in his role as General Delegate.

Brother José Luis Muñoz served most recently as the General Secretary for six years. However that was a service that he provided for the second time at the General Curia. Brother José Luis Muñoz was a constant presence at the General Curia when the Prior General and the Councillors traveled to the Provinces in the exercise of their ministry. His knowledge of canon law and his experience as Provincial of Andalusia, made Brother José Luis a valuable resource, not only for the Prior General, but also for the Provincials. The many

talents of Brother José Luis were shared by him with great generosity and ensured that the General Government of the Order was able to function with efficiency and thoroughness. On behalf of the General Government, and the whole Order, we thank Brother José Luis and we wish him every blessing, peace and success in his future ministry as he reinserts himself into his own Province.

Of course, one Brother has remained on the General Council besides me – Brother Vincent Kochakunnel. Since he is not leaving us I will not dwell on his many qualities. I will be relying on him for support throughout this coming sexennium – but especially in the early days of the establishment of the new General Government. I know just how helpful he can be to me through the way that we have worked harmoniously together during the last six years in the area of the Order’s mission ‘ad gentes’.

Another Brother who has been part of the General Curia as Procurator General is about to return to his home Province of Australasia. He is Brother Fabian Hynes. Brother Fabian has given more than 50 years of service to the Holy See as Director of the Vatican Pharmacy. In that position, and also while he was superior of the Order’s Vatican City community, he has represented what is best in our vocation as Hospitaller Brothers, our mission and our charism at the very heart of the Church.

Brother Fabian has developed the service that the Vatican Pharmacy provides from a very small ‘drug store’ type facility to what it is today. He has also served as General Councillor of the Order and for many years Procurator General. Brother Fabian has served under no fewer than six Popes and is probably the best known and sought after person in Vatican City – after the Holy Father himself, of course! Brother Fabian is a pharmacist by profession and as such has served on the medical teams that have cared for Popes and other members of the hierarchy that live in Vatican City, when they required medical assistance. A very high honour of the Commonwealth of Australia, *The Order of Australia*, was conferred on Brother Fabian in recognition of the manner in which, as an Australian citizen living abroad, he represented his country and was always available to Australians and other pilgrims who came to Rome and who may have required assistance while in that city.

In acknowledging him on behalf of the entire Order, and I am sure the Holy See itself, we thank him for the enormous contribution that he has made to the Church and the Order in Rome, and we wish him every blessing, peace and joy as he returns to his homeland and Province, after so many years abroad.

THE ELECTION OF THE NEW PRIOR GENERAL AND GENERAL COUNCIL

My first thoughts on being elected Superior General are ones of unworthiness and awareness of my many limitations as I try to fulfill this high office. However I also experience an inner peace that is, I believe, a gift of the Holy Spirit. Our beloved Order with its long history of service in the Church is a ‘pearl of great value’ for the Church, which the Church itself values and wishes to preserve. The ministry that the Order carries out and what it represents, promotes and advocates is also highly valued by the countries and society where it has a presence. But it is the people who are sick, poor or marginalized and their families that appreciate most what the Order stands for and tries to do for them in their moment of need. While not always doing it as good as we would like to, nevertheless it is the appreciation of this latter group of people that avails of our services that pleases us most and impels us to go forward to do more in order to be more for them.

To be asked to lead, safeguard and advance the mission of the Order at the beginning of the Third Millennium – which has only just begun – is truly a daunting task. I rely totally on the power of God dwelling in me, for, as Cardinal Newman said: “it is his grace that has brought me thus far and it is his grace that will lead me on.” I know that St. John of God will guide me and accompany me. I am inspired by what I know in my mind and in my heart about this extraordinary man, apostle of charity, faithful follower of Jesus, great pioneer – one might even say: a revolutionary in his time.

I will give myself totally to the exercise of my ministry and with your help and your prayers, Brothers and Co-workers, I will build on what has gone on within the Order in terms of renewal since Vatican II, during the Generalates of Brothers, Maria Alonfons Gauthier, Pierluigi Marchesi, Brian O'Donnell and Pascual Piles. Together we will together build a future for our Order that will ensure that the dream and vision of St. John of God will be advanced. If we were able to advance John of God's mission to an even infinitesimal degree, what an achievement, what a privilege that would be. I therefore am facing the future full of hope and with some dreams as well.

We have also elected six General Councillors and I have appointed a General Secretary. I see us working as a team. In due course various responsibilities will be shared out according to the experience and competency of each Councillor. In due course this information will be communicated to the whole Order. I also see myself working in a collegial way with the Provincials and General Delegates.

THEME OF THE CHAPTER

I want to return to the theme of the Chapter, “Passion for hospitality of Saint John of God in the world today.”

PASSION

The word ‘passion’ has a variety of meanings. They range from ardor and zeal to rage and fury. Passion is a very strong emotional feeling that leads to some external expression that can even turn to violence. We see great passion on the sports fields, on the streets of our cities, in pulpits and in parliaments.

The word ‘passion’ for us Christians has a particular meaning: that of the Passion of Christ. The Pope in his homily when we attended the audience on 18 October 2006, pointed out that, just as the betrayal of Jesus by Judas ‘consigned’ His Son into the hands of ill-disposed men, the Father also consigned His Son – not to death, but to the human condition with all its dangers and perils – in order to bring about our salvation. In this way the Father showed the extent of his love for us his children. “The Lord has saved me because he loved me.” (Psalm 18)

THE HOSPITALITY OF ST. JOHN OF GOD

A passion for the Hospitality of St. John of God is born out of a deep awareness of the love of God for his suffering children that He manifested in a special way in time through St. John of God. The manner by which John of God became hospitality for others showed in unambiguous and clear terms the love and compassion that God has for his people, especially in their time of need.

This is what Jesus did in his life, as in death. At the pool of Silo, for example, he asked the person who was so disabled that he could not get himself into the water in time when it was moved: “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus was told by the man that he wanted to be well again. He said that he had tried constantly for 40 years to get to the pool first, but to no avail. Needing help to get into the water so that he might be

healed he looked at Jesus with appealing and hope-filled eyes. Jesus took the crippled man by the hand, raised him up and healed him. The man could now run, dance, swim in the water. The bonds that held him tight, the disease that twisted his bones, the paralysis of spirit that he was experiencing were all broken. He was a free man. *“I have come that they may have life,”* Jesus said *“and that they may enjoy it to the full.”* (John 10:10)

I think it was St. Iraneus who said that ***the glory of God is the human being fully alive.*** Jesus brought this poor crippled man to life.

It was this model, the ‘Jesus model,’ that John of God followed in his mission. This became his style and the hall mark of his ministry. When John of God met a fellow human being who had a particular need he engaged him/her in conversation and, depending on the need, he freely offered a helping hand. Again John of God approached the individual, whom he recognized as a sacred person – a child of God – as Moses approached the burning bush: with feet bare, deep humility, respect and compassion. John of God was so convinced of the innate dignity of every human being and our oneness as brothers and sisters in Christ, that he believed that in caring for them he was loving and caring for his Lord. John of God would have traveled to the ends of the earth to help a brother or sister in need. This was John’s passion, a passion for Christ crucified – an image of which he always carried on his person in the form of a crucifix – and a passion for suffering humanity. In a letter to Gutierrez Lasso he expressed his pain at seeing ***“so many poor people (who are my brothers and neighbors) suffering and in great need in both body and soul, and I cannot help them.”*** (Letter 2 to Gutierrez Lasso)

This is the type of hospitality that we mean when we speak about ‘hospitality *in the manner of Saint John of God*’, it is rooted in a belief that the sacredness of each human being is something that poverty, disease or social condition or isolation cannot destroy or diminish.

The hope is often expressed amongst us that our communities might be ‘Schools of Hospitality’. This is not unreasonable given the fact that the first time that we heard the word *hospitality in the manner of Saint John of God* and experienced it was in community. We saw other expressions of Hospitality by the Brothers and Co-workers when we went to the Hospital or Centre of the Order, but it was in the community that we took our ‘first hospitaller steps’. We did this in service of the community and we saw that it was good.

In some countries the church is under scrutiny, suspicion and is being challenged on how it exercise its leadership, lack of openness and transparency, with the result that the faith of some believers is being tested and the church itself is becoming increasingly marginalized. This is where religious communities, and ours in particular, can demonstrate a new way of being church, can show a ‘new face’ of the church – one that is open, welcoming, compassionate, hospitable and caring.

Because of our consecration as religious we demonstrate a passion for Christ, with a lifestyle that ***“affirms the primacy of God and of eternal life, as evidenced in the following and imitation of the chaste, poor, obedient and hospitaller Christ”*** (Starting Afresh from Christ No. 8) will be truly evangelical in nature that will have a profound, affirming effect on people, especially those whom we invite into our homes, our communities.

I think it is also good for us to recall the words our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, at the General Audience that we attended during the Chapter where he stated when referring to Judas that *living with Jesus will not necessarily make a person holy.* In other words, living under the same roof where the Blessed Sacrament is

reserved in a religious house won't of itself make one holy. We need to spend time with the one we love, Jesus, listening to him, speaking to him and, at times, just being silent in his presence. Prayer, personal and communal, reflecting on the Word of God in Sacred Scripture is essential nourishment for ones spiritual life. It has been said that the apostolic religious of today needs to have the scriptures in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other hand. We need to be in touch with God, and in touch with the reality of the world around us, if we are to bring to the world the Good News in language that it understands, in a manner that is respectful and humble, with a love that is all consuming.

THE WORLD TODAY

During our discussions during the Chapter we spoke of many things, some of which are reflected in the Chapter resolutions, but there were other moments, people and events that kept reminding us that 'hospitality in the manner of St. John of God' *is needed in today's world* more than ever before. It is incumbent on us as Brothers, consecrated in hospitality, to be truly a "critical conscience, moral guide, and prophetic presence, open to new needs, in a renewed spirit of integration with the Co-workers. (Study on "The State of Formation in the Order, Chapter three, par 1.)

We live and exercise our ministry of hospitality in a world in which hostility is expressed in violence, terrorism, exploitation of children, mass movement of people from poorer countries to those that are better off, wars and extreme fundamentalism. *Hospitality in the manner of St. John of God* as the antithesis of this state of affairs is the antidote that the world needs.

The instrument of violence that we call the hand-grenade is very similar in appearance to our symbol of Hospitality – the pomegranate. The actions of those who would kill and harm others when they throw the destructive hand-grenade or bomb into crowds and places of assembly and worship stand in stark contrast to the action of John of God who projected into the world his pomegranate of Hospitality. Just as the hand-grenade shatters into pieces of shrapnel that wound, the pomegranate of Hospitality spills out seeds of God's love that heal. Every act of Hospitality by a Brother or Coworker answers an act of violence somewhere in the world that kills or wounds.

I believe that image illustrates how our vocation of hospitality is very relevant to the needs and situation of the world today. But it does challenge us to move out of our comfort zones, take risks for the sake of the Gospel, go where no one wants to or cares to go, to replace the hand-grenade of hate, discrimination, dehumanization and violence with the pomegranate of love.

In the context of the world of today, the matter of Bioethics deserves greater attention and development. This issue was repeatedly raised during the Chapter. We will endeavour to promote education and a better understanding of the Church's teaching on, as well as the humanitarian and psychological aspects of, the ethical issues which confront the Order everywhere.

There is great concern within the Order, amongst Brothers and Coworkers, about the lessening of vocations and the aging of Brothers - especially in the industrialized countries. While aging is a natural process which people can accept, when it comes to the future of the Order in terms of new membership there is concern. This was discussed at length in the Chapter.

Instead of seeing this situation as a 'problem' to be resolved, reading the signs of the times and guided by the teachings of Vatican II and our own experience over the past 40 years or so, we now recognize that lay men

and women also receive a call to offer hospitality to persons in need in the manner of St. John of God. We refer to those persons as our Co-workers in Mission. Yes, we need to continue to look at new ways and initiatives to make known within the Church our way of life and ministry as Brothers of St. John of God and invite people, when considering life options, to consider our way of life. We have to plan with equal care how our Mission of Healing through hospitality will be carried out by means of increasing involvement of lay Co-workers.

The experience of the Order is telling us very clearly in the lessening of vocations and the ageing of our membership that we need to be creative in finding the new structures that will ensure that the mission of hospitality, which contributes so significantly to the healing ministry of the church, will continue into the future. The structures of community life and mission have been put into place in the past to safeguard the mission of hospitality. When they do not serve that purpose they need to be changed. To quote Sister Helena Donohue: ***“As we leave some of our ministry institutions behind us and create new collaborative ventures, the question and challenge is: how can we ensure that a voice for the “deep-down things”, for the heart and soul which is at the centre of human living, for the particular character of the St. John of God inheritance, will pervade the new endeavours? We need new platforms, new porches or new doorways”.***

In my report to the chapter entitled “Co-workers of St. John of God” I said that today Brothers and Co-workers are trying together to respond to the needs of people who are suffering or marginalized, sometimes with limited resources. Differences talked through, sincere and open dialogue with a ‘listening heart’, can lead to greater understanding and bring people closer together, as it did John of God and Angulo. The presence of the 21 Co-workers at the Chapter, and their contribution to the discussions, certainly validated this statement. In their message to the Chapter the Co-workers as a group declared ***“We would like to offer the new General Government, which is quite rightly concerned about the future of the Order and the decline in vocations a message to set their minds at rest. Perhaps it is not simply the inability of humans to be able to identify inadequate forms of vocations promotion, but the will of God. This is precisely why we wish to send out a message of confidence and trust: the Order will not die out, even with the present and future shortage of Brothers, so long as there are lay people who will responsibly participate in its charism, preserving and implementing it.”***
Our confidence in facing the future therefore is based on the promised help and cooperation that is held out to us as our co-workers”.

Brothers and co-workers working together at every level within the Order is our guarantee for the future of St. John of God’s hospitality in our world. To ensure this, the education of Brothers and Co-workers for an integrated mission is one of the foundation stones which will guarantee the future capacity of the works of the Order to provide St. John of God hospitality successfully. The spiritual and professional preparation given to Brothers has been a traditional foundation to ensure that a work or service is effective and evangelising. We will need to extend these opportunities to our co-workers.

I see a need for greater commitment by the Order to the formation of our Co-workers and this might call for an office at the General Curia that would concern itself with promoting the place and formation of Co-workers in the Order’s life.

CONCLUSION

We need to initiate our search for a future vision for the Order and its mission at the side of the person who is suffering. The starting point in the search for meaning, mission and the shaping of a vision has to be the place where people are suffering. There are so many people who are suffering in so many ways from new forms of marginalization, dehumanization, lowliness and isolation that we cannot rest; we must seek creative and new ways of reaching these people. Our vision is one in which we develop greater interprovincial, international cooperation through networking, twinning. This is intended not only to reach as many suffering people as we can, but to make sure that they are treated, helped and cared for in the manner that St. John of God would approve of. I know this to be true in our centers but we cannot fall back into complacency or inertia. The work has only just begun, the road is long, sometimes hard, always challenging, but ***'it is the love of God that impels us.'*** (St. Paul)

In my first address to the Chapter I said that my thoughts and prayers were with all those who are in, or avail themselves of, a St. John of God service wherever that may be in the world. I wish to once again assure each such person that we, Brothers and Co-workers, are here for you. Our mission in life, as a religious Order in the Catholic Church, is to journey with people like you in time of need, listening to what causes pain and suffering, mobilizing help to bring relief. Have courage and may our compassionate God bring you healing and hope.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Now I come to that part of my remarks that always causes persons in my situation some anxiety. I want to thank everyone who has contributed in any way to the success of the Chapter but I know from experience that it is a simple matter to fail to mention someone. If you are such a person, please accept my assurances that we are all grateful to you even if human frailty causes me to neglect to mention your contribution. That said, on behalf of the capitulars, and, in fact, the whole Order I wish to register our thanks, in no particular order of priority, to:

- The Brothers and Co-workers who formed the Preparatory Commission
- The General Secretary and the personnel of the General Curia Secretariat and the Chapter Secretariat
- The Moderator of the Chapter, Sñr. Alvaro Díaz
- The Chapter Secretary, Brother Giancarlo Lopic'
- The Co-workers who joined us in the Chapter and presented us with an inspiring and challenging message – and those Co-workers who remained at home helping to keep our mission alive and active
- Sister Helena O'Donohue who helped us in our discernment before the elections
- The Chapter President of the session at which I was elected and the scrutineers who assisted in all of the election process
- The various Church leaders who visited the Chapter and celebrated the Eucharist with us
- The brother-priests who celebrated our Eucharistic liturgies
- The Brothers who prepared and presented the spiritual reflections at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Mrs Kathleen Elslander and her team of interpreters
- The moderators and secretaries of the linguistic and regional groups
- The capitulars who served on the various Chapter Commissions
- The Provinces and Brothers who presented various aspects of the life of the Order to us at evening sessions
- The persons who addressed the Chapter on various topics
- The Brothers who lightened the atmosphere of the Chapter with their depictions of “the other Chapter” in cartoons on the boards outside the Chapter room

- The photographers – the official one from the Tiber Island, Sig. Arnaldo Lucianetti, and the Chapter paparazzi who have made sure that we have a rich pictorial record of the Chapter
- The sound and voting technicians
- The Holy Father for receiving us at the Papal Audience and for the teaching in his homily on the need to be non-judgemental and to have complete confidence in the infinite mercy of God
- The Communities of the Order in Rome for their hospitality and for joining us on special occasions
- The St. Egidio Community for their reception of a representative group of capitulars
- The bus drivers who transported us to various engagements – even though, from time to time, they disappeared with their buses from where we expected to find them
- The Provinces who gave us gifts – especially the Provinces that managed to keep the weight of their gifts under 10 kilograms
- The Brothers back in the Provinces who have kept the work going while we have been here in Rome
- The poor, the sick and the needy – who might have been helped more if we had reduced some of the expenditures connected with the Chapter – for their patience with us and the example of faith and hospitality that they often give us
- The administration and staff of the Salesianum
- And finally I thank you, and the Brothers who elected you either as major superiors or vocals, for your presence and participation in the Chapter.

In even such a long list of persons to whom we owe our gratitude it would be possible to leave someone unthanked. However I *have* tried to acknowledge everyone who contributed to the planning and running of the Chapter because I believe that deep and sincere gratitude for what we receive is part of our spirituality as an Order and I wished to give expression to that value in my closing address.

Finally I want to thank all who have supported me during these first days as Prior General of our beloved Order, with their prayers and the many messages of support from all around the Order. Please continue to support me and the new General Council with your prayers.

When you return to your Provinces bring my affectionate and fraternal greetings to all the Brothers, especially those who may be sick or suffering from the infirmities of the ageing process. I send a special greeting and appreciation to our numerous Co-workers around the world. As you too have received the gift of the hospitality of St. John of God to carry out his mission, I encourage you to keep him as your model and guide as you exercise your profession in a service of the Order. The Order, of which you form part, depends on you to work with the Brothers to make John of God's dream become a reality in our time. In this way countless numerous of people in need will be give hope and healing and many others an opportunity of a better life.

Thank you.

Rome, Friday, October 20, 2006

Br. Donatus Forkan, O.H.

Prior General.

(This is a letter presenting the activities planned for next six years, along the same lines as that written for the activities planned in the previous six-year term)

TO ALL OF THE ORDER

It is with great joy that I address to you this letter presenting the activities planned for the next six years, following the celebration of the LXVI General Chapter.

The two past months have been very intense indeed. I have had the opportunity to meet and speak to many brothers and co-workers in Italy, Ireland, Korea, China, Vietnam, the Philippines and France, to address you through a number of messages, and to work with the General Council to prepare and plan the life of the Order over the next six years.

I feel that the Order has entrusted me with a great responsibility. However, I perceive it as God's call to work for his kingdom in the ministry and service of governing and animating our Order. It is especially a call of service and readiness to all, so that we may live out the evangelical plan of hospitality first initiated by Saint John of God and pass it on with true passion in a relevant form.

Although ours is a formidably great enterprise, I don't feel alone. In this journey, I am accompanied by the Lord's Spirit and the continuous and close presence of Our Lady of Good Counsel as well as our Founder, the true inspirer of the hospitality which we are called to renew constantly. I feel the presence and support of the entire Order, both brothers and co-workers. Without you and your support my ministry would be emptied of its meaning and life.

I especially feel the support of the brothers who are part of the General Council and of the team at the General Curia. We have all been entrusted with the task of governing and animating the Order, and together we form a real team. With a spirit of collegiality, we shall give ourselves to the Order completely, and endeavor to fulfil the mission that we have received.

The title of the LXVI General Chapter was ***"Passion for the Hospitality of Saint John of God in the World Today"***. It was a very enriching event in terms of exchanges, experiences, reflections and prospects for the future. I wish for this passion for the hospitality of Saint John of God to be truly lived out wherever the Order is present in the world today. I would like for us to be committed to achieving this goal over the next few years, based on the rich and long experience that we have gained. I would like for us to be able to build on that experience and develop it, so that we may pass it on to the new generations and all of our co-workers.

It is in this context that we should consider the conclusions of the General Chapter, which we shall refer to as Priorities. They urge us to be committed to hospitality in the style of Saint John of God, that we may be the true expression of God's mercy for the sick and needy of our world, with the modern and effective means of our time and the love-filled hospitality of all time, as that lived out by Saint John of God. It is along these lines that we have conceived and prepared the plan for the upcoming six years, which we submit to you in the following pages. We do so with great enthusiasm and hope, in the awareness that this is an opportunity that the Lord is giving us to renew our life and that of the Order.

I. "... NO ONE CAN ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITHOUT BEING BORN THROUGH WATER AND THE SPIRIT" (Jn 3:3-6)

This text befits the Easter period, and in my opinion, it is very appropriate for the time in which we are living. The Risen Lord is inviting us to renew our life and that of the entire Order, to be born again, not in any old way, but to be born of the Spirit, which renews and recreates all, which sets forth new paths and new challenges for the new times in which we are called to live. It is a permanent commitment for the Church and for us, especially forty years after the Second Vatican Council. It is a need which I would like for us to keep in mind as we look to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Council, in 2015.

The Order actually lives this paschal experience constantly, as there are many new realities and projects which are continuously generated, and many people who join our Family. However, there are also signs of fatigue, inertness and apathy among us. After many years of speaking about renewal and change, it may be that these words have become excessively used, and we may be tempted not to pay due attention to them. So many times before we have heard and read reflections such as this, even around the same Gospel text or others; we have even resolved to make this happen, but to no avail. At this point we could say that it is not easy to change, or that we do not have the strength to attempt it. In many instances we might even think that we have nothing to change, because we have already organized our life and are quite comfortable the way we are.

All this may occur at a personal, community, or institutional level, and we might ask ourselves, how can one be born again when one is old, exhausted, comfortable and with everything nicely organized? The Lord says to us, "In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit".

Faithful to the Spirit of the Lord and to Saint John of God, who according to the words of Saint John of Avila was born again after encountering the Lord, for he changed his life and was a new man to God in his service to the poor and sick, we must open up our heart and spirit to the Lord, in this ongoing process of being born and renewing our lives and that of the Order.

At the present time, the map of the Order has changed substantially. This is true from a geographical and operational point of view, but especially in terms of individuals. We have established the Order in all five continents, with an increasing presence outside of Europe, although we continue to be more numerous in Europe than anywhere else. Our hospitals and apostolic works are very creative and open to any need throughout the world. Though there are a few shortcomings which we need to address, our apostolic works are managed according to quality, efficiency and humanization standards. As regards human resources, there is an obvious imbalance between the number of brothers and that of co-workers, which is constantly on the rise, though this depends on the continent.

The Order thus has a more universal and a more global character today. In referring to the co-workers, the General Chapter opted for the term *union* rather than the previously employed *partnership and integration*. We all form the Order together, brothers and co-workers, united in our shared charism, spirituality and mission. Each one according to our own vocation, the brothers on the basis of their religious consecration, and the co-workers on the basis of their secular life, in a spirit of Hospitality.

I am aware that not all co-workers live their life and work from the perspective of Christian faith. It would be naïve on our part to believe otherwise, considering the religious and social reality of our time. However, many live out Hospitality as a Christian commitment, and others are committed to the Order through their professional engagement, and in many cases through their personal option for the hospitaller plan of Saint John of God. All of them, albeit at different levels, are part of our beloved Order.

We must look to the Order from this new perspective. It has changed considerably, and probably it no longer is what it was when we began our journey, though some things we will probably always cherish. Despite this, this new reality is full of life and opportunities, and we have come this far after many years of work and inspiration guided by the Lord. Once again, we are asked *to set out and be born again*. Let us not be afraid, for the Lord who is calling is with us and will lead the way.

This new perspective of the Order invites us to review and renew it in all of its aspects: the life of the brothers and communities, the management and style of our works, the vocations pastoral ministry and formation, the health care ministry, bioethics, structures and networking, by better tapping into the *knowledge* of all, at the service of the Church, the sick and the needy.

This vision of reality, shared and supported by the General Council, is the result of the reflections and conclusions of the recently concluded General Chapter, which joyfully celebrated the rich spiritual, cultural and health care heritage of the Order. Though recognizing that some problems and deficiencies do exist, the Chapter believes that the Order cannot simply close in on itself or await its own death. On the contrary, the Order must open up to new opportunities and possibilities, so that the hospitality of Saint John of God may be strengthened and spread for the glory of God and for the good of the Church, the sick and the needy.

It is a major challenge for us, a calling of God's Spirit, which we must heed promptly and with determination. Saint John of God's plan of hospitality is a gift of the Lord for the Church and for the world of suffering, which we are called to look after and spread, animate and strengthen, by virtue of our love and responsibility. It would be painful if, following the example of the *lazy servant* who was reprimanded by his master (Cf. Matthew 25:14-30), we were to keep and bury our *talent* in the ground, thus making it unproductive.

I thus wish to urge the entire Order, both brothers and co-workers, to commit ourselves to a movement of renewal and engagement from the grassroots. This shall be the main and more general objective, and all the other initiatives and goals that will be progressively defined will be geared towards its achievement. It is an invitation to look to the Order with great love, and it is the concrete way in which we can make a reality today *the passion for the hospitality of Saint John of God in the world*.

Allow me to go back to the text of Saint John, "How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back into the womb again and be born? Jesus replied: in all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit". How can we succeed in setting this whole process in motion? There are many problems, we are few and elderly, there are few vocations, the Church is losing its important role as a point of reference for many people, even God sometimes seems absent in the face of so many difficulties, in the face of so many entreaties that seem to go unanswered ... we could keep saying many things of this sort.

All this is true, dear brothers and co-workers, but ours is a plan that was entrusted to us by the Lord. In the light of faith and the Spirit, we may discover the dynamics of love and God's hospitality, which grows and becomes stronger as it opens up and gives itself. We have the example of our Founder and many brothers and co-workers, who lived according to this spirit throughout history.

With faith and humility, recognizing that we need God's mercy, again we feel the need in our heart to convert to the Lord and open up to his light, to discover life in another dimension, that of God's kingdom. It all begins here, amongst ourselves, provided that we make it possible for Him to live in a world of peace, justice and hospitality. This should be our perspective, may the last be the first, may the sick and the outcast be the preferred, may they be cared for with the greatest love and may they recover their dignity, may no human being enslave or prevail over his brother, for we are all the children of God and brothers in Jesus Christ.

We have a great responsibility and a major challenge before us. We will have to overcome many obstacles. But it is a beautiful and great plan, it is worth leaving everything for and following the Lord who is calling us. To the extent that each day we are capable of *being born through water and the Spirit*, we shall experience it as a reality.

Therefore, a time of hope is opening up for our Order and all of its members, a time of enthusiasm, joy and engagement. We might say that we are called to live a time of Easter, in which everything is renewed and in which the Lord triumphs over sin, evil suffering and death. It is life that triumphs. We too will have to undergo moments of purification, but let me say once again that if we decide *to be born again, through water and the Spirit*, at the personal, community and institutional level, life will be a valuable fruit for all, for the entire Order.

2. REPORT ON THE STATE OF FORMATION IN THE ORDER

The report was presented at the LXVI General Chapter. It is a sociological survey performed by the Department of Sociology of the Salesian Pontifical University of Rome, and its main objective was to look at the ways in which the quality of formation and vocations pastoral ministry in the Order could be improved. It is a tool that provides us with data and very interesting reflections on the vocations pastoral ministry and formation, on consecrated and community life, and on our charismatic identity and apostolic mission. It is intended to be of help to us in the renewal process that I mentioned before. In this document, we wish to provide you with a summary of the report, though every Province will receive a complete version of the study for its analysis and application. For the time being, I only wish to share a number of reflections with you.

We must look after and enhance our **hospitaller consecration**. The report revealed that we are confronted with a number of difficulties, which we must tackle with determination. One main problem is the poor life of faith and prayer and the lack of attention being paid to spiritual life. Obviously, this has an impact on the apostolic life of the brothers, and sometimes on their community life as well. This is a fundamental and basic aspect, without which we cannot foresee a future of hope for the Order.

Spiritual life, that is, life in the Spirit of God, is the spring from which we drink and recreate our life, where we find light and rest, mercy and energy. Daily personal prayer, community prayer and the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, are the sources which nourish the roots of our consecration and personal, community and apostolic life. Only by living out an intense spiritual life, will we be able to experience the joy of consecrated life and hospitality.

The document *The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of Saint John of God* is a good spirituality guide which we are called to deepen and live out.

According to the report, there are also some problems in living out the *religious vows*, which are an expression of our consecration. Individualism, the lack of in-depth communication with superiors, affective immaturity and at times, the failure to properly integrate the affective and sexual dimension, the inappropriate use of the means at our disposal, lack of self-esteem on the part of the brothers in relation to the new roles taken on by the co-workers, are some of the difficulties reported.

Religious consecration only makes sense if it is lived out with joy, in a positive manner, as a spiritual journey of fulfillment and plenitude. Of course, it entails giving up certain things, like any other choice. Equally, sometimes it is difficult for us to understand certain expressions and forms; we even have to engage in adequate theological readings considering the different cultures in which we live. However, what the report reveals is the reflection and expression of a number of imbalances and personal as well as community shortcomings to which we must pay great attention, so that our heart may be one for God and his cause, hospitality.

Times change, approaches do too, and our role in the mission is definitely different today. At times, we must step aside and make room for our co-workers, though this does not diminish in any way the depth or value of our vow of hospitality, which today requires new expressions and approaches, filled with meaning and vitality. This requires the due spiritual, ascetic and formative care, which must be diligently accompanied by the superiors, and especially by the formators.

All this should lead us to place great emphasis on the formation of the brothers, both initial and ongoing. The reasons why brothers enter religious life must be enhanced and discovered, and the personal fragility of candidates and those in formation must be studied and reinforced by a genuine and effective process of accompaniment. This need is viewed as an absolute priority for the future of our vocations and brothers, and the figure of spiritual director must be enhanced.

Accompaniment and spiritual direction are often discussed, but as in the case of spiritual life, they present a number of deficiencies. However, this process must be strengthened in initial formation, and there must be a commitment to do so on the part of the brothers as a whole. Being accompanied by a spiritual director is not only an act of humility; it is actually a need for the good of each person, who feels affirmed, enhanced, animated, at times challenged and always happy to develop his spiritual and personal life.

A number of difficulties were also identified in relation to **the charismatic identity of the mission**. These include the new role that the brothers are called to play in their mission, at times the relationship between brothers and co-workers, the difficulty in striking a balance between activism and inner life, the insertion of those in formation into the communities and mission, and the emphasis that must be placed on the formation process, given the weaknesses in the personality of youths who find it hard to make long-term commitments.

With great satisfaction, I have observed that most brothers have readily accepted the role we are called to play in our mission and the role played by the co-workers, and generally, we have established good relations with our co-workers. However, that is not always the case, and we must grow in this respect. We are called to be a critical conscience, moral guides and a prophetic presence in the midst of our apostolic works, and more generally, in the mission carried out by the Order. However, we must be aware that moral authority is

something to be gained through our sensitivity, self-giving and ongoing commitment to hospitality, together with our brothers and co-workers.

According to the report, if we are to improve our charismatic identity in the mission, we need to pay special attention to the initial and ongoing formation of the brothers, and provide them with the due accompaniment, without ever leaving young people alone in their formation process. *A community lived with joy, a sense of belonging, a charismatic identity and an intense sense of identity and passion for the mission are the necessary nourishment for a fervent religious life and a generous and altruistic zeal for the mission.*

As regards the **formation of formators**, the *report* appreciates its importance and dedication to it. However, it points to a number of deficiencies, the most significant being the lack of formation and its poor quality, although mention is also made of the weak formation of formators. Formation is especially weak in human sciences and related subjects.

Formators provide an indispensable and absolutely crucial service to the Order, and despite the difficulties, we should acknowledge and thank them for their effort and dedication. Nevertheless, we must be aware of the need for an adequate selection and formation of formators, who should be supported by all the brothers in the Order, especially the Superiors.

This is a mission for us brothers, in this we cannot be replaced by the co-workers, although at some point we might rely on their support and advice. The appointment of very young brothers or brothers with little experience of religious life as formators, the assignment of multiple tasks, little preparation for formation, the loneliness at times experienced by the brothers and their resistance to refresh their formation skills are problems which occur more frequently than we would like, and must be addressed.

We have the *Formation Plan for the Hospitaller Brothers of Saint John of God* which provides us with the fundamental criteria for the formation of brothers as well as formators. All the brothers in the Order have received it, but not all of us have become familiar with it or have come to own it. It is an extremely valuable tool to be implemented in its entirety, and we must commit to putting into practice in the Order at large.

The last and most extensive chapter of the report is devoted to the **Vocations Pastoral Ministry**. As with the previous chapters, it starts out by addressing the different suggestions and observations made by the brothers in responding to the survey's queries. The causes which determine a shortage of vocations in the Order are first analyzed. These include a secularized environment, the loss of the religious meaning of life, the difficulty for young people in making long-term plans and commitments, and the lack of positive witnesses.

The main shortcomings of our vocations pastoral ministry are also analyzed. These include the insufficient accompaniment of candidates, the lack of motivation of the brothers due to their poor results, the improvisation of responsibilities, and mixing up vocations pastoral ministry with *vocations recruitment*.

In spite of the internal as well as external difficulties, the *report* provides some insight as to how to promote the vocations pastoral ministry. One way is through the religious community, which is called to accompany, watch over and promote new vocations by living out a spirit of fraternal charity, prayer for vocations, a sober lifestyle, an intense climate of spiritual life, and ultimately a joyful experience of its vocation.

Another way is to attract young people through the values of the Order, which include the figure and charisma of the Founder, the universal mission of the Order to care for the sick, especially the most needy, the value of solidarity, the authenticity of a joyful fraternal life and spiritual life.

The vocations pastoral ministry should be a concern to us and a challenge, which we must face with peace of mind. It is true that we are going through difficult times in this field. There are few vocations, and sometimes we are tempted to become pessimistic. But our plan was entrusted to us by the Lord, and he is asking us to cast our nets, *Duc in Altum*, and to sow the seeds of hospitaller consecrated life. He is asking us to welcome new candidates and journey with them in their discernment and formation, so that they may consolidate their vocation. The personal commitment of each brother and his joyful and dedicated life is the first and most important key to renewing our vocations pastoral ministry, along with those previously mentioned.

There is also another important dimension which we must consider in the vocations pastoral ministry, consistent with what I have been saying thus far. We must include and engage the co-workers in our mission. They will undoubtedly be a source of renewal for our vocations pastoral ministry. Together, brothers and co-workers, we must work to promote the Christian vocation of hospitality, both in consecrated and secular life. The mission is one and the same, and many strategies and projects are also likely to be similar. Let us thus be determined to take this opportunity which the Lord and the Order have placed before us.

The *report* is a program filled with challenges for the Order, in the six-year period that has just started. Let us face them without fear, with the heart of those who are preparing *to be born again*, a heart filled with hope and trust in the Lord, who is our guide and beacon in the journey of our life.

3. PRIORITIES OF HOSPITALITY FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS

We have just celebrated the LXVI General Chapter, whose theme was “Passion for the Hospitality of Saint John of God in the World Today”. In our work at the Chapter, we mainly relied on the *Instrumentum laboris*, the Report on the State of Formation in the Order, the Order’s Charter of Hospitality, and the document *The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of Saint John of God: Spirituality of the Order*.

The reflections, group work and discussion in the different phases of the Chapter led to the approval of the final document on the fundamental objectives and the main lines of action to be undertaken by the Order in the next few years. In keeping with the terminology used for the previous six-year term, the document was called *Priorities of Hospitality*.

The General Council met on 30 November and 1 December to work on this document, and it developed the plan that we submit to you in the following pages. It is a general plan, not exhaustive by any means, which will evolve over time, as the different groups and commissions gain a greater understanding of the reality of the Order.

We have mainly allocated responsibilities by regions and provinces, we have defined the areas, services and commissions that are to be animated by the General Curia, and we have planned a number of concrete actions, in keeping with the document on *Priorities* and with everything we have said thus far.

I would now like to make some comments on the document entitled *Priorities of Hospitality* to help us implement it and integrate it into the life of the Provinces as of the next Provincial Chapters.

3.1. PRIORITIES IN THE LIFE OF THE BROTHERS

This paragraph refers to the issues that are specific to the life of the brothers, although when dealing with many of them we must also be open to the co-workers and other Church and social realities. In specific terms, they include the promotion of the vocations pastoral ministry, formation and fraternal life.

I already referred to some of them in the previous point, when I commented on the *Report on the State of Formation in the Order*. I will thus be more concise in this paragraph.

The **vocations pastoral ministry** is a challenge for us, not only because we are witnessing a decrease in the number of vocations to hospitaller consecrated life, but especially because we must avail ourselves of adequate human and material resources to welcome and properly form new vocations. Accompaniment and discernment are especially important in this stage, especially to evaluate the human and affective maturity of the candidates and the real motivations for their vocation.

The vocations pastoral ministry must be connected with youth pastoral ministry, which involves an effort to work with other Church groups and to work with young co-workers who by virtue of their profession, engagement, or volunteers come into contact with our houses. To them, we must present the Christian vocation to hospitality, from the perspective of consecrated life and the laity.

As to **Formation**, in addition to the point made previously, further emphasis must be placed on *Ongoing Formation*. We know how necessary it is, but reality suggests that we must be more attentive to it. Not always do ongoing formation programs exist in the Provinces, and a lack of motivation and interest are often perceived. It is a challenge that we must face. Our future largely depends on ongoing formation.

When we push it beyond mere academic titles, ongoing formation fosters our personal, human, religious and hospitaller development. This is why ongoing formation is absolutely essential at any age and in all the phases of one's life, not because it merely means gaining new diplomas, but because it enables us to live our consecration to the Lord in a permanently new form. A significant effort will be required on everyone's part over the next six years, especially the Provinces, communities and each brother in particular.

The General Curia will also be undertaking a number of initiatives, including the courses in preparation for solemn profession, provided that a sufficient number of brothers signs up. I wish to take this opportunity to encourage all the provinces to send their brothers to this course. I know that it is expensive in all respects, but it is a unique vocational, formative and hospitaller experience due to the quality of the courses, the perception of the universality of the Order, and the opportunity to engage in a process of discernment prior to solemn profession.

Two paragraphs deal with **Fraternal Life**. One refers to Fraternal Life proper, and the other concerns *New Forms of Community Life*. As far as fraternal life is concerned, a number of guidelines are set forth, which are truly important for our life, considering that community life is an essential element of our hospitaller consecration.

The document on Priorities also lays emphasis on spiritual life as a base and foundation. It does so because though it is something that we know and often repeat, it is one of the aspects that we must reinforce in our personal and community life. If our spiritual life falters, so will everything else, including fraternal life. It is the foundation that can allow us to live out our hospitaller consecration with integrity. We are all responsible for

this, each and every one of us personally, but so is the community, to the extent that it accompanies, integrates, helps and fosters the spiritual and consecrated life of the brothers.

The fraternal community is a privileged space which nourishes the life of each brother. However, it is possible only if the community receives permanent and co-responsible feedback from each and every one of its members, through the contribution of their gifts and values. It must be a vital, welcoming and plural space, where young and old, healthy and sick and those with different ideas may live in a fraternal spirit. Indeed, basically it is not this that unites us, but God's love and his call to live out hospitality, which we must also practice with our brothers.

An important factor to promote fraternal life is communication between brothers, not just in terms of faith and experience of God, but also in terms of our apostolic mission and our whole life in general. The *Report on the State of Formation in the Order* sets forth a number of weaknesses in this area, which we are called to overcome. When the brothers share only important moments, or when the communication between brothers remains at a merely superficial level, the community languishes and individualism sets in, which in the long term reduces contact between the brothers and in the communities.

We must promote amongst ourselves moments of greater and more profound communication of faith and life, which undoubtedly contributes to strengthening and fostering community life. We are called to promote community life to bear witness to the value of fraternity before the rest of the world. Each one according to his responsibility; the superior as an animator, a servant and the authority, and the other brothers as active and committed community members, who share and contribute what they have individually for the benefit of all.

The General wanted to take a step forward, considering the new reality which the Order has become and in which it lives today. This is why in the document on Priorities he urges us to promote *new forms of community life* that will respond to the new contemporary needs. While keeping alive the spirit and meaning of community life as described in the Constitutions of the Order, they should give the brothers the opportunity to live in a spirit of fraternity with the co-workers, the sick and the residents who may so wish. They should enable the creation of intercongregational communities and temporary communities set up to animate specific projects.

Increasingly, community life should be measured not so much according to the number of events and moments in which its members are together, but in terms of the quality of such moments. That is to say, the quality of community prayer, ongoing formation, apostolic and family community meetings, retreats and spiritual exercises, and leisure time spent together. We may thus understand and accept that some brothers might carry out their mission outside of the community in specific circumstances, while continuing to look to the community as their point of reference, and sharing with it significant and specific quality times.

3.2. PRIORITIES IN THE MISSION OF THE ORDER

The mission of the Order grows each day, as a result of its fruitfulness and thanks to the contributions of all of its members. It could not be otherwise, for hospitality is dynamic and active. It would be desirable for this trend of evangelical hospitality to continue in the future, as is likely to happen. However, this would imply a greater complexity for our works, which we shall have to manage according to quality and efficiency standards, while preserving our own style and philosophy. This will also imply a great openness to the co-workers, and a great responsibility on the part of the Order to pass on to those who are part of our works

the charism, style and values of our Institution. The Order's Charter of Hospitality will be a valuable point of reference for all of these processes.

Charismatic management occupies an important place in the Priorities for the next six years. This expression was coined by the Charter of Hospitality, and we worked on it throughout the previous six-year term. Although significant progress has been made, this area requires further work, especially in certain regions of our Order. Formation meetings will have to be promoted to help the Provinces manage the works in accordance with the principles set forth in this document. We have to be responsible and transparent in this process, for the good name of our Institution is at stake, and especially the possibility of effectively fulfilling the mission that the Church has entrusted to us. The document *Priorities for the Mission of the Order* provides very concrete points and actions which we should all follow and put into practice.

The appointment of duly selected and trained co-workers to management posts and positions of responsibility has been a positive reality in the Order for some time, especially in some Provinces. We should seize this opportunity, whenever necessary, and overcome any fears and misunderstandings. Many of them are taking on important responsibilities, and are making it possible for the Order to develop its mission. They do so in their capacity as lay persons, fully united with and committed to Saint John of God's project of hospitality.

Our apostolic works must be managed according to charismatic quality criteria, and we should be able to assess the values of the Order in the mission which they carry out. Charismatic management, therefore, will not be a mere aspiration or an ideal discussed at Chapters and meetings, but a reality that strives for excellence in hospitality on the basis of logical and relevant management criteria.

The option for the poor, the sick and the needy is a priority which we must always keep alive in our Order. It is a sign of our permanent sensitivity and ability to respond to the newly emerging needs and to be among the sick and the most abandoned poor. It is a richness which we have inherited from our Founder, which we are called to constantly enhance and which is part of the very essence of our being. We must increasingly involve the co-workers and all our works in this option, even the most technologically advanced, so that special care may be provided to the sick and needy who live in precarious conditions, while at the same time helping other works that may need their support.

Brothers and co-workers united in the mission and charism. This is not just a title, but a way to perceive the presence of the co-workers in the Order. United refers to the fact that they are part of the Order. We do not speak of partnership or integration, for that would imply the need for us brothers to wish or decide to make them part of our Order. They are the Order to the extent that they are willing to commit themselves to its plan of hospitality. As brothers and co-workers, we are a rich and fruitful expression of the Church, which is called to incarnate God's merciful love according to the spirit and manner started by Saint John of God in the city of Granada.

I have extensively and frequently addressed this issue, and now I only wish to add one last observation. When it comes to this area, the *Priorities* urge us to find new ways and means to bolster the Hospitaller Family or the Saint John of God Movement, to establish new bonds of greater spiritual communion amongst the co-workers and the Order. It is further evidence of the wish that exists to grow in all of these aspects. In some of the places where the Order is present, some experiences are being carried out and attempts are being made to establish structures conducive to this. I believe that we must move ahead in this respect, cautiously but at the same time with great confidence and determination. This is why I would like to

encourage all the provinces to reflect on and promote these movements. We will do the same from the General Curia, sharing, examining and possibly approving any criteria and regulations we will deem appropriate.

Conveying the values of the Order. This is a need which deserves great attention and dedication on our part. As the number of works and especially co-workers increases, it becomes a more impelling necessity. In almost all of our works, the presence of the brothers in numerical terms is minimal compared to that of the co-workers; this trend is expected to continue and even increase in the future. For this reason, and with a view to keeping alive the spirit of Saint John of God, we must see to it that our co-workers are familiar with and love our philosophy, so that they can be committed to it. The future of many of our works and of the Order itself will largely depend on this.

All of us brothers should be committed to this task, along with the co-workers, especially those in positions of greatest responsibility, namely top and middle management. Sound human resource departments are required, with selection, induction, follow-up and evaluation plans, with a background which should include training in the philosophy, history and reality of the Order, and other aspects specific to each situation and place. Consistency and transparent management practices, in accordance with the principles previously set forth, must always be present if we really want to be effective. In addition to this, the personal witness of the brothers and co-workers is an essential tool to adequately convey our values.

We are called to promote the “*Saint John of God brand*”, that is, the features which characterize us and for which we want to be known, inside and outside our works, in the Church and in society at large. More than being a logo, this “*brand*” should express the contents of the plan of hospitality of Saint John of God, his style and image, his charism and his mission. This is exactly what we should strive to convey to the outside world, according to the communication media and technologies available today, with the ultimate aim of fostering the charism, spirituality and mission of the Order.

Health and Social Pastoral Care. This is an area in which we have traditionally been very active, and that we have promoted in many places throughout the world. The spiritual and religious care of the sick and the needy, their families and the co-workers is the core of the pastoral ministry in our works. In the course of the next six years, we would like to give further impetus to this dimension to strengthen and renew it in the entire Order. In so doing, we shall be mindful of the new circumstances in which we live and the concrete characteristics of every reality in which we are present.

An organized and team-based pastoral ministry is required, with adequately formed people, who should embrace a broad rather than an exclusively sacramental vision of evangelization. They should be ecumenical and open to religious pluralism, capable of conceiving spiritual accompaniment as a broad term, whatever the religion professed by the individuals. The brothers responsible for this pastoral ministry should be capable of working in an interdisciplinary team with the other professionals and health care services, for the exclusive purpose of offering holistic care to the sick and needy. They should share with caregivers and social workers a set of working tools, such as health care protocols and patient medical history, to mention a few. Only this way will the Spiritual and Religious Care Services in our works be able to find the necessary space for their action, only then will they be accepted and understood, and most importantly, dialogue with professionals and create a culture of spiritual and religious care among the co-workers.

This is an engagement which we must all take on board over the next six years, the provinces and each one of the specific apostolic works alike. We at the General Curia will also devote the necessary attention to this

field, and for this purpose we have appointed a General Counselor who will be responsible for promoting and animating Health and Social Pastoral Care in the Order.

Bioethics is another very relevant issue. The progress in medical technologies, research, the risks of a dehumanized medical practice, the management of human and economic resources, the serious social situations in which we find ourselves and many other circumstances permanently confront us with ethical dilemmas which we must be capable of facing, in the effort to make the right decisions.

Sometimes, the ethical dilemmas are more serious as they challenge the very ethical principles of the Church and the Order. They may be promoted by State laws or result from social claims or the demands of concrete individuals, which require of us a prudent and in-depth study and ethical debate. The General Chapter was very conscious of this, when it decided to devote a special paragraph to this theme in the *Priorities of the Mission of the Order*.

We must definitely work in the field of bioethics in the upcoming years. The ethical formation of brothers and co-workers, the establishment of Medical and Research Bioethics Committees are two actions which all of the provinces should undertake. The purpose should not only be to create a group of experts who will try to solve bioethical dilemmas, but to encourage in our staff an ethical approach to management, research and the care of the sick and needy in particular.

At the General Curia, we shall promote the creation of a Bioethics Observatory, whose purpose will be to further formation in bioethics and create Bioethics Committees in the Order, provide advice to the provinces, reflect and foster a dialogue in bioethics, and share information and protocols with the provinces. A General Counselor will be responsible for this area and for the implementation of the Bioethics Observatory.

3.3. PRIORITIES IN NETWORKING

Universality and globalization are two important characteristics of the Order's reality today. Networking has been enhanced and steadily promoted in the past few years, thanks to which it has been possible to carry out many projects and initiatives throughout the world.

Its importance is growing, as perceived by the General Chapter, which felt the need to include in the *Priorities* for the next six years a paragraph exclusively devoted to networking at different levels: interprovincial, within the same region; interprovincial, between different geographic regions of the Order; with other Church institutions; and in general, with other public and private institutions, provided that the fundamental principles of our Institution are respected.

Of course much has been done, but we still have a long way to go. In the Order there are many opportunities, there is a lot of knowledge and a lot of experience acquired over the years. We are called to share this heritage for the growth and development of the whole Order, to make possible new projects and initiatives in places where there are pressing needs.

The Office for Missions and International Cooperation is a forum for cooperation which was established in the previous six-year period, and which we are called to promote to step up solidarity and cooperation, especially with the Order's works in developing countries. Its mission will be to manage anything related to Missions and International Cooperation, in coordination with the provinces, Associations and NGOs of the Order, which are to continue their activity and cooperation.

Intensify and encourage twinings between centers or provinces. This is another form of cooperation that we have just started, and which I encourage you all to implement. Experiences so far have been very positive, and this is a relevant and efficient way to cooperate, not only financially but also on the cultural and professional level. Not only from Northern to Southern countries, but also the other way around, especially considering that we live in a time of great migration flows.

Continue and intensify regional meetings. Along with universality and globalization, our world is currently characterized by the promotion of the local and regional. Of course, within the universal context of the Order, there are characteristics specific to each place which should be taken into account. This is why regional meetings were held in the previous six-year period. They were basically continental, and their purpose was to consider concrete problems and devise answers that would be more in tune and consistent with those realities. We believe that it would be sensible to continue in this direction, and have planned a number of regional meetings of major superiors, for the purpose of working at a regional level on the aspects that are more specific to those realities or that require a more specific and detailed analysis in each region.

Interprovincial Commissions. They have been around for the longest time, and have generally been very positive for the life of the Order. It is precisely for this reason that we should revitalize them, by changing the aspects that require change, by possibly changing their dynamics and enhancing their contents, in the effort to overcome any difficulties or forms of mistrust that may exist, for the common good of the provinces involved and the Order in general.

The General Council will be involved in these initiatives and in others suggested by the Chapter document on *Priorities*, by ensuring its presence, animation and support to the provinces and regions. It also plans to create any commissions or working groups deemed necessary for the proper achievement of the defined objectives.

4. GOVERNMENT AND ANIMATION OF THE ORDER

I consider government and animation as a service provided to the Order to live out in creative fidelity the charism, spirituality and mission of hospitality started by Saint John of God, which we have inherited from him. It is a service to the Order to implement the broad lines of action that the LXVI General Chapter approved for the next six years.

Governing and animating the Order involves actions like guiding, listening, dialoguing, deciding, and sometimes correcting. It is a truly difficult mission and service that I take on with a spirit of humility and hospitality. At the same time, dear brothers and co-workers, I ask you for your understanding, support, availability and openness to hear and accept the calls that the Spirit of the Lord will be making to us all over this time.

I would like for team work and collegiality to become the trademark of my service of government and animation in the Order. With the Council, we form a truly fraternal and apostolic community, and a real team, for we allocate and share the different responsibilities and tasks that we have been entrusted. In this respect, I am heeding one of the suggestions made by the General Chapter, according to which greater responsibilities should be delegated to the General Counselors

From the General Curia, we shall promote the setting up of different working commissions, some of which I have already mentioned to you. In a dynamic manner, they will endeavor to make progress in the different areas, with the participation of brothers and co-workers from all over the Order. Thanks to the modern means of communication, we will be able to rely on the help of many people without them always having to travel to Rome, or wherever meetings are held.

On the other hand, the General Council will hold an Enlarged Council twice a year, with the attendance of several co-workers who will not change for at least three years. Others may also participate if a discussion on specific issues is planned. The Enlarged Councils will last at least two days, and will allocate some time for the General Council to discuss strictly canonical matters. I think that this openness is necessary in order for the co-workers to be part of the highest governing bodies of the Order. Their input and advice in issues in which we have little experience may be very valuable.

I wish to also enhance the spirit of collegiality and teamwork with the Provincial Superiors, albeit at a different level, to ensure the good governance of the entire Order. This too, was a line of action approved by the Chapter. We have planned to meet with them on a yearly basis, both at the level of the entire Order and regionally. In addition to such meetings, I would like for the Provincials to be permanently in contact with the General Counselor assigned to their province, and naturally with me, if they so wish.

We shall all work on and study the issues that gradually come up, so as to help the General Council find the best solutions. The possible restructuring of certain parts of the Order is one of the questions that we will have to look into. I know that it is hard and difficult, that it will require a lot of caution and dialogue, but in some cases we will probably have to consider this possibility. Among the various *approved priorities*, the General Chapter asked the General Curia and the provinces to move in this direction, in accordance with our own law. This line of action and the two mentioned previously in this last paragraph are not reflected in the document on *Priorities* and have thus been included in this section on the government and animation of the Order.

5. CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, let me say that I hope to have enlightened you with these reflections. May they help you to begin this six-year period with enthusiasm and hope.

As you can see, the program is extensive and the challenges before us are many. This is why I invite you all, brothers and co-workers, to work hard and be committed to implementing this new phase of the Order's life, keeping alive *the passion for the Hospitality of Saint John of God in the World Today*.

As I said at the beginning, I hope this will be a propitious time of Easter for you all, in which everything is born again thanks to the Spirit of the Lord. Let us be on our way, let us dare to be born again, to rekindle the flame of hospitality, which is a sign and expression of the presence of God's kingdom in the world.

I confide in Saint John of God and all of our saints and blessed, whom I consider to be our privileged intercessors before God. I confide in Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, who will always be by our side, encouraging us on our journey. I confide in God our Lord, who today is incarnated in Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem to be light in the midst of darkness, peace in the midst of war and violence, hospitality in the midst of our world, so often hostile and inhospitable.

United always in Saint John of God

Rome, 25 December 2006
Solemnity of the Lord's Nativity

Brother Donatus Forkan
Superior General

PROGRAMME FOR THE SEXENNIUM 2006 – 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

Overleaf is the programme for the Sexennium with the calendar for the Provincial Chapters, the Canonical Visitations, Meetings with the Superiors General and other important meetings, and other areas of responsibility for the Governance of the Order.

These are important dates, and are benchmarks in the life of the Provinces. But we realise that this is an incomplete calendar because the various Commissions and working groups that are being put into place by the General Government will be driving the dynamics of the Order intensely with meetings at various levels, that still have to be scheduled, and will be announced with sufficient advance notice.

The animation of the General Government programme will move in two directions. Firstly, geographic areas: one or two General Councillors will animate the different Regions of the Order, working closely and in coordination with the Provincial Superiors. In this way, and through meetings with the Interprovincial and Regional Commissions it will also be possible that specific working programmes and schedules will be established for one particular Region or Interprovincial Commission or another. Secondly, specific areas of animation of the Order, such as Vocations Promotion/Pastoral Care and Formation, Charismatic Management and the Economy, Bioethics, the Pastoral Care of the Sick, Missions and International Cooperation. Both of these – the geographic areas and the animation areas – will also require meetings to be organised, which will be scheduled subsequently at the appropriate times.

The Brother General will also be sending papers and letters to the whole Order, to the, Brothers and Co-workers, and specific moments during the course of the Sexennium, particularly in relation to major events in the life of the Order.

We hope that the whole Order, Brothers and Co-workers alike, will joyfully welcomed the programme for the Sexennium, as a source of the excitement, hope and life that we wish to put into it. We urge you all to co-operate and show goodwill in implementing it.

2. CALENDAR OF PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS: 2007

February	12-15	English Province
February	20-24	Indian Province
February	27-03 March	Viet Nam Province
March	12-16	Australian Province
March	19-23	Korean Province
March	27-31	Rome Province
April	11-15	Lombardy-Veneto Province
April	17-21	Aragon Province
April	23-27	Bética Province
April	30	Rhineland Delegation
February	01-06	Bavarian Province
May	08-12	Austrian Province
May	14-16	Bohemia-Moravian Province
May	21-25	Castile Province
May	28-01 June	French Province
June	04-08	Irish Province
June	11-15	Portuguese Province
June	19-23	Southern S.A. Province
June	27-01 July	Northern S.A. Province
July	05-09	Colombian province
July	12-16	Mexican Province
July	19-21	G. Delegation of Canada
July	24-28	United States Province
July	31-04 August	Polish Province
August	06-08	G. Delegation of Silesia
August	13-17	G. Delegation of S. Benedict Menni, Africa
August	21-25	G. Delegation of St Richard Pampuri, Africa
August	27-31	Our Lady of Mercy Province, Africa.

3. CALENDAR OF PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS: 2010

February	15-18	English Province
February	22-26	Indian Province
March	01-05	Viet Nam Province
March	09-13	Australian Province
March	16-20	Korean Province
April	12-16	Rome Province
April	12-16	Aragon Province
April	12-16	Bavarian Province
April	19-23	Lombardy-Veneto Province
April	19-23	Bética Province
April	19-23	Austrian Province
April	26-30	Irish Province
April	26-30	Castile Province
May	03-07	French Province
May	03-07	Polish Province
May	10-14	Portuguese Province
May	10-14	United States Province
May	10-12	General Delegation of Silesia
May	18-20	General Delegation of Canada
May	24-28	Southern S. American Province
May	31-04 June	Northern S. American Province
May	31-04 June	Gen. Del. of St Benedict Menni, Africa
June	07-11	Colombian Province
June	15-19	Mexican Province
June	15-19	Gen. Del. of St Richard Pampuri, Africa
June	22-26	Our Lady of Mercy Province, Africa.

4. CANONICAL VISITATIONS

YEAR 2008

Our Lady of Mercy Province, Africa: 07.01 – 23.02, Closure: 25.02
Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel and Bro. Robert Chakana.

Bética Province: 10.03-26.04, Closure: 26.04
Brother Jesús Etayo

Lombardo-Veneto Province: 31.04-14.06, Closure: 14.06
Brother Elia Tripaldi.

Province of Mexico and Central America 07.04 - 10.05, Closure: 31.07
Brother Daniel Márquez

French Province: 05.05-06.06, Closure: 06.06
Brother Jesus Etayo

Polish Province: 19.05-28.06 Closure: 14.07
Brother Rudolf Knopp

G. Delegation of Silesia: 30.06 – Closure: 12.07
Brother Rudolf Knopp

Rome Province, 16.06-17.07, Closure: 19.07
Brother Elia Tripaldi

Colombian Province 12-05 - 14.06, Closure: 28.07
Brother Daniel Márquez

Prov. Delegation of Papua-New Guinea: 20.06-05.07. Closure: 05.07
Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel,

Australasian Province: 18-06 - 08-07 Closure: 08.07
Brother Donatus Forkan

Northern South American Province: 18.06 - 25.07. Closure: 25.07
Brother Daniel Márquez

Korean Province: 1.09-29.09. Closure: 29.09
Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel

YEAR 2009

Castile Province: 23.03 - 09-05 Closure: 09.05
Brother Jesús Etayo

YEAR 2011

Aragon Province: 07.01 - 26.02 Closure: 26.02

Brother Jesús Etayo

General Delegation of St Benedict Menni, Africa: 24.01 - 19.02. Closure: 19.02

Bros. Vincent Kochamkunnel and Robert Chakana

English Province: 01.02-12.02. Closure: 12.02

Brother Donatus Forkan

Bavarian Province: 07.02 - 26.03. Closure: 26.03

Brother Rudolf Knopp

General Delegation of Africa of S. Richard Pampuri: 01.03 - 19.03. Closure: 19.03

Bros Vincent Kochamkunnel and Robert Chakana

USA Province: 01.03 –12.03 Closure: 12.03

Brother Donatus Forkan

Irish Province: 01.06 - 01 .07. Closure: 01.07

Brother Donatus Forkan

Indian Province: 01.06-30.06. Closure: 13.08

Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel

Southern South American Province: 01.06 - 02.07. Closure: 09.07

Brother Daniel Márquez

General Delegation of Canada: 04.07-07.07. Closure: 07.07

Brother Daniel Márquez

Provincial Delegation of Japan: 04.07 –09.07. Closure: 10.08

Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel

Provincial Delegation of the Philippines: 11.07 - 16.07 Closure: 08.08

Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel

Viet Nam Province: 18.07 - 05.08 Closure: 05.08

Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel

Austrian Province 19.09- 12.11 Closure: 12.11

Brother Rudolf Knopp

Provincial Delegation of Brazil: 01.10-10.10. Closure: 10.10

Brother Jesús Etayo

Portuguese Province: 13.10 - 16.11. Closure: 16.11

Brother Jesús Etayo

5. GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF ANIMATION

- Europe Region: Bro. Rudolf Knopp and Bro. Jesús Etayo
- Asia-Pacific Region: Bro. Vincent Kochamkunnel and Bro. Donatus Forkan.
- Africa Region: Bro. Robert Chakana and Bro. Rudolf Knopp
- America Region: Bro. Daniel Márquez and Bro. Jesús Etayo

6. AREAS OF ANIMATION AND GOVERNANCE

Process of Renewal (the life of the Brothers, Co-workers, Formation, Vocations Promotion/Pastoral Care): Bro. Jesús Etayo

Animation of the three General Curia Communities: Bro. Jesús Etayo

Charismatic Management, Bursary, Cultural Heritage, Statistics and Administration, Tiber Island Hospital, the Nazareth Hospital: Bro. Rudolf Knopp.

Bioethics: Bro. Jesús Etayo and Bro. Elia Tripaldi

Pastoral Care of the Sick: Bro. Elia Tripaldi and Bro. Jesús Etayo

Postulator General: Bro. Félix Lizaso and Bro. Elia Tripaldi

Missions and International Cooperation: Bro. Vincent Kochamkunnel, Bro. Robert Chakana, and Bro. Daniel Márquez.

Information and Communication: Bro. Daniel Márquez and Bro. José María Chávarri.

Procurator General: Bro. José María Chávarri

Secretary General: Bro. José María Chávarri

7. MEETINGS OF MAJOR SUPERIORS

Year 2007:	26-30 November	General Meeting
Year 2008:	October – November	Regional Meeting
Year 2009:	9-22 November	Extraordinary General Chapter (Approbation of the New General Statutes)
Year 2010:	September	General Meeting
Year 2011:	April – May	Regional Meeting
Year 2012:	January – February	Regional Meeting

8. LXVII GENERAL CHAPTER

2012: 1 to 21 October in Latin America to

9. COURSE IN PREPARATION FOR SOLEMN PROFESSION

2008:	28 January - 09 March
2009:	02 February - 15 March
2010:	01 February - 14 March
2011:	31 January - 13 March
2012:	30 January - 11 March

Brother Donatus Forkan O.H. Prior General

Brother Donatus Forkan (William, Baptismal name) was born April 5th 1942 in Swinford, County Mayo, Ireland. (Diocese of Achonry). He has three brothers and one sister.

Brother Donatus entered the Juniorate in 1957 and made his First Profession on September 8th 1960 and Solemn Profession on the August 28th 1966.

Brother Donatus is a qualified nurse and is a graduate of the Order's International College in Rome. He also completed studies at The Franciscan College, Seoul, Republic of Korea and The Holy Ghost Missionary College, Kimmage Manor, Dublin, Ireland.

Brother Donatus lived twenty one years of his Hospitaller Vocation in Korea and had various responsibilities in Vocations Promotion, Formation and was Provincial Delegate from 1989 to 1992.

Brother Donatus was elected Provincial of the Province of the Immaculate Conception, Ireland in 1992 and in 1994 was elected General Councillor. He was re-elected General Councillor on the 18th of November 2000 and served as the First General Councillor for the last six years. Among his responsibilities as General Councillor, Brother Donatus was co-ordination of the Missions of The Order. He chaired the Hospitaller Youth Conference (Granada, November 2005) and the 2006 General Chapter Preparatory Committee.

Br. Rudolf KNOPP

Born at Kahl (Germany), 18th January 1958. Temporary profession 15th August 1981 and solemn profession 12th October 1986.

Br. Jesús ETAYO ARRONDO, priest

Born at Fustiñana – Pamplona (Spain) 26th May 1958. Temporary profession 29th September 1977 and solemn profession 12th October 1983. Ordained priest 21st September 1985.

Br. Vincent KOCHAMKUNNELL

Born at Mattakkara (India) 30th January 1959. Temporary profession 2nd February 1978 and solemn profession 25th August 1985.

Br. Elia TRIPALDI, priest

Born at Uggiano Montefusco - Taranto (Italy) 4th May 1939. Temporary profession 13th October 1957 and solemn profession 13th October 1963. Ordained priest 19th December 1970.

Br. Robert CHAKANA

Born at Lubwe (Zambia) 20th April 1960. Temporary profession 15th August 1992 and solemn profession 11th April 1999.

Br. Daniel Alberto MÁRQUEZ BOCANEGRA

Born at Bogotá (Colombia) 28th November 1960. Temporary profession 1st July 1984 and solemn profession 8th March 1991.

Br. José M. CHÁVARRI IMAÑA

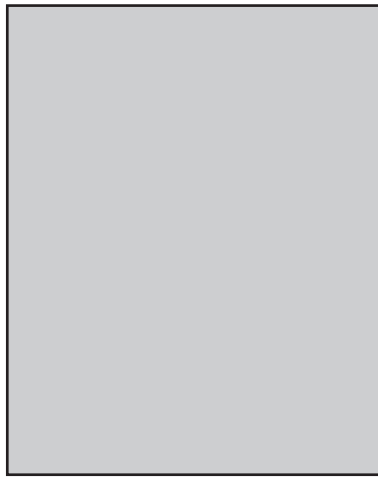
Born at Leiva (La Rioja, Spain) 19th September 1953. Temporary profession 29th September 1972 and solemn profession 24th September 1978.

Br. Gian Carlo LAPI , priest

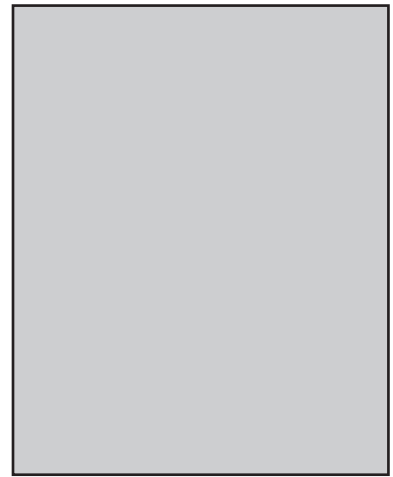
Born at Sinj (Croatia) 2nd April 1968. Temporary profession 9th February 1997 and solemn profession 6th October 2002. Ordained priest 9th October 2004.



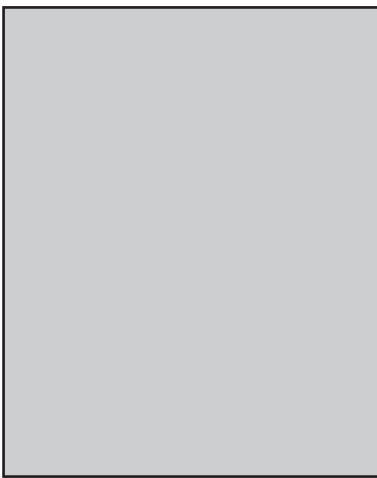
Brother Donatus Forkan,
Prior General



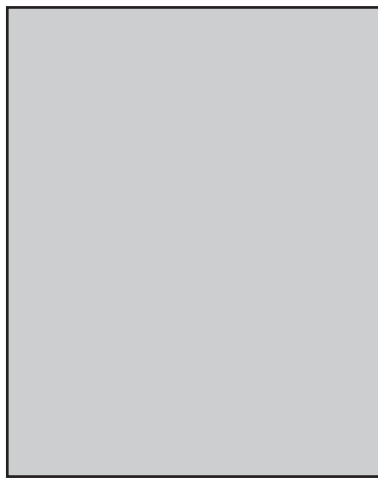
Brother Rudolph Knopp



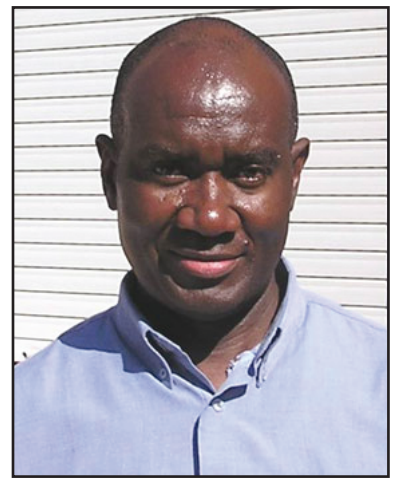
Brother Jesus Etayo



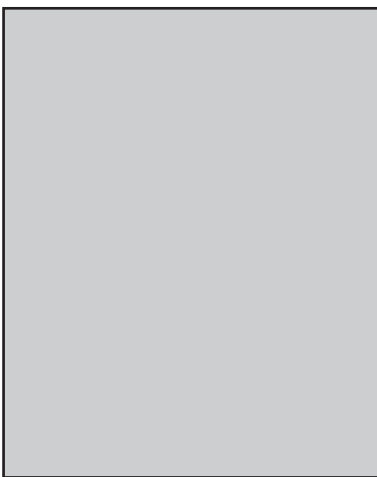
Brother Vincent Kochamkunnell



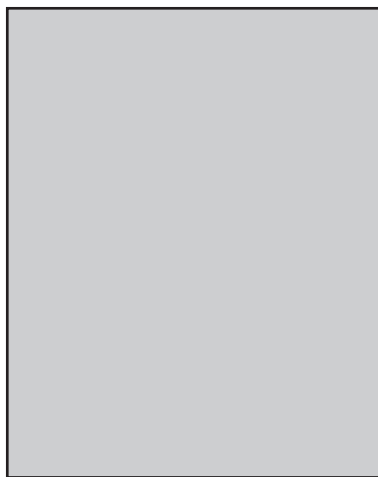
Brother Elia Tripaldi



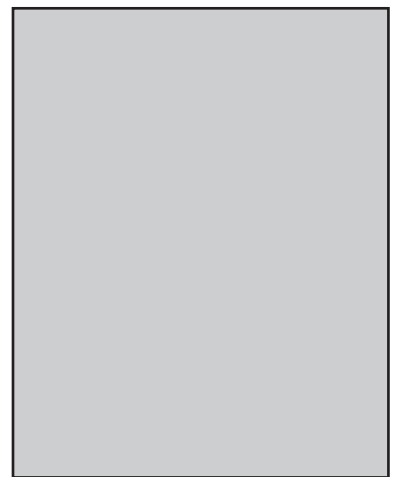
Brother Robert Chakana



Brother Daniel Marquez



Brother Josè Maria Chavarri



Brother Gian Carlo Lopic'