



Rome 11 June 2021
Prot. N. PG030/2021

**To the Provincial Superiors,
all the brothers of the Order and
the whole Family of St. John of God**

Dear Brothers and Co-workers, and Members of the Hospitaller Family of Saint John of God,

I am writing to convoke the Provincial Chapters pursuant to the provisions of no. 92 of the Constitutions and no. 133 of the General Statutes.

For the Provincial Chapters,¹ which are a very important event in the life of the provinces, we have chosen the title: "**Go forth with passion to promote Hospitality**", the same motto adopted by the General Definitory for the current Sexennium.

The Provincial Chapters offer a special moment of synodality with the participation of the brothers and the members of the Hospitaller Family of St. John of God of the Province, making it necessary to plan and foster the active participation of the brothers and Partners in the Chapters, as nos. 93 of the Constitutions, and 98 and 102b of the General Statutes require.

I would also like to remind you that no. 133c of the General Statutes permit any Province, at its discretion, to convene a Pre-Chapter Assembly attended by the Capitulars and other Brothers and Co-workers, invited by the Provincial Definitory.

For the preparation and celebration of the Provincial Chapters, you must comply with the General Curia Document entitled **GUIDANCE FOR THE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS Criteria and Guidelines**. This document was sent to the Provincial Superiors some time ago. If any Province needs a fresh copy, please apply to the General Secretariat.

Since the beginning of 2020 we have been suffering from the coronavirus pandemic all over the world. With the arrival of vaccines, it is gradually being overcome, albeit unevenly, and we are not completely certain that next year it will all be behind us. It is very likely that some restrictions will remain in place, and that in some places it will still not be possible to travel or to hold meetings beyond a limited number of people.

¹ Cf. Constitutions, 90-91

For this reason, the proposed timetable for the 2022 Provincial Chapters will be as shown in the attached document, subject to the pandemic conditions at the time. While we hope that everything can be done as planned, some Chapters may have to be postponed to a later date. We will certainly not know this before the end of this year. On the other hand, and even though the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has just announced the possibility of holding the Chapters online as an extraordinary measure, following a complex procedure, the General Definitory prefers all Provincial Chapters be held in person, even if some of them may have to be postponed for a few months.

The attached document with the calendar of the Provincial Chapters also names the President of each Provincial Chapter who will be accompanied by one or two General Councillors, whose names are also shown there.

Following the unification of the Latin America and Caribbean Provinces and Delegations and of the Spanish Provinces in January and March 2021, both Provinces will be holding their first Provincial Chapters.

At the forthcoming Provincial Chapters and during their preparation, we must bear in mind two recent fundamental events which must mark the life of our Provinces and of our Order: firstly, the Declarations of the 69th General Chapter held in Rome at the beginning of 2019, and secondly, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on each of the provinces, on our personal and community life, on our mission of Hospitality and on the future of the life of the province.

The Declarations of the last General Chapter posed several vitally important challenges for our Order and for each Province relating above all to charismatic revitalisation, the spiritual and community life of the brothers, initial and continuing formation, the commitment to make our Houses safe spaces, especially for vulnerable people, showing care for the Earth and the environment, and the future of each Province. The Provincial Chapters, both in their preparatory phase and when they are in session, must address these issues, especially as they relate to the future of each Province. As on other occasions, we urge you to conduct joint reflections, and hold meetings of two or more Provinces to examine these issues together. I urge all of you to bear in mind Pope Francis' address to the participants at the last General Chapter, which will be of great help to the Chapters.

The pandemic has once again exposed the fragility and vulnerability of the foundations on which our world, our institutions and men and women depend. Suffering, loneliness, and death have dealt a very severe blow to so many people, families, and friends, as well as members of our Hospitaller Family, with enormous social, economic, ethical, and spiritual repercussions. This situation must also be part of the diagnosis and of the hospitality project of each Province and of the Order as a whole. Faced with these facts, we must lift up our heads and must keep alive the hope and the dream of hospitality in the manner of St. John of God, because the Lord is coming with us in the same boat.

I would like to remind you that all the Provincial Chapters must submit the document on their Province's the Stable Patrimony, pursuant to no. 159d of the General Statutes. All the Provinces are therefore asked to send the draft version of this document to the General Curia by 1 December 2021 for prior examination.

The Provincial Chapters are a powerful spiritual occasion, an opportunity to listen to the Holy Spirit, to discern synodically the state of the province and to draft a mission and life project for the coming years. It demands study and preparation, to avoid falling into generic proposals lacking in any transformational power. It is not sufficient merely to organise the Chapter as an event; the Chapter must be "a fresh

beginning", offering a global project for the whole Province. A Chapter must be a group of "seekers of the contemporary relevance of our charism", supported and sustained by the whole Province which is also in search of this "newness".²

I urge all the members of our Hospitaller Family of Saint John of God to prepare the forthcoming Provincial Chapters with hope and commitment, trusting that our Lord and Saint John of God will help us to find the new pathways which each Province must follow in the present times, faithful to the charism and mission of Hospitality, to continue to glorify God in serving the sick and the neediest people.

Having received this official convocation, you can now call the elections in the manner approved by the previous Provincial Chapter, in compliance with the provisions of the Order's "Handbook",³ paying special attention to no. 136c of the General Statutes on the consultation which must take place before the Chapter for the election of the Provincial Superior. If a Provincial Chapter must be postponed for the above-mentioned reasons, the election of the vocals to attend Chapter, as well as the consultative vote for the Provincial Superior, will remain valid for whatever new date may have been set for the celebration of the Provincial Chapter.

Let us commit the Provincial Chapters of our Order to our Lord, coinciding with the 450th anniversary of the promulgation of the Bull *Licet ex debito*, by which St. Pius V approved our Institute. Let us all take up the intentions of the Provincial Chapters in our prayers from now on, so that through the intercession of Our Lady of the Patronage and St. John of God, they may be a time of grace and of new life for the whole Order and each of its Provinces.

United always in our Lord and in St. John of God.



Brother Jesús Etayo
Superior General

² Cf. García Paredes, Cristo Rey. Capítulos Generales para un nuevo comienzo. Vida Religiosa. Monográfico 5/2020/vol.128. Madrid. Págs 7-8

³ Reference Handbook. Chapter II: Elections and appointments, 3) Election of vocals to the Provincial Chapter. We would remind you that all professed brothers in both solemn and simple vows have the right and obligation to participate in voting at this election in their respective Provinces (*EG* n. 98 § a), **except** those who for whatsoever reason, are deprived of **active** voice. Solemnly professed Brothers who for some reason have been deprived of active voice for whatsoever reason may not be elected (Cf. Handbook, 1.3 and 3.2).