

HOSPITALLER MISSIONARY WEEK
18-24th October 2010

UNIVERSAL CHURCH WATCHWORD :

We wish to see Jesus

INSTITUTIONAL WATCHWORD:

Hospitality: Conviction and Commitment



PRESENTATION

“We wish to see Jesus.” (Jn 12.21)

“ Hospitality: Conviction and Commitment”

Once again this year we wish to invite the Brothers, Sisters and the Co-workers to take part in a Week of Missionary Sensitisation and Prayer, experienced through Hospitality.

At the same time let us join with the whole Church with the watchword “We wish to see Jesus” which invites us to expand this desire, to wish to see Him, in the hope of becoming more closely acquainted with Him, and to believe in and walk with Him.

“We wish to see Jesus” was what some Greeks said one day to the apostles, wishing to know who Jesus was, where He came from, where He lived, etc.

And this desire to see Jesus still remains latent in the Church and in our Hospitaller Family. We cannot therefore stifle or avoid this desire, but must give it a new lease of life.

We are called to experience an encounter with Him with a great sense of hope, from two points of view: firstly, God came out to meet us and expects us to reach out to Him and to devote personal time to Him every day, a few moments alone with Him, like a meeting between bosom friends. Secondly, this intimate meeting must take us out to meet our suffering brothers and sisters, convinced in our own minds that, **“as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me”** (Mt 25, 40), and on the basis of our institutional commitment, **“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”** (cf. Const, OH, 6; HSC 9).

The celebration of this Hospitaller-Missionary Week of Prayer offers us an opportunity to back up our commitment as Christians, as Hospitallers, Brothers and Sisters alike, to those brothers and sisters who lack the very basics they need for their survival. We are being called to pray “in season and out of season”; but that in itself is not enough. We have to enter into undertakings which involve other areas of our lives. It is the time we have to ask ourselves individually what commitments we are ready and willing to take upon ourselves, in order to actively cooperate with our brethren in the less fortunate countries, and what actions we can perform, individually or collectively, to involve others in missionary animation and commitment.

Practising hospitality in the 21st century will only be feasible if we are seriously committed and determined to build a more humane and committed world possible, with greater solidarity: in other words, a more HOSPITALLER world, as John of God and St Benedict Menni did at the very beginning of their work, and which so many Brothers, Sisters and Co-workers are still doing today, in their desire to see Jesus, fashioning their work with conviction and commitment in generous and creative Hospitality.

In the hope that thanks to everyone playing their part we shall be able to achieve new goals in our Missionary-Hospitaller commitment.

With our best wishes, united in prayer, in the mission and in fraternity.



Monday, 18 h: The Feast of St Luke: HOSPITALITY – A SHARED GIFT

Institutional text

John of God shared the gift that he had received with all kinds of different people who felt attracted and influenced by the way he lived Christianity and his love for the needy: simple people who joined him to help to serve, anonymous benefactors, and members of the aristocracy who supported him with their wealth, priests who cooperated with him to provide spiritual assistance to those who were hospitalised, and many other volunteers, physicians and individuals who cared for the sick with him and with the Brothers.

The gift of hospitality in the manner of John of God has always continued to spread, even to those who are not always animated by the values of the Christian faith. The charism that has been handed down has spread with remarkable creativity, giving rise to many achievements meeting the needs of different times and places. We are becoming increasingly more acutely aware that the charism of hospitality in the manner of John of God transcends the Brothers who have made their profession in the Order. We are continuing to move forward with a new vision of the Order as a "family", and we welcome the possibility of sharing our charism, spirituality and mission with others, as a "family". This situation, which has only very slowly gathered strength, is a challenge to us to identify so closely with our mission that our Co-workers feel animated to do likewise. (cf. the Path of Hospitality in the Manner of St John of God: 32 and 33).

Another text: cf. The Hospitaller Mission, Good News, HSC Sisters, Nos. 25 and 27.

Social text

Despite the fact that international society offers fragmentary aspects, expressed in terms of the conventional names of First, Second, Third and also Fourth worlds, global interdependence remains as deep as ever, and when it is separated from ethical demands it has a fatal consequences on the weakest. Moreover, this interdependence, through a kind of interior dynamics of its own, and driven by mechanisms which cannot be called anything other than perverse, is giving rise to harmful effects even in the wealthy countries. It is precisely in these rich countries that, albeit to a lesser degree, we find the most specific signs of underdevelopment. It should therefore be made widely known that either development is converted into the common good in every part of the world, or it leads to backwardness even in areas which are noticeably advancing. This phenomenon is particularly indicative of the nature of genuine development: either all the nations in the world participate in it or it will certainly not be authentic. (Cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, No. 17).

Let us pray with Africa

Cross continents, go to Africa, praying, learning, welcoming in its *joie de vivre*. Africa will offer you a welcome and hospitality, its simplicity, its dance rhythms and its sense of celebration, its confidence in daily life. Lord we thank you for this path forward. Lord we thank you for Africa.

Amen.

Institutional text

Jesus frees the sick from attitudes which could paralyse their personal rehabilitation.

Jesus' hospitality rebuilds the person and frees the person for life, for communication. His work impacted on the social-political and religious structures of his age. He not only criticised the causes of marginalisation which left the sick unprotected and abandoned, but he proclaimed and defended the rights of the sick even to the point of infringing the law.

Through our Charism we are called to be a prophetic presence in serving and giving ourselves to those who are experiencing marginalisation and poverty today. The sick help us to discover new horizons for the mission, and they challenge us to develop responses which are sign of the kingdom. ("Pastoral care in the world of psychological suffering", Sisters Hospitallers, pp. 28-39; The Hospitaller Mission, Good News, HSC Sisters, No. 30).

Another text: cf. Do not forget hospitality", PPC, 2004, Francesc Torralba, pp. 169-170.

The social teaching of the Church

We must make haste. Too many people are suffering. While some make progress, others stand still or move backwards; and the gap between them is widening. However, the work must proceed in measured steps if the proper equilibrium is to be maintained. Makeshift agrarian reforms may fall short of their goal. Hasty industrialization can undermine vital institutions and produce social evils, causing a setback to true human values. (cf. Populorum Progressio, No. 29, Encyclical letter by Pope Paul VI).

Let us pray with America

Cross continents, go to America, praying, gathering information. America will help you to understand that life is a struggle and that the Gospel is the weapon of justice. It will communicate its faith to you, its value and its tenacious determination to liberate all men and women. O Lord we thank you for this path. O Lord we thank you for America. **Amen.**

Institutional text

We must: humanize ourselves in order to humanize others: to be witnesses of holiness in terms of the radicalism of the Beatitudes following the example of St John of God a poor man amongst the poor, a servant and a prophet.

We must put across our hospitality culture as an alternative to the hostility culture which is not only increasingly dominating relations between peoples, nations and ethnic groups, but also interpersonal relations. We must demonstrate a new capacity towards receptiveness and welcome, creating communities of open faith that will be inviting to all those who have relations with us: the sick, their relatives, co-workers, and friends. Every centre must be a small domestic Church that can create Christian communion in which all share each other's joys and sorrows. Today, more than ever before, the Brothers of St John of God is called to be a witness of God "Lover of life", in all his human relations, merging with his own people and through his presence making the land welcoming and man truly human. (Charter of Hospitality, 4.5.2).



Another text: Cf. Charism and Hospitality, Sisters Hospitallers, pp. 95 and 96

The Church's social teaching

True mercy is, so to speak, the most profound source of justice. If justice is in itself suitable for "arbitration" between people concerning the reciprocal distribution of objective goods in an equitable manner, love and only love (including that kindly love that we call "mercy") is capable of restoring man to Himself.

Mercy that is truly Christian is also, in a certain sense, the most perfect incarnation of "equality" between people, and therefore also the most perfect incarnation of justice as well, insofar as justice aims at the same result in its own sphere. However, the equality brought by justice is limited to the realm of objective and extrinsic goods, while love and mercy bring it about that people meet one another in that value which is man himself, with the dignity that is proper to him. (cf. Dives in Misericordia, No. 14).

Let us pray with Asia

Cross continents. Go to Asia, praying, gathering information, and welcoming its mystery. Asia will teach you to discover the depths of yourselves in order to discover God and yourself. Asia will teach you the value of silence, self-domination, patience and serenity. O Lord we thank you for this path. O Lord we thank you for Asia.

Amen

Jueves dia 21: HOSPITALITY: FAITHFUL TO OUR COMMITMENT

Institutional text

Fidelity to the vocation we have received is possible thanks to the unchanging faithfulness of God. He has chosen us to reproduce the image of his Son, and thus enriched us with the gifts of the spirit, as a guarantee of the irreversible nature of his love and his call.

This attitude on God's part requires of us a response of unbroken faithfulness:

- - to God himself, living in communion with him and carrying out his will;
- - to ourselves, nurturing and developing the gifts we have received;
- - to our Brothers, helping them to reach their full development;
- - to the Church, carrying out our mission in accordance with the charism we have been given;
- to the sick and those in need, offering them our service as a manifestation of God's love for them.

We are aware that in living out the gift we have received we are conditioned by our human frailty and by an environment which continually urges us to accept values foreign to the Gospel.

This leads us to live in an attitude of constant humility and conversion, accepting the need for personal self-denial as a means of cultivating fidelity. (Cf. Constitutions OH, Nos. 101 - 102).

Another text: Cf. Const. HSC 2; 5 and 12



Text from the social teaching of the Church

Development of the individual necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of the human race as a whole. At Bombay We said: "Man must meet man, nation must meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God. In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race." We also urge men to explore concrete and practicable ways of organizing and coordinating their efforts, so that available resources might be shared with others; in this way genuine bonds between nations might be forged. (Populorum Progressio, No. 43. Encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI).

Let us pray with Oceania

Cross continents, go to Oceania, praying, gathering information. Then you will understand your thirst for God, which is so real. In this continent made up of islands of a thousand hues and colours, languages and cultures, you will understand your concern for unity and reconciliation. O Lord, we thank you for this path. O Lord we thank you for Oceania.

Amen

Friday 22TH: HOSPITALITY: DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Institutional text

True fidelity to our charism requires us to preserve the identity of our Congregation, as well as being open to new forms of Hospitaller apostolate according to different circumstances of time and place. To properly read the signs of the times, the needs of men and women and the love which the Father has poured out into our hearts will help us to discern the spheres of action of our Institute. (cf. HSC, No. 66 Const. and Directory).

Another text: cf. The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of St John of God, No. 34.

Social text

Development cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man. As an eminent specialist on this question has rightly said: "We cannot allow economics to be separated from human realities, nor development from the civilization in which it takes place. What counts for us is man—each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole."

Those of you who have heard the cries of needy nations and have come to their aid ... are the promoters and apostles of genuine progress and true development. Genuine progress does not consist in wealth sought for personal comfort or for its own sake; rather it consists in an economic order designed for the welfare of the human person, where the daily bread that each man receives reflects the glow of brotherly love and the helping hand of God.

(Cf. Populorum Progressio Nos. 14 and 86. Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI).

Let us pray with Europe

Cross continents, go to Europe, this continent on the move, rich in political, cultural, economic and religious diversity. Praying and gathering information you will understand your thirst for reaching out to the universal. O Lord we thank you for this path. O Lord we thank you for Europe.

Amen.



Institutional text

Mary, who protects and looks with pleasure on our Congregation, is the first Hospitaller. She received Jesus in her womb and accompanied him even to the cross. She leads us to the source of living water which springs up in the Heart of Christ, and clothes us with sincere compassion, so that we can take her maternal love to those who are suffering. She teaches us to discover the needs of others, even when they themselves do not disclose them, and to deal with them effectively. From her fortitude and perseverance at the foot of the cross we learn to stay close to the sick person until the end.



She is a model of humility, of readiness to fulfil the Father's will, to show gratitude for his mercy and goodness and carefully listening to the Word, and the love which frees us and announces the kingdom to the poorest and the needy. (Cf. Const. 68, HSC; Charism and spirituality, Sisters Hospitallers, page 140).

Another text: cf. "Do not forget hospitality", PPC, 2004, Francesc Torralba, pp. 117-121.

Social text

The Church's love of preference for the poor is wonderfully inscribed in Mary's Magnificat. The God of the Covenant, celebrated in the exultation of her spirit by the Virgin of Nazareth, is also he who "has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly, ...filled the hungry with good things, sent the rich away empty, ...scattered the proud-hearted...and his mercy is from age to age on those who fear him." Mary is deeply imbued with the spirit of the "poor of Yahweh," who in the prayer of the Psalms awaited from God their salvation, placing all their trust in him. (Cf. Redemptoris Mater Redemptoris Mater No. 37).

Let us pray with young people

Lord God, Our Father, the Father of young people, today we commend into your hands all the young people in the world. May they discover that what is most important is not to be more, to have more, to be given more power, but to serve others more. Teach them the truth which liberates them, which breaks the chains of injustice, and which makes people ready for the kingdom.

Help them to discover and to believe that this unequal world can only be reborn thanks to your son Jesus Christ and that this involves and concerns them. Give them a generous and willing heart, to know how to set out in a sincere quest for their vocation and to be able to respond to your individual call, individually and generously.

Amen.

Institutional text

St John of God was understanding, treating everyone, whether sinners, oppressors or oppressed, the way God had treated him: he forgave and helped, he assisted and healed the physical and moral wounds of all. Very often the moral and spiritual wounds were healed first, and as a condition for obtaining the healing and the harmony of the body.

In a world divided by so many kinds of ideology, fundamentalism and ethnic discrimination which generate hatred, resentment and the desire for revenge, St John of God's capacity to pardon, reconcile and build bridges of brotherhood deserves to be studied and experienced by all of us in the Hospitaller Family. He was a profound healer of wounds, tensions and conflict among all those he assisted and those who worked with him.

Like Christ, he healed with his own wounds. His biographers always point out the way he was wounded by his separation from his parents, by loneliness, by the frustrations of military life, but above all by guilt, the hardships he had to endure, his suffering for the many debts that he had taken out in order to help the poor and the sick, his brothers and sisters. These experiences of existential wounds also made him a Hospitaller who was specialized in healing and reconciling enemies, to make them his co-workers, as he did with Antón Martín and so many others. (Cf. The Charter of Hospitality, 3.1.6).

Another text: cf. Hospitaller Identity, Sisters Hospitallers of the SHJ, No. 14.

It is from the conversion of hearts that there arises concern for others, loved as brothers or sisters. This concern helps us to understand the obligation and commitment to heal institutions, structures and conditions of life that are contrary to human dignity. The laity must therefore *work at the same time for the conversion of hearts and the improvement of structures*, taking historical situations into account and using legitimate means so that the dignity of every man and woman will be truly respected and promoted within institutions. (Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church, no. 552).

Let us pray with the sick and the elderly

Jesus, you are the power of the father. You know the ills that beset us, and this is why you wish to be with us, as we walk along the path of life. You are not far from anyone, much less those who are ill, or old, tired or depressed. Today we wish to say to you, O Lord, may we always see you during our nights, and may we always see you in our joys. Receive the pain of our lives which is poured out, drop by drop, day by day. Give us your comfort and your strength, especially when our days are most bleak.

Amen.



PRAYER:

O Lord,
your voice continues to resound in our ears:
"The harvest is great ... but the workers are few..."
"Go and make disciples...
baptising them... teaching them ..."
"I am with you until the end of the world..."
We trust in your word ,
we open up our hearts to your missionary message
and we pray to you with the strength of the faith we have received.
May this Missions Day
be a "new Pentecost of love".
May our Communities
be missionary, and reject the temptation
to become inward-looking,
and may the new Churches in the mission
co-operate with the other more needy ones
and give of their poverty;
May young people, the sick and consecrated men and women
participate in the missionary commitment,
and may those who are called with a missionary vocation
respond to it with generosity,
and may we, as baptised members of the faithful,
participate in the Church's missionary work
responding responsibly for your missionary marching orders.
We pray this with Mary, Queen of the Missions.
Amen

**HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST JOHN OF GOD**

**SISTERS HOSPITALLERS
OF THE SACRED HEART
OF JESUS**

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