



ORDINE OSPEDALIERO | di
SAN GIOVANNI DI DIO

The Laudato Si Constellation

Towards an affirmation
of pastoral action

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Towards an affirmation of pastoral action

FOREWORD

The Hospitaller Order's General Commission for the Pastoral Care of the Sick and Social Pastoral Care has undertaken an exhaustive study of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* in the course of the present sexennium. We are convinced that this letter offers a vision of the future for the further development of pastoral care in the manner of Saint John of God.

This document has been written in collaboration with and under the direction of Professor Juan Ambrosio. It is intended, first and foremost, to serve as guidance for pastoral workers, placing the care of the people entrusted to them and of our "common home" at the very heart of their work.

Some "GPS coordinates" are listed in the final chapter to help steer us safely through the pastoral demands of our age, accompanying us along the path towards the purpose of all pastoral care work: to make God's love for people tangible and perceptible today.

OUR COMMON HOME

Only if we find the courage to unite around a common cause can the challenges confronting humanity today be addressed. Only a common cause, even if perceived from different perspectives and with different sensitivities, are able to unite the concerted efforts of our humanity in pursuit of a common project for the future.

In his address to the Interreligious Meeting during his historic visit to the United Arab Emirates, Pope Francis posed a number of important questions: "How do we look after each other in the one human family? How do we nourish a fraternity which is not theoretical but translates into authentic fraternity? How can the inclusion of the other prevail over exclusion in the name of belonging to one's own group? How, in short, can religions be channels of fraternity rather than barriers of separation?" In response to these



challenging questions, the Pope did not hesitate to assert: "There is no alternative: we will either build the future together or there will not be a future."¹

Christians and their communities cannot evade this challenge. We, too, are called upon to commit ourselves to this common cause, which we believe can be achieved in two broad areas: safeguarding **our common home** and promoting the **dignity of the common human being**.

This is the key to reading this moment in history, which also applies to the contemporary Church. At the beginning of Francis' pontificate, we were called to commit ourselves to renewing the Church, in a more missionary and synodal direction, so that the joy of the Gospel (the Good News) might reach all the vast human expanses (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013). We therefore began to better appreciate the fact that the reason for this exercise stemmed from the need for the Church to renew herself in order to be ever more faithful to her mission.

The commitment to care for our common home (Encyclical *Laudato si'*; the Exhortation *Dear Amazonia*, 2020 and the Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, 2023) and the promotion of universal fraternity (the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, 2020) are the mandatory embodiment of this fidelity to the mission.

Families (*Amoris Laetitia*, 2016), young people (*Christus Vivit*, 2019), the poor (whose World Day was to be celebrated from 2017 on the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time), grandparents and the elderly (whose World Day was to be celebrated from 2021 on the fourth Sunday in July close to the celebration of Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus) and children (called in 2023 to a world meeting on the theme "Let us learn from boys and girls") occupy a key position place in this mission.

Mercy (Jubilee Bull of Mercy, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 2015 and the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, 2016) and holiness (Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 2018) constitute the essential benchmark of this practice of caring, in which we are called to engage as Christians.

The *Economy of Francesco* (launched in 2019), the *Global Compact on Education* (launched in 2019), the *Laudato si'* Platform for Action (launched in 2021) and the *Family Global Compact* (launched in 2023) call on the most diverse sectors of the Church and society to commit to transforming the world, in order to shape a future where there is no room for surpluses and no discarded people.

Caring (Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*, 2020), paying attention to reality and everyday life (Apostolic Letter *Sublimitas et miseria hominis*, 2023, on the 400th anniversary of the birth of Blaise Pascal) and unconditional trust in the love of God, who sustains us to do great things in the smallest actions (Exhortation *C'est la confiance*, 2023, marking the

¹ The apostolic visit took place from 3 to 15 February 2019. His interfaith address was delivered at the Founder's Memorial in Abu Dhabi on 4 February. On this visit, Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib, signed the document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together".



150th anniversary of the birth of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus) are the "watermarks" that cannot be missing in any Christian action.

The whole of this journey must be embarked upon in communion, and with the participation of everyone (Synod 2021-2024, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*), as *Pilgrims of Hope* (2025 Jubilee).

This brief overview may help us to better grasp the importance of exercising care throughout the Francis' pontificate, and to perceive the contemporary relevance of the model of care proposed by Saint John of God, in which the human being is welcomed in, care for, and loved holistically.

As we read in *Pastoral Care in the Manner of Saint John of God*, "the times in which we are living give us the opportunity to offer a prophetic and practical witness in favour of human life and the dignity of the person, which is losing more and more connection. If we fail, our facilities and our co-workers will eventually lose their sensitivity and enthusiasm for a mission to promote the dignity and sanctity of human life".

Caring for the guests in our facilities entails adopting this global perspective, which is linked to this common cause as we understand it here. We are therefore convinced, as stated in the aforementioned text, "that the future of our Hospitaller Family's hospitality consists in fostering and promoting evangelisation and in placing greater emphasis on the therapeutic contribution of pastoral care in our centres and services as a personal good which always coincides with the person's overall well-being, and being for others and with others. Ensuring harmony of the human being with him/herself and with the world around them". To achieve this, the same text states, "we need trained people (ordained ministers, deacons, religious, co-workers, volunteers, etc.) and appropriate places for an authentic pastoral service, respecting the freedom of religious beliefs of each guest and his or her dignity".

The emerging future is revealing the importance of appreciating a charism that promotes warm hospitality. In this sense, the Charism of Hospitality is relevant today.

In the hospitaller and social field, working together is extremely important. In us, "relating" becomes a major instrument for generating and implementing all the interactions that make it possible to make ensure that the dignity of the human person and care for our common home become a tangible reality. The quality of relations is therefore what can consolidate a project which gives sense and meaning to our pastoral work.

THE COMMITMENTS OF LAUDATO SI' TO "ALL OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS" (Fratelli Tutti)

The Encyclical *Laudato Si'* offers Christians four commitments.



The first commitment frees us from any ideas, and above all, attitudes, that allow misunderstandings when we speak of human dignity, decisively demonstrating that dignity is inalienable for every person. One of the examples used here is the value of work. It asserts that *"Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment. Helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work."* [128]

The second commitment is to ensure the responsible use of the earth's resources, avoiding wasting resources and protecting the environment. In the face of the increasing degradation and visible deterioration of the biosystem that is planet Earth, this commitment compels us to change lifestyles, to undergo ecological conversion and to live with a new spirituality, relearning how the earth grows and gives life in an ecosystem of sharing. For the way we are living today is degrading the environment. Considering resources to be infinite and viewing the world as a commodity to be exploited leads us to misuse them. And this also means that even technological development takes no account of its harmful effects, not only on our human race itself, but on all forms of life.

The third commitment is to embrace a universal sense of the common good. This sense leads us to stop exploiting the earth and the species, and to place ourselves at the service of others, protecting and conserving the land. This sense of the common good reveals that every human being is dependent on other human beings, and on the environment that surrounds us, and that we are a part of it. From the earth we should only take what is right and necessary. And so with this understanding of what is meant by the common good there is a need for a spirituality that motivates concern and care for the world and for sharing with the most vulnerable people.

The fourth commitment is to adopt an integral ecological approach, which includes the social dimension, care, wonder and love for Creation. It entails understanding the human being in the world and terms of our relationship with the world surrounding us. This means that human beings and nature are interlinked and cannot be conceived of in isolation, including in our approach to every field (education, health, environment, the economy and politics). Environmental problems, such as air pollution, over-exploitation of soil or human conditions that perpetuate poverty, drug use, violence, corruption and crime, demonstrate the existence of interaction between ecosystems and the societal environments. For example, economic exploitation in one continent produces repercussions in other countries and often results in a failure to respect the environment and, above all, a breakdown in social cohesion. This is why integral ecology transcends nationalities and cultures and calls out for us to respect the identity of different places; it demands fraternity and respect for every human being, and it also requires us to live in harmony with Creation.

In addition to these four commitments, this integral ecological approach raises the need to consider four conversions which the Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* urges us to adopt in the form of dreams.



The Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, held in Rome from 6 to 27 October 2019, was not so much a Synod for a particular region as a reflection forum by a region, while taking account of the universality of the Church. That is why it was convened as an Extraordinary Assembly and not as a Regional Assembly. When we read in the *Instrumentum Laboris* that the Amazon is not only an *ubi* (a geographical space), but also a *quid*, that is, a place of meaning for faith (cf. n. 19); or when it states that listening to the voices of Amazonia can urge us to make a renewed response to diverse situations and to seek new paths that make possible a Kairos for the Church and for the world (cf. n. 147), this emerges quite evidently.

The title of this Special Synodal Assembly "Amazonia: New paths for the Church and for an integral ecology" reinforces the insights of this Pontificate that is calling us to renew the Church in order to take better care of humanity and the world.

Taking into account all the work done in the Synodal Assembly, Pope Francis issued the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, which was promulgated in Rome in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, on 2 February – the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord – in 2020, the seventh year of his Pontificate. In this text, Francis shares four dreams:

“ dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced. I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways. I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests. I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.” (n. 7)

Simply replacing the word ‘Amazon’ with the word 'Church' and the word 'world', it becomes easy to see that these dreams are not altered or impaired in any way.

These four dreams refer to the four conversions referred to in the Final Document of the Synodal Assembly and which are highlighted and explored further in four chapters under the following headings: New paths of pastoral conversion (chapter II); new paths of cultural conversion (chapter III); new paths of ecological conversion (chapter IV); new paths of synodal conversion (chapter V).

It is easy to see that what is dreamt of, as a proposal and a challenge to the Church and the world, presupposes the need to exercise care that requires these paths of conversion.

This being the case, it is evident that the field of social pastoral care and the pastoral care of the sick requires efforts to be made synergistically, reinforcing formation in the school of Christ and in the manner of the Holy Founder of the Order, in order to grow in humanity, to continue working and look compassionately at those who are suffering. This is the whole point of our mission, the mission of caring for people and all totality, and all their dimensions.



To undertake this mission, we must also anchor ourselves in the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. Being guided by this text we can see a paradigm shift becoming ever more necessary and relevant.

For, in contemporary societies, the imperative of production, of the most beautiful, the fittest, prevails. Success must be achieved at all costs and is the only yardstick. We dismiss and despise everything that is not productive or successful. For example, the ageing process is now seen as a personal issue, of managing one's own old age, trying to escape from it, instead of dealing with the sociological complexity of ageing societies. Once again, the throwaway path is inevitable, instead of an attitude of open universal fraternity and acceptance and love for each and every one of our brothers and sisters.

Christians must strive to anticipate the moment when they have to rethink their way of life, the way they establish and maintain relationships between people, the way they organise themselves in community and the meaning of their very existence. The wealthiest society is not the one with the highest GDP, the greatest number of millionaires, the highest level of individual happiness. The wealthiest society is one in which differences coexist, complement, enrich and enlighten each other. It is the one that manages to include the periphery and accommodate everyone.

This is clearly the way to understand that the four dreams mentioned above are now presented as one big and unique dream, capable of involving the whole of humanity in building up a different future:

"It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together". Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all." (*Fratelli tutti*, n. 8)

THE VULNERABILITY OF SICKNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Let us start with the vulnerability that arises as a result of sickness. Sickness is often seen as an "unexpected visitor", a reality in motion, often gradual, whose most general and constant feature is to provoke an imbalance in the functions of the organism, such that it threatens the harmony that defines the state of being healthy. When the imbalance is very significant, it threatens essential vital functions, including the danger of dying. Although this is not always the case, since for different diseases we must consider their severity, their prognosis (some are treatable and others are not) or even the type of treatments available from the time of diagnosis, sickness leads the individual to a state of collapse. The patient remains alive, firstly, depending on the diagnosis, then depending on the



evolution of the illness, but fundamentally always dependent on an unknown future. This state of uncertainty gives rise to a series of reactions that become a kind of biographical x-ray of those affected. The experience of sickness is always an experience of meaning. Basically, it means being in a situation in which people realise that their existence is finite, powerless and fragile. Being ill is fundamentally a social conditioning of everyday life, rather than the narrow definition of the body's biochemical dysfunction.

Faced with this situation, caring means trying to reintegrate a metaphysical perspective that not only allows us to adopt empathetic attitudes, words and actions that offer the patient the greatest possible comfort (Strauss et al., 1895), but it also enables us to focus on the information provided by the patients and their histories. This approach means that the time of caring is a time of interaction and moral rules, which prevents us from viewing the patient as an object. It is a time of trust, or a time to give the patient a hand again, to get to know their biography, to recognise their identity by deepening the relationship, identifying the real situation and context without illusions and pretence.

In the matter of social exclusion, the Hospitaller Order's particular focus is on responding to excluded and homeless people. So who are these people we serve? Despite all the initiatives that have been taken to combat poverty, exclusion and homelessness, this fight has been very difficult, to the point of calling into question the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that we all grow up free and equal in dignity and rights. On the other hand, there is a progressive widening of the gap between rich and poor, between the developed and the developing world. This gap is not only about economic factors and income levels, but also about access to health, education, food and housing. All these factors make it impossible for millions of people around the world to enjoy a dignified existence and full citizenship.

In addition to poverty, let us also examine social exclusion, that is to say, an extreme breakdown at the level of the family and emotional relationships, as well as the labour market or other forms of exclusion (Castel, 1998). Like poverty, social exclusion is also a complex phenomenon, far beyond the breakdowns mentioned by this author. Indeed, it is a multidimensional phenomenon that must be considered in the light of local, national and global contexts.

In the case of homelessness,² in addition to the lack of physical shelter, there is also a lack of social, occupational, economic, family and psychological protection. Disruption is always present and is often associated with consumption (of alcohol and/or drugs or any other type of new dependencies). It is not a choice, but a circumstance forced on them by their situation: the most vulnerable have a higher risk of living on the street, such as the unemployed, immigrants, people addicted to drugs, alcohol or other dependencies, ethnic minorities, women victims of domestic violence, war veterans, children, people with mental illnesses, to name a few.

² The term Homeless is always used to refer to those who lack a home, a place they can identify with and belong to. These are 'rough sleepers' living on the streets.

These are the environments, listed here in general terms, in which the people we serve in the social services of the Hospitaller Order live.

STARTING FROM THE COMMON HOME AND THE COMMON HUMAN BEING: FEATURES OF CARE

This papal Encyclical, and the whole constellation around it, has highlighted the need to listen to the different forms of human suffering and vulnerability. This emphasis, while not new, does offer a new perspective and a new way of looking at human beings and their environment through biblical eyes and statements about Creation. Indeed, today's demands are forcing health professionals to spend their available time on mechanical and repetitive tasks that follow a rationale of production: performing hygiene, distributing medicines, food, examinations and therapies, treating wounds, checking vital indicators, recording and sharing information about the next shift. This mechanisation of work requires the health professions to be scientific, exact, like engineering or mathematics. Today, statistics takes precedence over what should be profoundly human.

Gone are the days of general practitioners, whose almost priestly mission led the doctor to look at the patient in context, to view the patient generously and humanely. It was important for the doctor to know the patient, to know the person. Paracelsus (Swiss physician, 1493-1541) said that the basis of medicine is love. On this basis, good techniques or technology availability will not suffice: it is important for health care provision to include contexts, narratives, values and experiences, in an environment that not only helps to ease a critical and acute situation or to find a remedy, but which fosters care when a cure is no longer possible, and which comforts when death is inevitable.

The same is true in the social field. The poor become a statistic that makes the headlines when the media agenda permits. Either it is about a nice social project, or a flagship cause, for which to compete for possible funding, or for which a fundraising campaign is launched, leaving the social responsibility for it with its sponsors.

Will we be able to assist the suffering, the sick or the socially excluded in a humane and holistic manner?

The Order's care facilities must offer a "new home" to those who come to them, a place that is suitable and focused on the person being cared for. Pierluigi Marchesi said that, to be humanised, the facility must be open, have a transparent and well-defined line of command, based on teamwork, with a permanent sense of formation and learning (the patient as a university), and at the same time be a "family home".

This "family home", this "new home", has a parallel with the "common home" and has an anthropological meaning. One author has said that, "There are two situations which a life cannot do without if it is to be human and fulfilled: a love to which to give oneself and a home to receive, welcome and shelter those who have blossomed from this love, a love and a place where to feel loved and where to practise hospitality towards the loved



one. Home and love cannot be dissociated, so inextricable is their relationship". The displacement of certain stages in life, namely, the beginning and the end, to the place we call "hospital", means that here, too, life is lived emotionally, given care and protection, a place that calms fears and offers a sense of security.

This writer also mentions the fact that there is a place in the house to which Jesus, in the Gospel narrative, attaches particular importance. That place is the door. Vaz says: "At the door, the house opens up to receive people and they welcome us. The door opens the entrance and allows people to exit. It relaxes the constraints and limitations of the house. Thanks to the door, the house becomes bigger than its problems, giving them a way out and a solution."³

The image of the door reveals the importance of hospitality. Hospitality must stand on two fundamental pillars: receptivity and activity. By being receptive, we are ready to see life from other angles, taking a different perspective from the one we had until the moment of reception, seeing the world in a different way. Being receptive means being able to understand reality from the viewpoint of the person being hosted. The second pillar is activity, through which we can offer the person we are hosting different alternatives that allow them to forge new connections, new more comprehensive and inclusive approaches to the challenges they are facing.

THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING THE *LAUDATO SI'* 'CONSTELLATION' A PASTORAL REALITY IN THE CARE CENTRES OF THE HOSPITALLER ORDER

Let us begin with the words of Leonardo Boff: "*Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*", a cry that also reverberates loudly throughout the *Laudato si'* constellation.

St John of God heard the cry of the earth: he ministered to the poor and vulnerable in the city of Granada. He gave substance to the commitments we are now reviewing in the papal Encyclical: the unequivocal principle of human dignity, the responsible use of the earth's resources, the adoption of a universal awareness of the common good and an integral ecological vision, looking at the human being as a whole, attending to their needs, body and soul, putting hospitality into practice, in imitation of the Good Samaritan.

We are living in an age in which it is necessary to reconfigure what it means to be "human", based on the challenge posed by the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*: to establish a new relationship with nature. This challenge therefore calls for an integral ecology, that is to say, a model of social justice, which is important for social pastoral care and which promotes the values of justice, respect and responsibility.

In this sense, viewing the earth as a common good must be developed within a specific spirituality, which has learning and sharing as its pillars. Through it we relearn how the earth continues to breathe, grows and gives life to all living beings. We then share this gift of the Creator with our brothers and sisters, who live with us in our common home. This is how the Hospitaller Order has to be, transmitting hospitality in the manner of St

³ Ibid., p. 91.



John of God, so that the spirituality of St John of God may continue to spread, nourish and sustain our world.

The Founder of the Hospitaller Order, in his third letter to the Duchess of Sesa, unveils his spiritual testament. In the language of his age, he expresses "contemporary insights" which shed light on the challenges of the present age.

“ This cloth has four corners for the four virtues that go together with the above-mentioned three: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. Prudence teaches us to act prudently and wisely in everything we must do and think, seeking the advice of those who are older, because they know more than we do. Justice means being just and allotting to each person what is his: give to God everything that is of God and to the world what is of the world. Temperance teaches us to use moderation and sobriety in our use of food, drink, clothing and all the other things needed for the care of the human body. Fortitude means that we must be strong and constant in serving God, greeting trial, tribulation and sickness with the same smiling face as if they were prosperity and joy, and offering our thanks to Jesus Christ for them all alike.”⁴

CONTRIBUTION TO A PASTORAL GEOGRAPHY

For sick and vulnerable people, the Hospitaller Order's care centres must be places offering hospitality and recognition,⁵ in other words, communities of interrelationships that help and guide the person in one (or several) stages of his or her life's journey. As such, they must guarantee support when experiencing the vulnerability brought about by sickness and become a place of compassion and communication, where everyone can draw closer to the purpose of their existence. In this sense, the pastoral context must provide places of ontological contemplation⁶: on the one hand, contemplation itself is a way of relating to the environment; on the other hand, it makes it possible for the meaning we give to our existence to become aligned with a higher order of existence.

What, then, should this "Geography of the Pastoral Care of the Sick" (GPS) be based on?

⁴ Saint John of God, 3rd Letter to the Duchess of Sesa, no. 11.

⁵ Lluís Duch, in Ambrosio, Juan (2023). La dimensión religiosa y la condición humana.

⁶ 'Ontological contemplation' is a free translation of the English term 'Wonder'. To better understand this concept, the author cites the Indian tradition as an example. Here, wonder is the reaction to the opportunity to witness the divine in a phenomenon of exaltation. It is closely related to the Darshan (Sanskrit word meaning "divine presence") tradition, the ritual act of seeing one's own divinity. This act is believed to transcend the traditional division between subjective and objective experience, including participation in the essence and nature of the divine basis of a particular person or object. It takes the individual beyond his or her individuality to participate in the ontologically greater whole.



1st GPS coordinate: Lk 14:12-14 (Choosing the guests)

MEANING. The social meaning of existence: we offer a bespoke response for each individual we host. When appropriate, in order to enhance the relational dimension, we share activities: convivial moments and celebrations. But as a goal, there must always be an experience of meaning, an experience of purpose, which enhances the identity of those we host.

One of the core motivations in St John of God was his desire to "do good, and do it well"; linking his work to a purpose, a transcendent experience that gives meaning to the entire spectrum of people's relationships. This is how he put it in his First Letter to the Duchess of Sesa:

“Everything passes away except for good works”.⁷

2nd GPS coordinate: Mk 3,31-35 (Jesus’ Family)

FRATERNITY. The fraternal dimension of spirituality: pastoral care must form the setting that fosters a spirituality that contemplates a fraternal dimension, seeking in others the figure of Jesus, treating everyone equally, with a clearly defined meaning.

Fraternity is part of having opted for hospitality. The charism is attractive when it is present in our structures, processes and people.

The Founder of the Hospitaller Order offered his place as the "new home" for sharing fraternity:

“The house is open to you. I should like to see you go from good to better, as a son and brother.”⁸

3rd GPS Coordinate: Mt 25:40-45 (In so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me)

DIGNITY. The conviction of the inalienable dignity of every person. It is this conviction that underpins all pastoral work. We must uphold a sense of transcendent dignity, without a hierarchy of care, because we are all the people of God.

⁷ Saint John of God, First Letter to the Duchess of Sesa, no. 6.

⁸ Saint John of God, Letter to Louis Baptist, no. 11.



The present time is offering an opportunity to bear tangible witness to respect for human life, for the dignity of every person and for the care of our common home.

Seeing God's presence in history, in the face of each person, is the way in which we express our Hospitaller identity:

“ If we reflected on the breadth of God's mercy, we would never cease doing good while we were able because, while for his love we give the poor what he himself gives us, he promises to reward us one hundredfold in the joy of heaven. What a happy reward and exchange!”⁹

4th GPS coordinate: Jn 15, 12-14 (A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends)

LOVE. Motivation to love and welcome in everyone. Pastoral care is for everyone, it welcomes everyone. In addition to the people cared for in the Order's centres, the beneficiaries of our care are also their families and co-workers involved in other areas of care, who are often overlooked when we are overworked.

John of God bequeathed to us a model for accompanying every person who suffers:

“Always have charity, for where there is no charity God is not there – even though God is everywhere.”¹⁰

According to this model, every human being living in our common home must be cared for in lovingly and holistically. These same criteria are the benchmark we must use to care for our planet.

5th GPS coordinate GPS: Mt 5,3-12 (The Beatitudes)

COMMITMENT. Creating a pastoral care ministry that actively advocates on behalf of the poorest, the victims of inequalities, the most needy and those deprived of their fundamental social rights. Pastoral care should be a point of reference for the accompaniment of people in vulnerable situations.

Juan Ciudad became aware of the importance of providing a service to the sick and the poorest. Through his experience, he developed the capacity to respond in a timely manner to concrete needs, in spite of adverse circumstances:

“and I am also very unhappy when I see so many poor people (who are my brothers and neighbours) suffering and in great need in both body and soul, and I cannot help them.

⁹ Saint John of God, First Letter to the Duchess of Sesa, no. 13.

¹⁰ Saint John of God, Letter to Luis Bautista, no. 15.



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Nevertheless, I trust solely in Jesus Christ, who will bring me out of debt, for he knows my heart.”¹¹

Commitment to the most vulnerable and care for our common home are realities that are becoming ever more apparent. For us, they are constituent parts of our mission in the 21st century.

DOCUMENT OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK AND SOCIAL PASTORAL CARE

Under the supervision of Prof. Juan Ambrosio (Catholic University of Portugal - Faculty of Theology)

General Objective: To apply the principles of *Laudato si'* to the Pastoral Care of the Sick and Social Pastoral Care in the Hospitaller Order.

Specific Objective: To create a guide for the reading of the Encyclical with an essentially pragmatic approach, applied to our pastoral care of the sick and social pastoral care.

It is intended to serve as a handbook on how to apply *Laudato si'* in our pastoral care work.

¹¹ Saint John of God, Second Letter to Gutierre Lasso, no. 8.