

HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF GOD

**RESEARCH REPORT ON THE STATE OF
FORMATION IN THE ORDER**

**This study was undertaken by two Commissions of Brothers,
with the consultation and technical-scientific analysis by
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**General Curia
Rome, 2006**

**THE HOSPITALLER ORDER FACING UP TO THE CHALLENGES OF
SOCIETY, EXAMINES ITSELF AND MAKES PROPRPOSALS
FOR THE FUTURE**

N.B. Abbreviations in the graphic tables are as follows.

S. Euro. = Southern Europe.

C. Euro. = Central Europe

Lat. Am. = Latin America

**USA = United States of America, Canada, Australia and
New Zealand, including the Provincial Delegation of Papua New Guinea.**

Format. = Formator (postulant, novice, scholastic masters)

Voc. Pro. = Vocation Promoter.

Techn. = Technician, nurse, teacher, therapist, etc.

**Diploma = Certificate of academic qualification. (i.e. nurse, radiologist,
chaplain, physiotherapist, etc.)**

Dr. = University doctorate, degree.

G & P Govt = General and Provincial governments.

Prior = Priors of communities and Directors of the Orders various centres.

V.A. = Added Value.

% = percentage.

M = Midpoint.

NR = No reply.

PRESENTATION

It is with great satisfaction that I present this document “**REPORT OF THE RESEARCH ON THE STATE OF FORMATION IN THE ORDER**”. It is something like a “*photograph*” or an “*X-Ray*”, resulting from the sociological research sponsored by the General Curia for the study and deeper understanding of the state of vocation promotion and religious formation. It utilises the study of six specific areas related to the life of the Brothers and to the mission of the Order.

We all know that the subject of vocation promotion and of formation of new Brothers calls for special attention at this present time, with a view to the future. *Today we are greatly concerned for new vocations. We have to promote them and give them a good formation* (cfr. circular Letter of 2 February 2004). The document that we introduce now can suggest to us the path to promote the growth and vocational maturity of those men who feel called to share our life as Brothers of St. John of God in the Church. Such growth must be harmonious, systematic and progressive for the service of suffering humanity in a world that is becoming more and more globalised.

To facilitate an understanding of the text, it is necessary to know the context in which it has been produced. Therefore, I will describe the origin, and the steps taken to develop the final document.

At the General Conference held by the Order at Tagaytay, in the Philippines (December 2003), the question emerged about the *actual state of vocations and formation in the Order*. The General Definitory, together with three Provincials and one Delegate Provincial for the Asia-Pacific Region, met on 19 and 20 January 2004 and discussed, among other matters, the subject of vocation promotion and religious formation, which I had previously referred to in my Circular Letter of 2 February of the same year, requesting that a study be made on the great challenge that the Order has to face. This meeting insisted that it was urgent to assume this as a priority to act upon (cfr., cit. Circular Letter, n. 7.5); faced with the conviction that, to a large extent, the future of the Order depends upon the new vocations that we are capable of promoting, welcoming and forming.

In the autumn of the same year (2003) the General Definitory approved the proposal to undertake an intense study of the subject of formation. A commission was formed consisting of a General Councillor and four Brothers representing the geographical zones of the Order, and an external expert for consultation. In two subsequent meetings (December 2004 and February 2005), the Commission set the foundations of the study that was taken up by a second commission, consisting of three Italian Brothers and one Spanish Brother.

After working for several months, an elaborate questionnaire containing 54 questions was sent out to the 1362 Brothers that composed the Order at that time. We received 1012 replies, a number that we considered sufficient to be able to gauge the importance of the subject and the interest it stimulated.

From the study carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the Pontifical University in Rome, beginning with *thirty diversified variables*, the resultant document is the purpose of this presentation that we offer to the whole Order. As well as the introduction and conclusion, it comprises seven chapters. The last one consists of an

appendix that, in turn, contains the synthesis of the answers that the Brothers freely gave to the 54 questions.

The first chapter of the document introduces general aspects of the structural and organic analysis of the Order. The second and third refer to the charismatic identity of the two areas so fundamental to us: consecration and mission. The fourth and fifth chapters illustrate important elements in respect to the lifestyle of the community and the formation of the formators. Finally, chapters six and seven deal with vocational promotion on two fronts, not parallel but complementary called Phenomenology and Prospectives, and the Challenges of Hospitality.

From the time of its Founder, the Hospitaller Order has always maintained a living and constant awareness of its specific vocation and mission in the Church in the service of hospitality. It has always had a vigilant attitude that is suited to changes when faced with challenges and the requirements of each time and place. Now, *faced with the challenges of society, it is questioning itself on how to plan for the future with renewed hope*. This study on the state of formation has been carried out as a strategy to permit us to be aware and to have an insight into our reality in areas treated by this study.

The knowledge of this reality opens to us the doors of hope and exhorts us to look for some ways that will help us to transform, improve and plan for the future. Now, as this General government comes to an end, I wish to reiterate to my confreres, that only those who have hope can ponder anew *the value of reproducing the audacious creativity of St. John of God* in fidelity to the charism.

The techniques used in this study, as well as others, can be useful for making an examination that could carry us forward. They are valid means to strengthen our personal, community and institutional energies; but above all to discover what the Holy Spirit is asking of us as a living Order that asks questions in a world and in a society that is changing and transforming.

The Chapter General can ascertain that the study reveals both light and shade. The light illuminates the way our Hospitaller Family is progressing, and it invites us not to lose sight of the horizon to which the Order is called by society and the Church today. The shade asks of us a change of vision and calls us to conversion.

The scarcity of vocations in some geographical zones of the Order and the maintenance and incorporation of new projects, urges us to study these phenomena in the light of faith, and not to become tired of casting the nets for the catch; and to ask the Lord of the harvest to send new workers into the Hospitaller Vineyard. All of this is making us awake from a dream, because for new vocations it is necessary to prepare and to offer another way of viewing and interpreting the expression of our consecrated hospitaller life. We have to prepare a new scenario of lifestyle and community life; we have to apply a plan of formation in a way that is consistent with the existing Formation Program (“Formation Program for the Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God, 2000).

It is urgent that the whole Order face up to the challenges that vocation promotion and formation present today, and to prepare for the future of hospitality. This is why it is imperative for the Provinces, General Delegations, Communities, every Brother and also our closest Co-Workers, to apply themselves with dedication and simplicity to deepen the charism and to view the mission with the vision and spirit of St. John of God.

'Formation in the Order' is not just another document. Its content is important as a means of comparison and evaluation in realising what necessary changes are required of us in our present situation. As far as we are concerned, we have to be responsible and correspond to the necessary changes needed for our advancement. We all have to grow in the core values of the Order, and fidelity to our vocation of consecration to God as followers of Christ in the service of the hospitaller mission. Each of us can constitute a vocational opportunity to promulgate vocations that the Lord may continue to call, and these will need to be given a fully comprehensive training.

I thank all the Brothers of the Order, and in particular I thank Brothers Luis María Aldana, Richard Binder, Ildefonso de Castro, Billy Gutiérrez, León Mbengue, Jesús Etayo, Benedetto Possemato, Dario Vermi and Salvino Zanon, who participated in the first and second Commissions and worked so tirelessly for two years.

I also thank Professor Don Renato Mion SDB and his assistants who have brought this technical and sociological study to fruition.

As one of the last actions of the General government of the Order's six years term as it is about to conclude, I am introducing this work to the whole Order and placing it under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the day that the participants to the General Chapter go on pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of our Lady of Good Counsel at Genazzano (Rome). We beseech St. John of God and our Hospitaller Saints and Blesseds, that they always accompany us along the way of hospitality toward the future that awaits us.

Rome 7th October 2006
Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Brother Pascual Piles Ferrando
Prior General

INTRODUCTION

An X-ray vision for the Order's development for renewal: based upon the past and projected into the future

Not long ago we entered into the new millennium and the challenges of contemporary society impelled the different Religious Institutions more and more to the renewal, both spiritual life and apostolic, requested by the 2nd Vatican Council. The Council called for the reform of the Constitutions of every Religious Congregation and Order. The Hospitaller Order paused to make a general verification of the path it had undertaken, and this constitutes the start of a fertile process of study and updating. This already began as a preliminary to the forthcoming General Chapter. It now intends to verify its findings through a sociological investigation of the state of formation in the Order and the possible way to undertake a more effective vocation promotion program.

The value of our sociological research

The work that we now introduce needs to be seen as a precise and timely X-ray, giving a reading of its specific background and value, with a closer detailed deepening of how the Order sees itself in the actual situation of today. The rigorous criteria of scientific objectivity have to be observed in regards to the contents and conformity suggested in concordance with the religious leaders of the Hospitaller Order who have been exploring the Order's fundamental dimensions of religious life and apostolic activity.

Understandably this study is structured according to a distribution on a global scale, taking into account the diverse works of the Order and the ethnicity and lifestyle of its members. This will be considered in regards to the work developed by the Order in the formation of its members. It also embraces the apostolic service in the Church, and this too will be particularly examined in reference to the formative-vocational dimension that is now particularly worrying. As the various chapters will show, this report treats of all these matters.

The value of scientific sociological research is of utmost importance, especially when it is applied to religious life. It evaluates and delivers judgment upon decisions made by lawful authorities. Even though many problems can be assessed or even isolated by simple intuition, nevertheless, sociological research can help to confront problems and discover new methods to solve them. The answers and resolutions that result from this research places the two conflicting viewpoints into light and shade, and both views have to be investigated and debated to come to a correct decision.

This was the approach we employed with the questionnaire answered by the Brothers of the Order. This methodology overcame simple suppositions, conjectures and opinions that the Brothers discuss from time to time.

This research objectivity guarantees results and sorts out simple interpretations, by reason that it was commissioned by the Order to a research institute with a longstanding experience of professional recognition. Above all, this analysis guarantees a complete neutrality of judgment since it is not performed by the Order but from an external observer, consequently it can be read impartially and evaluated without any manipulation. This study directly reflects the judgment,

evaluation, perception and orientation of the Brothers throughout the world who have been given the possibility to freely express themselves on one of the most burning matters affecting the Order today, namely that of vocations and religious life.

What emerges from this research will be data that guarantees a picture of the state of the Order today. Obviously, the Brothers who responded with absolute liberty of judgment and expression were guaranteed the necessary anonymity vital to this type of research. Given this data, it is therefore necessary to begin with individual reflection and community discussions so that personal and collective perspectives of a reasonable interpretation of the facts might be achieved. It was our task to bring all this together and to render it more coherent.

The the research we undertook for the preparation of General Chapter of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God and all its communities, is an essential basic contribution to this study. The result is a detailed and objective global report, rich in charts and illustrative tables for the Chapter's procedures. Besides, it can constitute a solid basis for further necessary reforms.

Fact-finding and the path we took

The preparatory study was prepared during the first semester of 2005 from a series of ad hoc bilateral meetings between the General Councillor responsible for the Order's vocation promotion, the international committee and the professors of the Pontifical Salesian University's Institute of Sociology.

Work began to study the proposed project, and discuss ways to tackle the task proposed by the Order; to analyse the nature of the problems and the subjects to be investigated; the formulation of the questions to be placed into a questionnaire. This was to better facilitate all the replies so as to achieve the desired results. The numerous meetings with the Committee and study sessions were cordial, fertile, open and rich in collaboration. Consequently a definitive layout of the questionnaire was achieved. This was then sent to every Brother of the Order throughout the world, and they were given every opportunity to freely express their own opinions on crucial matters and to collaborate so that the General Chapter might reach the best result.

The principal objective of the study

The principal objective of the study was to examine and deepen the study of the qualitative improvement of formation and vocation promotion in the Order. Obviously, in regards to this matter, the subject could not be isolated to a purely practical function of techniques and strategies. This necessarily implies a series of other particular objectives of not small importance that has been developed in the in-depth study of the identity of the Order; the quality of the the religious life of the Brothers; the concrete expression of their consecration and mission as realised in a community of fraternity and the effectiveness of the apostolic mission entrusted to each Brother. All this is expressed in the structure of the questionnaire and is divided into different areas of analysis.

Consequently the definitive questionnaire, elaborated by the committee of the Hospitaller Brothers, was structured according to 6 principal areas treating of the subject. It contained 54 articulated questions aimed at facilitating the various sectors under study.

This first section of the study was concerned with the gathering of general information from all who were interviewed. The aim of this was to specify and qualify a great analytical

differentiation of the answers according to the various regions of origin, the age of the Brothers, the number of years of their religious profession, their present situation in the Order, the role they fulfil, what academic titles they may possess, and whether they may be available and competent to take part in the formation program of the Order.

The second section is concerned with the characteristics of individually expressed consecration and the motivation in the choice to take religious vows and the difficulties encountered in fidelity to keeping them. It looked into the value of confrontation and spiritual direction, and the possibility of more frequent reasons for the abandonment of vocation.

The third section is directed more at the identity of the mission of the Hospitaller Brother, namely the operational and apostolic dimension of the Order in the new roles it is called upon to operate. It also treats of the difficulties encountered in the balance between action and contemplation. In particular all that concerns the sector of pastoral care is considered. Above all, special attention is devoted to the formation of the young Brothers and of their initial insertion into the permanent formation program. In this area the study also takes into consideration the relationship with the Co-workers who share the spirit and the works of the mission.

The fourth section goes deeper into focusing attention on the whole style of religious life in community; its nucleus and the source of a serene and cheerful religious life in common : a lifestyle consisting of prayer, a formality of interpersonal relationships, especially between the young Brothers and the animators of the community or the apostolic activity, and of their influence upon all about them.

The fifth section introduces the most direct interpretation of the appointments of formators to the different levels of the institutional structure and to their actual realisation in the various Provinces. It treats of their preparation, of the formation schemes and strategies to undertake them as well as the various formation proposals already taking place in the Order.

The sixth section is devoted to vocation promotion and a series of nine questions are put forward. The wide-ranging sectors regarding the causes of the lack of the vocations are investigated. It looks at the process that every Province is facing; the choice and formation of Brothers to tackle the task, and the contribution required of every community to encourage new vocations. This calls for a personal availability and collaboration to promote the specific values of the Order so that young men may feel attracted to it today.

Brothers called to respond to the questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to all the Brothers of the Order, who according to the data furnished by the General Curia, to 31st December 2004 numbered 1362.

This was not simply a sampling of the Brothers, but embraced each and every one of them. Obviously, since the questionnaire was not imposed by obligation to all the members of the Order, we have to ascertain some limits circumscribed to certain particular situations of coordination, organization and the inevitable difficulties uncounted in an Order of worldwide diffusion. Nevertheless 350 *did not respond* and not all the rest replied fully to the questionnaire, or they had not validly given North American and Australian answers to the aims of the investigation. Such a quota of non-answering (about 1/4 of the Brothers), is of little consequence in regards to the precision and generalisation of the end results. To get a more correct and precise reading of the data, it will be opportune to make a judgement on the basis of the consistent reasons that have come forward.

Diffusing the results

Even if the quota of answers received doesn't include the totality of the Brothers, releasing the results has one legitimate and valid comparison to the problems of the Order. Nevertheless the validity of the results is guaranteed from the quality of those Brothers who did answer. That is because these were the Brothers who were more responsible and concerned for the development and improvement of the Order and have felt duty bound to take part in the process of verification and did not want to miss out on this occasion to express their constructive opinions. Probably those who did not answer had various excuses such as difficulties of age, illness, or the inability to express themselves. Maybe there might have been an indifference or mistrust in the methods of social science. In every case for the reasons given above, we rightly retain that the results received have a strong validity, as above all, they faithfully reflect the positive and critical judgments of at least three quarters of the St. John of God Brothers.

Working on the statistical data

The work of correlating all the statistical data received as a result of the questionnaire was very detailed and analytical. It was achieved with the cooperation of the Brothers who were on the research team. It is not possible to print out individual replies to every single item in questionnaire, as such individual replies would have been far too cumbersome for a statistic printout and would have been excessively fragmented and time wasting to achieve the desired photo of the Order. Besides, they were so bulky that they proved to be useless since an excessive particularised fragmentation would lose sight of the global vision thereby stifling an innovative technique.

The analytical level of our study nevertheless has given us the opportunity to go more deeply into the subject; and as the different chapters show, the meaningful and important differences of important in achieving the final goal have been highlighted.

If anyone desires to satisfy his own legitimate questions or to go further into the matter, a copy of the results achieved is available.

The principal referral variations

One of the positive aspects noted in the statistics is that about thirty variable headings present themselves for consideration. They show a cross-section of details on a global scale to all the questions in the questionnaire. In fact each question in the questionnaire was submitted to an examination to such an extent that they give us a very detailed X-ray of the Order. This is reflected as a very accurate statistic differentiation of the various subjects treated and it opens the way to a possible further study of the various matters under consideration.

These variable headings are selected in relationship to specific differentiation for:

1. the large geographical zones of the apostolic activity of the Brothers (6 zones);
2. the different age categories (question. 3: 4 classes);
3. the years of profession (question 4: 4 classes);
4. the positions of formative responsibility (question 5.2: yes = 1+2, no =3)
5. the appointments of responsibility in vocation promotion (question .5.3: yes = 1+2, no = 3);
6. the academic title (question. 6: 3 levels);

7. the position of government currently served in the Order (question 7: 4 levels);
8. the specification of preparation acquired in the sector of the vocational formation (question 9)
9. the availability to take on formative responsibility (question 10).

It deals with the task of deepening and permitting a more appropriate development in comparison of the different matters indicated to the different sectors of intervention. Such an elaboration will greatly facilitate more specific details in comparison to the problems that arise.

The text that we now present offers a synthesis and very detailed X-ray vision of the results received of the life of the Order. We studied it and compared it with what we already knew, and we even went much further to elaborate upon both the statistics and logistics since these required objectives and the particular nature of the content of the questions and asked for good knowledge of the reality of the situation.

The demand for a realistic description of the situation and the fidelity to the answers of the Brothers, together with the cognitive and operational finalities of the General Chapter, forced our hand to take everything we received into consideration even though much of it was superficial, nevertheless it was still possible to profit from this.

We wish therefore that the text we have prepared can be used as a working document, and that it has solid methodological suggestions that can answer the requirements proposed to us by the General Councillors of the Order; and as a consequence may permit us to offer to all the Brothers a global photo of the Order. The answers reached therefore show the Order's positive aspects as well as those that are more critical, and specifically in regards to the important question of renewal.

CHAPTER ONE

STRUCTURAL AND ORGANIC STUDY OF THE ORDER

The purpose of this first chapter is to introduce the photo of the resultant findings in the particular structure of the Order and its members, according to objective coordination of age, religious profession, roles fulfilled, positions held and academic qualifications. In particular it is interested in the availability of Brothers willing to assume an explicit formative appointment in the Order.

The basis of our analyses is presented by the quantity and quality of the answers received to the questionnaire sent to all the Brothers. This along with the official data given to us by the General Curia reached a total quota of 1362 subjects, currently members of the Order up to December 2004.

The suitable answers that we received enabled us to workout all the necessary statistics reaching a valid quota of 1012 in conformity with the Brothers' replies; (350 less in comparison to the general total, but not too many, nor too little; amounting to about a quarter), thereby giving us a figure to refer to during the course of our observations.

In reading all the data, we use the word "*sample*" for convenience sake to point out the subjects in the questionnaire that have been answered, however also retaining a sample of the statistical representation for the reasons explained above.

1. THE REPLIES FROM THE PROVINCES

The questionnaires sent to all the Brothers and individually answered and sent to General Curia, were then sent on to the Institute of Sociology at the Pontifical Salesian University where, employing the opportune methodological criteria were studied and detailed. There were 1012 valid replies to the questionnaire. Those were incomplete were eliminated as barely appraisable.

Table #.1.1 points out the detailed distribution, both in frequency and percentage, measured on the totality of replies to the questionnaire. The geographical distribution follows a particular conventional grouping that we have worked out. It takes into consideration the subdivision of the Provinces of continental zones or economic-cultural affinity, thereby facilitating a more acceptable reading.

The zones we constructed are as follows:

1. Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, France, Portugal)
2. Central Europe (Austria, Germany, Poland, England-Ireland, Czech, Rep. Slovakia,, Hungary, Ukraine)
3. Africa,
4. Latin America,
5. Asia (India, Korea, Vietnam, Philippines and Japan)
6. The USA which is the key representing the United States, Canada and Australia (which comprises Papua New Guinea and New Zealand)

Tab. 1.1 – Distribution of the Provinces of the questionnaire (in V.A. %)¹

	Frequency	Percentage
Roman Province	24 -----	2.4
Lombard-Venice (Nth Italy)	43 -----	4.2
French	37 -----	3.7
Aragon - Spain	76 -----	7.5
Castile- Spain	83 -----	8.2
Betica (Andalusia)-Spain	60 -----	5.9
Portugal	57 -----	5.6
	380	37.5
Poland	68 -----	6.7
Silesia	17 -----	1.7
Bavaria - Germany	22 -----	2.2
Rhine - Germany	4 -----	.4
Bohemo-Morava-Rep.Ceca	6 -----	.6
Austria	37 -----	3.7
England	9 -----	.9
Ireland	26 -----	2.6
	189	18.4
Africa- Benedetto Menni	28 -----	2.8
Africa- Riccardo Pampuri	26 -----	2.6
Africa- BVM of Mercy	30 -----	3.0
	84	8.4
Mexico -Central America	37 -----	3.7
Colombia	45 -----	4.4
Brazil	10 -----	1.0
South America (northern)	38 -----	3.8
South America (Southern)	42 -----	4.2
	172	17.1
India	39 -----	3.9
Korea	26 -----	2.6
Philippines	10 -----	1.0
Vietnam	52 -----	5.1
	127	12.6
N.AM/AUST	15 -----	1.5
Canada'	10 -----	1.0
Australia	35 -----	3.5
	60	6.0
Total	1012	100.0

¹ V.A. = Added Value; % = percentage.

From such distribution it is deduced that the greater part of the questionnaire has come from Southern Europe (380, equal to 37.5%) and Central Europe (189, equal to 18.4%), followed by Latin America with 172 in conformity with Brothers equal to 17.1%; from Asian (127, equal to 12.6%), from Africa (84, equal to about 8.4%) and from the area of North America comprising NORTH AMERICA to which we added Canada and Australia for cultural affinity (60, equal to the 6%). To Australia was added Papua New Guinea and New Zealand since they are part of that Province.

Of the 380 St. John of God Brothers in Southern Europe of the South only 8.4% are less than 35 years of age, while the percentage of the elderly Brothers is rather greater with 266 Brothers (equal to 70%) who are over 56 years of age and represent the greatest percentages in all the other geographical zones. Also the percentage of those who have complete more than 25 years of profession is as much more elevated (76.3%). This same zone also has the greatest percentage of formation activity (37.6% equal to 157) in comparison to the 17.9% of the Brothers in Latin America, 17.5% in Central Europe, 9.8% in Asia, 9.6% in Africa and 7.7% in North America and Australia. Besides there is about one Brother in three (31.4% equal to 90 Brothers) occupied in vocation promotion. This is followed by 21.6% (equal to 62 St. John of God Brothers) in Latin America; 21.3% (equal to 61 Brothers) in Central Europe, 10.5% (equal to 30) in Africa, 1% (equal to 26) in Asia and finally from 6.3% (equal to 18) in North America and Australia.

More explicitly, the question was set (also #.8) asking: **“in which continent are you currently developing your apostolate?”** that received the followings answers. More than half were from Europe – both Southern and Central(52.3% = 535 Brothers), 20% (= 202 Brothers) in America altogether comprising 8.5% (= 86 Brothers), Africa 15.3% (= 155 Brothers). Information on Asia and other nations in the Pacific was lacking.

\ At first glance the answers confirm a particular underlining of the prevalence of Brothers of a more advanced age in the European regions of Europe and younger Brothers in the other zones. Of course the Americas follow the trend of Europe regarding the age and qualifications of the Brothers.

2. THE AGE STRUCTURE

The Brothers who answered the questionnaire were also studied on the basis of age distribution. At first glance the age range extended from 18 years to 96 years, highlighting each year of the presence of one or more subjects. In particular, the observations that emerge from the tables are most interesting.

In fact a quarter of the replies came from Brothers who were under 36 years of age, while half came from the under a 52 years group, equal to 508 Brothers. under 70 years of age. There are 806 St. John of God Brothers (it seems that about 79.64% replied). From the 80 years and over group we counted 55, Although, this is not a realistic structure for the age of the Brothers in the Order, nevertheless it gives us enough information to index a realistic approximation of it.

The relationship of the young Brothers (18-35) to the elderly (70-96) is still in favour of the young ones, as the following graph of the demographic relationship of the index demonstrates:

$$\frac{\text{elderly (71-96 years)} = 20.36\%}{\text{young (18-35 years)} = 25.10\%} = 0.81$$

This means that among those interviewed the number of elderly Brothers between 71 and the 96 years (0.81) is less that the young ones aged between 18 and 35 years.

Furthermore, these observations are theoretical, so for great functionality of reading of our tables, we have been able to construct a distribution for groups of the homogeneous age, composed of 4 groups:

1. from 18 to 35 years = 23.6 % (239) consideration of the youngest and most active:
2. from 36 to 55 years = 30.3% (307) mostly active and having responsibility:
3. from 56 to 74 years = 32.0 % (324) mature men in active and responsible positions:
4. from 75 to 96 years = 13.0 % (132) elderly, partly active or retired.

The statistic procedures we performed allowed us to go deeper into the study with a more detailed analysis and to cross over the particular age levels or groups to draw a more detailed representation.

Thus we are able recuperate a series of analytical tables relative to the distribution of the *6 zones of origin*.

The youngest group of Brothers (239) are proportionally represented in Africa and Asia, then decreasing in Latin America, Central Europe, North America and Australia and finally Southern Europe. The middle-aged and more elderly (456, equal to 45% added together) are mostly found in north America, Australia and Southern Europe.

It is interesting to note that in Africa there are no Brothers over 74 years of age and only two in Asia.

Tab. 1.2 – Distribution of the age groups in the zones of origin (in V.A. and %)

Z O N E of ORIGEN							
	TOTAL	S.Eur	C.Eur	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.Am/Ast
T O T A L I	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
18 - 35 years	239	20	54	39	62	56	8
	23.6	5.3	28.6	46.4	36.0	44.1	13.3
36 - 55 years	307	87	68	37	50	56	9
	30.3	22.9	36.0	44.0	29.1	44.1	15.0
56 - 74 years	324	180	49	8	44	13	30
	32.0	47.4	25.9	9.5	25.6	10.2	50.0
Over 74 years	132	86	17	0	15	2	12
	13.0	22.6	9.0	.0	8.7	1.6	20.0

In synthesis, between the 36 and the 74 years groups 62.3% of the Brothers, almost two thirds of the Order, are fully active and hold positions of responsibility. In particular as it appears from chart #1.3, 72.4% of them are currently involved as formators and 71.4% entrusted with vocation promotion.

The St. John of God Brothers of Southern Europe are primarily placed between the 56 and the 74 years (47.4%); those of Central Europe between 36 and the 55 years (36%); those of Africa between the 18 and the 35 years (46.4%); Asia (44.1%) and in a lesser measure Latin America (36%). Half the St. John of God Brothers in North America and Australia is set between the 56 and the 74 age group. Africa and Asia have the youngest Brothers, while the more elderly ones are mostly present in Southern Europe, North America and Australia.

Tab. 1.3 – Distribution of the age groups involved in formation and vocation promotion. (in V.A. and %)

In synthesis, between the 36 and the 74 years groups consist 62.3% of the Brothers, almost two thirds of the Order, who are the most active and hold positions of responsibility. In particular, as can be seen in the tables 1.3, 72.4% of these Brothers is currently involved as formators and 71.4% entrusted with vocational promotion.

The St. John of God Brothers in Southern Europe are mainly placed between the 56 and 74 years group (47.4%); those of Central Europe between 36 and the 55 years (36%), in Africa between 18 and the 35 years (46.4%) and in the same age group, Asia (44.1%) and to a lesser degree Latin America (36%). Half the St. John of God Brothers in the USA, Canada and Australia are between 56 and 74 years of age. Notably Africa and Asia have the youngest Brothers, while those more elderly are found in Southern Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia.

Tab. 1.3 – Distribution of the age groups involved with formation and vocation promotion (in V.A. and %)

	5.2 FORMATORS		5.3 VOC.PROM		Academic titles			
	TOTAL	Yes	No	yes	No	Techn.	Uni.Dip.	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
18 - 35 years	239	46	193	45	194	112	40	26
	23.6	11.0	32.5	15.7	26.8	22.9	18.2	15.1
36 - 55 years	307	149	158	107	200	137	78	74
	30.3	35.6	26.6	37.3	27.6	28.0	35.5	43.0
56 - 74 years	324	154	170	98	226	160	77	62
	32.0	36.8	28.6	34.1	31.2	32.7	35.0	36.0
Over 74 years	132	65	67	34	98	77	23	9
	13.0	15.6	11.3	11.8	13.5	15.7	10.5	5.2

If we compare the age relationship with the positions currently covered, more than half the Brothers of the General and Provincial government (cfr.Tab. 1.4: 52.9%, some 46 Brothers) they are aged between 36 and 55 years, 36.8% between 56 and 74 years, but there are also Brothers who are less than 35 years of age and they represent 8%.

Tab. 1.4 –distribution of the age groups (in V.A and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G & P.GVT	PRIOR	Forma-	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
18 - 35 years	239	7	20	31	181
	23.6	8.0	9.0	44.3	28.6
36 - 55 years	307	46	103	26	132
	30.3	52.9	46.4	37.1	20.9
56 - 74 years	324	32	85	9	198
	32.0	36.8	38.3	12.9	31.3
Over 74 years	132	2	14	3	113
	13.0	2.3	6.3	4.3	17.9

Formators – 5.2

Vocation Promotion – 5.3

Academic titles –Professional technicians, Uni. Degrees, Doctorates

	Total	S.Eur.	C.Eur.1	Africa	Lat. Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST	
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
18 - 35 years	239	46	193	45	194	112	40	26
	23.6	11.0	32.5	15.7	26.8	22.9	18.2	15.1
36 - 55 years	307	149	158	107	200	137	78	74
	30.3	35.6	26.6	37.3	27.6	28.0	35.5	43.0
56 - 74 years	324	154	170	98	226	160	77	62
	32.0	36.8	28.6	34.1	31.2	32.7	35.0	36.0
Over 74 years	132	65	67	34	98	77	23	9
	13.0	15.6	11.3	11.8	13.5	15.7	10.5	5.2

If we compare the age relationship with the positions currently covered, more than half the Brothers and the General and Provincial governments (cfr.Tab. 1.4: 52.9%) are between the ages of 36 and 55 years, 36.8% between 56 and 74 years, but there is also 8% of the Brothers that have less than 35 years.

Tab. 1.4 – Distribution of the age groups with their positions covered (in V.A. and %)

Less than half (46.4%) of the local superiors and the managers of the centres are reasonably young: they are between 36 and 55 years of age, and more than (38.3%) are between 56 and 74. Only 20 Brothers are less than 35 years old.

Brothers currently active in formation and vocation promotion (70) are predominantly young: 44.3% (about 31 years old). Those less than 35 years (about 26) are between 36 and 55 years and represent 37.1%. The availability of Brothers for positions of formation and vocation promotion is somewhat higher, about half the younger Brothers (46.2%) and this number is raised further to 103 Brothers in the 36 to 55 age group (39.3%).

Finally we underline that, obviously, almost two thirds (62.5%, 633 Brothers) interviewed, nobody wants to take on institutional responsibility these days.

3. AGE OF ENTRANCE TO THE NOVITIATE

Generally during the years prior to Vatican Council II, most vocations entered religious life at a young age. This was the usual case in the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God as the majority of the answers to the questionnaire indicate. In fact, 49.11% of the Brothers entered when they were younger than 22 years of age and 77.27% were under 27 years. 90.2% of the entire Order averaged 32 years, while the other 10% widen on a range between 33 and 61 years.

To aid us further we have schematically constructed 5 age groups of entry into the novitiate.

1. Between 16 and 20 years : 36.1 % = presumably after secondary school.
2. Between 21 and 25 years : 31.7 % = especially in Africa
3. Between 26 and 30 years : 18.5 % = especially in Africa and Asia
4. Between 31 and 35 years : 7.1 % = Entering later
5. Over 35 years : 5.2 % = Adult vocations

To develop a more articulated analysis, let us have recourse to Tab. 1.5 that specifies for us the diversified *distribution of the global geographical zones*.

More than a third of the Brothers (36.1%, 365 Brothers) entered between 16 and 20 years of age. This is especially so in regions with an ancient Christian tradition. Between the 21 and the 25 age group 31.7% of the Brothers entered, while 18.5% entered between 26 and 30 years. As the age increases lesser numbers entered, so that between the 31 and 35 group there were 7.1% and only 5.2% over the 35.

Africa is (47.6%) and Asia (35.4%), while North America and Australia it is (35%). There are no entries in the first age group, but rather more at an advanced age, mainly between 21 and 25 years. However there are also consistent percentages between the 26 and 30 years, that are 28.6% and 24.4% respectively and are a higher number to the data received from other zones for equal ages.

Those over 35 years number about 5.2% (= 53 Brothers), and are found especially in Latin America (8.1%) and in Central Europe (5.8%). 75% of the Brothers in Southern Europe entered under the age of 26, in comparison to 73.3% for North America and Australia, 65.1% for Latin America, 63.5% for Central Europe, 59.8% for Asia and 58.3% for Africa.

Tab. 1.5 – Age of entrance to novitiate per total and geographic zone (in V.A. and %)

	Z O N E o f O R I G I N						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat. Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L I	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	14	11	2	0	1	0	0
	1.4	2.9	1.1	.0	.6	.0	.0
16 - 20 years	365	189	58	9	55	31	23
	36.1	49.7	30.7	10.7	32.0	24.4	38.3
21 - 25 years	321	96	62	40	57	45	21
	31.7	25.3	32.8	47.6	33.1	35.4	35.0
26 - 30 years	187	55	36	24	32	31	9
	18.5	14.5	19.0	28.6	18.6	24.4	15.0
31- 35 years	72	14	20	9	13	14	2
	7.1	3.7	10.6	10.7	7.6	11.0	3.3
Over 35 years	53	15	11	2	14	6	5
	5.2	3.9	5.8	2.4	8.1	4.7	8.3

The 79.3% of the Brothers who today fulfil roles of Central and Provincial government entered at less than 25 years of age. And as Tab.1.6 shows, 75.7% of the local superiors entered about the same age. This also applies to the 62.8% of formators and 63% of vocation promoters, also 59.2% of those available to take office. Certainly an intelligent initiation. The spiritual formation in the Order is the general guarantee and sound forecast of a great stability and solidity of appointments.

The main difference between those who enter the Order at an advanced age and those who entered it when quite young, is that the latter were given a longer period of formation and a deepening of the Order's values. However there is also a great differentiation of cultural experience. There is an increase in the academic, technical and professional qualifications emerging in the percentages of the group between 21 and 25 years of age (36%). Those between the 26 and 30 years (19.6%) in comparison to the 16.4% of those who gained university degrees at the same age and 17.4% who received them later.

Half the Brothers (49%) entered over the age of 35 and have a diploma of professional or technical qualification. Three quarters (75.4%) of those who today exercise responsibilities entered before the age of 25.

Finally, almost half of the Brothers who possess major university or ecclesiastical qualifications, entered the Order between the ages of 16 and 20. This is born out in tab.1.7, and represents 45.9% while other cases are 47.7%. However, there are also those who have been preferably entrusted with formation and vocation promotion.

Tab. 1.6 – Age of entry to the novitiate of institutional position holders (in V.A. and %)

		Office held				
		TOTAL	G & P.Gvt	Prior	Formator	None
T O T A L		1012	87	222	70	633
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage		100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply		14	1	1	1	11
		1.4	1.1	.5	1.4	1.7
16 - 20 years		365	44	95	15	211
		36.1	50.6	42.8	21.4	33.3
21 - 25 years		321	25	73	29	194
		31.7	28.7	32.9	41.4	30.6
26 - 30 years		187	11	35	14	127
		18.5	12.6	15.8	20.0	20.1
31 - 35 years		72	3	11	6	52
		7.1	3.4	5.0	8.6	8.2
Over 35 years		53	3	7	5	38
		5.2	3.4	3.2	7.1	6.0

Tab. 1.7 – Age of entrance to the novitiate of formation directors and vocation promoters and academic qualifications (in V.A. and %)

		5.2 FORMATOR		5.3 VOC,PROMOTER		ACCEDEMIC TITLE			
		TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techni	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L		1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage		100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No Reply		14	5	9	5	9	5	4	1
		1.4	1.2	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.0	1.8	.6
16 - 20 years		365	190	175	117	248	146	101	82
		36.1	45.5	29.5	40.8	34.2	29.9	45.9	47.7
21 - 25 years		321	125	196	93	228	176	57	40
		31.7	29.9	33.0	32.4	31.4	36.0	25.9	23.3
26 - 30 years		187	68	119	44	143	96	36	30
		18.5	16.3	20.0	15.3	19.7	19.6	16.4	17.4
31 - 35 years		72	16	56	17	55	40	9	10
		7.1	3.8	9.4	5.9	7.6	8.2	4.1	5.8
Over35 years		53	14	39	11	42	26	13	9
		5.2	3.3	6.6	3.8	5.8	5.3	5.9	5.2

4. YEARS OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Religious profession is a highly decisive and qualifying step in the personal formation of a religious as it is his insertion into a religious Order. Therefore, it is important to use the intervening time as a most useful indicator to better understand the religious level reached and of the personal formation of each Brother up to that point. How much more, in fact, are the years of perpetration for the religious profession of a St. John of God Brother, so that he may receive a

solid foundation on the level of human, Christian and religious formation. This specifically calls for an understanding of the different age structures in the Order.

Since our research tells us that the duration of religious profession of the St. John of God Brothers reach as much as 75years, we looked for a basis for some specific steps and decided upon four, leading to silver, gold and diamond profession (jubilee).

1. up to 5 years	= 20.6 %	about 208 St. John of God Brothers
2. from 6 to 25 years	= 27.7 %	about 280 St. John of God Brothers
3. from 26 to 50 years	= 34.5 %	about 349 St. John of God Brothers
4. over 50 years	= 14.6 %	about 148 St. John of God Brothers

The results show that 48.3%, a few less than half the Brothers (488 St. John of God Brothers), have not yet celebrated the 25th years of religious profession, a sign that confirms the Order still has young Brothers.

We now enter a deeper and more detailed stage of the study based upon the variables already defined. That is, those that refer to the geographical distribution of the zones of origin and the availability of those willing to assume vocational animation.

Tab. 1.8 – Distribution of St. John of God Brothers by years of religious profession according to their geographic zones of origin (in V.A. and %)

		Z O N E O F O R I G I N						
		TOTALE	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.AM	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L		1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage		100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
Up to 5 years		208	20	50	23	51	56	8
		20.6	5.3	26.5	27.4	29.7	44.1	13.3
6 - 25 years		280	58	63	51	54	42	12
		27.7	15.3	33.3	60.7	31.4	33.1	20.0
26 - 50 years		349	193	55	9	41	25	26
		34.5	50.8	29.1	10.7	23.8	19.7	43.3
Over 50 years		148	97	15	1	20	2	13
		14.6	25.5	7.9	1.2	11.6	1.6	21.7

The years of religious profession also indicate the younger/elderly age of the Brothers in the Order throughout the respective geographical zones. Tab. 1.8 confirms how much has emerged from the preceding references to the age groups.

Considering Southern Europe, there are only 5.3% Brothers with less than 5 years of religious profession and 25.5% with over 50 years.

When we consider Asia, we see that that region appears to have the youngest proportion of Brothers because 44.1% of them have less than 5 years of profession and only 1' 1.2% with

over the 50 years. This shows that the younger/elderly ratio tells us that Asia has a younger age group. Compared with other geographical zones we see two extremes.

Africa is a region that is also predominately younger with the majority (60.7%) of Brothers that have between 6 and the 25years of religious profession, so this leads to the hypothesis that this zone precedes Asia. In each case, always being based upon this data, 88.1% of the Brothers have less than 25years of profession, surpassing that of Asia (77.2%) or some 10 points among the younger Brothers, and also as many among the more elderly (Africa 11.9% - Asia 21.3%).

The regions of Latin America and Central Europe follow a rather proportionate direction with a prevalence of younger Brothers in Latin America in first place (29.7% in comparison to the 26.5% of Central Europe. and a great presence of elderly in the last group (11.6% for Latin America in comparison to 7.9% for Central Europe). The zones of North America and Australia seem to follow Southern Europe more closely.

To make a relatively deeper study of *formation and the vocation promotion* we utilise Tab.1.9.

Tab. 1.9 – Distribution of the Brothers active in formation and vocation promotion, their academic qualifications and years of religious profession (in V.A. and %)

	5.2 FORMAZ.		5.3 Voc.Prom		Academic Title			
	TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techni	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
Up to 5 years	208	27	181	29	179	99	33	20
	20.6	6.5	30.5	10.1	24.7	20.2	15.0	11.6
6 - 25 years	280	138	142	104	176	133	65	67
	27.7	33.0	23.9	36.2	24.3	27.2	29.5	39.0
26 - 50 years	349	176	173	108	241	169	86	69
	34.5	42.1	29.1	37.6	33.2	34.6	39.1	40.1
Over 50 years	148	72	76	42	106	80	30	15
	14.6	17.2	12.8	14.6	14.6	16.4	13.6	8.7

There are 39.5% of the Brothers who have had charge or are currently in charge of formation; and there is 46.3% entrusted with vocation promotions. The former group belongs to the younger age group of up to 25 years of profession. However it is interesting to observe that in this latter group there is a prevalence (7 points more) of the elderly class with up to 50years of profession (17.2%, in comparison to the 14.6% of vocation promotion). A similar course is also found at the level of the group between 26 and 50years of profession, respectively 42.1% and 37.6%. In other words, those entrusted with formation are usually older than the vocation promoters.

When we compare the qualifications of academic achievement we note that those with university and technical qualifications belong to the older age group. However it is observed that

while in the age groups between 26 and 50 years of profession, the percentages of the degrees are more numerous than the diplomas (respectively 39%, 29.5%, 27.2% than in the second group; and 40.1%, 39.1%, 34.6% in the third group). In the first group of the younger Brothers the course of titles is instead reversed (11.6%, 15%, 20.2%). In other words it seems that these days (praiseworthy or not!) it is easier to get a professional diploma than to undertake a greater cultural engagement.

As for the availability of Brothers prepared to be appointed as vocation promoters, those who replied to the question “*would you like to train as a formator?*”: some 262 Brothers in the affirmative. Some 79% belonging to the youngest group of religious profession; that is 40.5% among this youngest group (the first 5 years of profession) and 38.5% among those from the 6 to 25 years group; while it is appreciated that this appointment is devoted to 15.3% of those found in the group of Brothers who have celebrated their 25th or 50th years of religious profession.

5. THE RELIGIOUS STATUS OF EACH BROTHER

By this title we want to report on the institutional structure of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God Brothers. This is well well-known to the General Curia through the data continually supplied to the General Secretariat. The purpose of the question inserted in the questionnaire was to try to individualise a useful cross-study, while being aware of not to generalise our reflections to the whole Order, by reason of the preceding observations on the sample.

Tab. 1.10 – Distribution of Brothers who replied to the questionnaire based on their religious status and given the data supplied by the General Curia (in V.A. and %)

<i>Actually you are...</i>			
	Questionnaire		General Secretariat 2004
	%	Frequency	Frequency
No reply to the question	0.4	4	---
1. Oblate	0.8	8	16
2. Novice	6.3	64	87
3. Scholastic	15.8	160	186
4. Professed solemn vows	70.1	709	1073
5. Priest	(6.6)	(67)	(141: same as professed)
TOTAL	100	1012	1362

This results with an interesting picture that we can compare with the official data of the General Secretariat to the end December 2004. On the other hand we can individualise the corresponding consistency in the answers to the questionnaire and the sectors with the greatest gaps. The chart doesn't need any comment, other than to highlight the structure furnished to us by the General Curia in regards to the percentage of answers received in comparison to the total number of Brothers in the respective categories. From among the oblates 50% responded; of the novices 73.6%; , the scholastics 86% and 66.1% of the solemn professed.

Based upon the cross-sections of *the geographic zones*, that we can observe in Tab 1.11 we note:

- a greater presence of novices in Asia (14.2% = 18 Brothers), Latin America (12.2% = 21 Brothers); Central Europe (10.6% = 20 Brothers), but their is an absence from Africa and an uncertain presence in North America, Australia (3 Brothers) and Southern Europe (2 Brothers);

- the presence of scholastics in Africa (35.7% = 30 Brothers), Asia (29.1% = 37 Brothers), Latin America (20.9% = 36 Brothers), in Eastern Europe (18% = 34 Brothers) and a small presence in North America and Australia (10% = 6 Brothers), with more in Southern Europe (4.5% = Brothers);
- the numerical prevalence of the professed of solemn vows is by now obvious, though we notice the distribution of the percentage in the various geographical zones: as for instance in Eastern Europe (83.4%) and in Central Europe (66.1%);
- but more interesting is the distribution of the percentage in comparison to other institutional levels of the Order. In fact where there is an absence of Brothers in the initial levels, the percentages increase with the professed; however, it is also observed that there is found to be a shortage of vocations and a lack of interest with the young. Where the percentages of the professed is less, that of the novices and scholastics is elevated;
- finally, the greater number of priests is found in the Eastern Europe (37 Brothers) and Latin America (17 Brothers).

Therefore, by examining the distribution of the Brothers by age groups, the greater part (55 Brothers) of the novices, that is 64 of the total, are placed between 18 and 35 years of age, also there are those who present 8 in the group who are between 36 and 55 years and 1 in the 56 to 74 age group. This confirms that the greatest presence today are adult vocations.

Of the 160 scholastics who answered the questionnaire, 122 are in the first group of 18 to 35 years of age, then there are 35 in the group up to 55 years, and 3 from 56 to 74 years.

Among the solemn professed (122 Brothers), these is the prevalence of the older men from 36 years onwards, numbering 57 more than the younger group between the 18 and 35.

The priests (67 Brothers) primarily are in (56.7% = 38 Brothers) in the group between 56 and 74 years, but also there are 28.3% (19 Brothers) between 36 and 55 years. There are six 75 years or over and 3 in the youngest group.

Analysing the availability to assume formation appointments, 262 Brothers, 29.4% (77 Brothers) were positively available, and also between the scholastics and the novices (13.7% = 36); but obviously the greatest availability is found among the professed, 51.1% (134 Brothers).

Academic titles are non negligible

It is very clearly deduced that only 15 of the 160 scholastics, equal to 9.4%, have tertiary diplomas or doctorates, while 78 (equal to the 48.7%) have reached a level of diploma of professional qualification or technique. Obviously among the 67 priests 68.6% (46 Brothers) have achieved an ecclesiastical license or degree.

We retain that a motive for particular attention can constitute that among the solemn professed Brothers 53.1% (376 Brothers) have only reached a level of diploma of professional qualification or technique and only 23.8% (169 Brothers) have a university baccalaureate.

Tab. 1.11 -distribution per religious status according to geographic zone (in V.A. and %)

		Z O N E of ORIGIN						
		TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L		1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No Reply		4	3	1	0	0	0	0
		.4	.8	.5	.0	.0	.0	.0
Oblate		8	4	2	0	1	1	0
		.8	1.1	1.1	.0	.6	.8	.0
Novice		64	2	20	0	21	18	3
		6.3	.5	10.6	.0	12.2	14.2	5.0
Scholastic		160	17	34	30	36	37	6
		15.8	4.5	18.0	35.7	20.9	29.1	10.0
Solemn Professed		709	317	125	52	97	71	47
		70.1	83.4	66.1	61.9	56.4	55.9	78.3
Priest		67	37	7	2	17	0	4
		6.6	9.7	3.7	2.4	9.9	.0	6.7

A greater precision is subsequently derived from our reflection on the most direct question referring to the title of academic level reached. However, this was a difficult question for many to answer by reason of the motive for the different and heterogeneous interpretations of the different scholastic systems. Nevertheless there was always a real and attentive concern for a substantial professional competence of the Brothers.

6. BROTHERS ACTIVE IN FORMATION

Question 5.2 “*Are you responsible for some section of formation?*” constitutes a substantial portion of this paragraph, and was introduced with the specific purpose to study with great attention the sector of formation (that for clarity we have differentiated from vocation promotion). Actually in its varied articulations based upon the variable cross-section, it is opportune to indicate the scope of the study undertaken.

From the answers received we can gather this basic data

1. **10.9%** are actually responsible for some sector of formation
2. **30.4%** had been so in the past
3. **56.4%** never chosen

First of all we notice that only about 2.3% of the Brothers did not reply to this question: a derisive percentage, that therefore gives reliability in regards to the distribution obtained.

Tab. 1.12 – Distribution of the formators at present by geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	Z O N E of Origin						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	23	14	3	1	2	3	0
	2.3	3.7	1.6	1.2	1.2	2.4	.0
Formators at present	110	24	20	18	25	15	8
	10.9	6.3	10.6	21.4	14.5	11.8	13.3
Formators in the past	308	133	53	22	50	26	24
	30.4	35.0	28.0	26.2	29.1	20.5	40.0
Never been a formator	571	209	113	43	95	83	28
	56.4	55.0	59.8	51.2	55.2	65.4	46.7

This premise emerges from (Tab. 1.12) showing that there are 110 Brothers now occupied in the sector of the formation: this is not a light percentage, considering the quantitative consistence of the Order and also bearing in mind that 30.4% of Brothers had done this work in the past. It deals with a consistent group of Brothers, that have been enriched by a formative experience more than the others, therefore they can be utilised as to train other formators with great advantage for the whole Order.

Tab. 1.13 – Distribution of present *formators* per age groups and religious profession (in V.A. and %)

	Age group					Years professed			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	23	5	4	4	7	5	1	5	8
	2.3	2.1	1.3	1.2	5.3	2.4	.4	1.4	5.4
Formators at present	110	35	48	23	3	17	63	27	3
	10.9	14.6	15.6	7.1	2.3	8.2	22.5	7.7	2.0
Formators in the past	308	11	101	131	62	10	75	149	69
	30.4	4.6	32.9	40.4	47.0	4.8	26.8	42.7	46.6
Never been a formator	571	188	154	166	60	176	141	168	68
	56.4	78.7	50.2	51.2	45.5	84.6	50.4	48.1	45.9

The number of Brothers involved with formation on a global scale is 41.3% of the total number of Brothers in the Order today. They constitute a very strong tradition in formation which the Order can fortunately count upon. This is not only on the social level of transmitting religious values, but also in upon a strong personal individual religious and spiritual formation that has a strong tradition in the Order.

Let us now rather confine ourselves to the territorial distribution that appears to be rather homogeneous. Also it is evident that there is a greater number of formation directors in Africa (21.4% = 18 Brothers) and Latin America (14.5% = 25 Brothers). Obviously the more recently founded regions of the Order have younger Brothers who are already serving as formators.

Also their age group is mostly present among the first two classes (18-35 and 36-55, respectively, 14.6% and 15.6% of the cases; while that of the previously trained formators covers the two latter more mature groups, both in age (40.4% and 47% respectively), and that of religious profession (42.7% and 46.6% respectively), as seen in Tab. 1.13. This latter group is in possession of some academic title, as Tab. 1.14 shows.

Tab. 1.14 – Distribution of present *formators* per academic titles and engaged with formation and vocation promotion (in V.A. and %)

	5.2 FORMAT.		5.3 Vov.Prom		Academic title			
	TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techn.	Diploma Dr.	
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No reply	23	0	23	4	19	15	3	1
	2.3	.0	3.9	1.4	2.6	3.1	1.4	.6
Formators at present	110	110	0	72	38	55	24	25
	10.9	26.3	.0	25.1	5.2	11.2	10.9	14.5
Formators in the past	308	308	0	145	163	119	84	82
	30.4	73.7	.0	50.5	22.5	24.3	38.2	47.7
Never been a formator	571	0	571	66	505	300	109	64
	56.4	.0	96.1	23.0	69.7	61.3	49.5	37.2

From the same table another fact is noticed, namely that there is a certain overlap of duties between formators and vocation promoters. This would appear to make it difficult to adequately manage them both positions together. Of the 110 Brothers engaged in formation, 72 (about 65.4%) are also engaged in vocation promotion, in respect to the 38 (about 34.6%) who are not so engaged.

7. BROTHERS ENGAGED IN VOCATION PROMOTION

Together with the sector on formation already studied is that of vocation promotion, with the specific question; “Are you responsible (or have been) for vocation promotion?” This was to permit us to expressly appraise its consistence.

Also, there was a scarcity of answers to this question (4%), just a little more than the preceding one. Underlining the results of it total, we can observe the distribution in these terms:

1. **8.1%, appears that only 82 Brothers are actually engaged in vocation promotion.**
2. **20.3% had been in the past but are no longer so engaged.**
3. **67.6% have never been vocation promoters.**

Of the 82 Brothers occupied in the vocation promotion, 22 are in Latin America. 19 in Eastern Europe, 15 in the Central Europe, 12 in Africa, 9 in Asia and 5 in North America and Australia. They are predominantly younger Brothers, 33 less than 35 years of age (and of these, 22 have less than 5 years of profession), while 33 are between 36 and 55 years of age. There are also 2 elderly Brothers who are over 75 years of age engaged in this work. 57 out of these also stated that they are engaged in formation, as appears in Tab.1.15.

Tab. 1.15 – Distribution of the present *vocation promoters* per acc. Titles and engaged in formation and vocation promotion (in V.A. and %)

	5.2 FORMATOR			5.3 VOC.PRO.		Academic title		
	TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techn.	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No Reply	40	17	23	0	40	18	8	5
	4.0	4.1	3.9	.0	5.5	3.7	3.6	2.9
Formators now	82	57	25	82	0	37	19	21
	8.1	13.6	4.2	28.6	.0	7.6	8.6	12.2
Formators in the past	205	160	45	205	0	88	50	53
	20.3	38.3	7.6	71.4	.0	18.0	22.7	30.8
Never been formators	685	184	501	0	685	346	143	93
	67.7	44.0	84.3	.0	94.5	70.8	65.0	54.1

The Brothers entrusted with formation as well as vocation promotion have to be prepared with a high-level of studies: at least 21 of them replied saying that they have an ecclesiastical license or degree and 19 a university baccalaureate; also 37 (equal to 45.1%) have a professional diploma.

Among these 82 brothers, it appears that 40 formators are members of the General or Provincial governments and 16 are local Priors or Directors of some centre, while 14 have no other occupation. There is a consistent group of 205 Brothers who say they have done vocation work in the past, while another group of 308 Brothers said they had been formators. Adding the data of those Brothers who declare they have been occupied in formation (418 Brothers) and those who have previously been involved with vocation promotion (287 Brothers), we reach the sum of 705 Brothers, equal to 51.8% of the entire 1362 Brothers in the Order.

Also, accepting that there also has been some overlapping of positions, we note that a good part of the Order, over half in fact, have held formative or vocational positions of some sort. And that is considering the necessary religious and formative preparation that such appointments involve.

A further interesting element emerges among other data in our study, and that is that among the 571 Brothers who declared that they had never been involved in formation some 147 (= 25.7%) said they would be available to be prepared to become formators. Of the 685 Brothers who have never been responsible for vocational work, some 162 (= 23.6%) would be prepared to work in formation.

6. TITLE OF ACCEDEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Professional competence occupies a place of primary importance in an active Religious Order dedicated to charitable activity in hospitality. That is why question #6 in the questionnaire is so important. At least it permits us to make an objective and realistic evaluation of the subjective declaration of Brothers interviewed, not all of who are on the same cultural level in the Order, measured on the indication of academic achievements.

	%	Brs
1. Diploma of professional or technical qualification	48.3	489
2. University degree	21.7	220
3. Ecclesiastic degree (or diploma)	8.7	88
4. Doctorate	8.3	84
5. No reply	12.9	131
TOTAL	100	1012

Also ascertaining that 12.9% (=131 b) have not given an answer to this question, especially among the younger Brothers (61) and the most elderly (23), among those in Eastern Europe (44) and Latin America (35); nevertheless the answers distributed according to these percentages in the panel are useful.

We wanted to make a comparison on the totality of the 1362 Brothers in the Order, on the basis of the objective frequencies already received in the answers to question 6, we are also aware of the limitation of this operation. Nevertheless we have put forward a hypothetical distribution that gives a real photo of part of the organic one that the Order gives.

	Brs	%
1. Diploma of professional or technical qualification	489	35.9
2. University baccalaureate	220	16.1
3. Ecclesiastic degree (or diploma)	88	6.5
4. Doctorate	84	6.2
5. Brothers not responding	481	35.3
Based upon 1362 Brothers	100	

We observe in both panels that the greater part of the Brothers is primarily in possession of a diploma of professional or technical qualifications; about double of those with an university baccalaureate; 1 in 6 of those with an ecclesiastical license and as many 1 in 6 of those with a degree or a doctorate.

Tab. 1.16 –Academic titles distributed by age group and years professed. (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	131	61	18	25	23	56	15	25	23
	12.9	25.5	5.9	7.7	17.4	26.9	5.4	7.2	15.5
Diploma	489	112	137	160	77	99	133	169	80
	48.3	46.9	44.6	49.4	58.3	47.6	47.5	48.4	54.1
Doctorate	220	40	78	77	23	33	65	86	30
	21.7	16.7	25.4	23.8	17.4	15.9	23.2	24.6	20.3
Ecclesiastic diploma	88	11	31	39	6	10	31	35	12
	8.7	4.6	10.1	12.0	4.5	4.8	11.1	10.0	8.1
University degree	84	15	43	23	3	10	36	34	3
	8.3	6.3	14.0	7.1	2.3	4.8	12.9	9.7	2.0

Looking into the total data on the basis of the most significant indications, we observe that the geographical areas with the greatest number of graduates are in Southern Europe (33 Brothers) and Central Europe (23 Brothers) together with Latin America (19).

However, we think it very important and symbolic to study *the younger age group of between 18 and the 35 years*; because, as it appears from the tab. 1.16, this is the group that we notice has not answered the specific question, and also because of those up to 35 years 46.9% of them (almost the half) only posses a professional diploma. The same table also confirmed an increase of the data of the latter age groups with a more elevated percentage of academic titles. Maybe this observation can be adjusted to some extent by reading the column of the 36 and 55 years group whose percentage seems a little higher.

The same reading is also confirmed by the study of the varying years of profession that in another way, in almost a homogeneous measure, reflects the same as the preceding observations.

Then we also asked if they had achieved other specialisations (question 6.1). A positive answer was received from 39.2% of the Brothers (equal to 397 Brothers), especially in Asia (56.7%), North America and Australia (58.3%) and also the two age groups between 36 and 74 years who are more directly involved in professional activity. This is also confirmed by the varying years of profession. A positive answer especially came from those who had already achieved a degree or university baccalaureate (109 Brothers), and those with an ecclesiastical license or degree (90 Brothers).

Of these 397 Brothers, a good section of them said they would feel prepared to offer their service both in vocation promotion (57 Brothers) and that of formation (139 Brothers). Over 370 Brothers indicated the type of specialisation achieved, however, that did not directly answer what the questionnaire asked, so we did not proceed any further with this.

9. INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONS AND OFFICES (QUESTION 7)

Question 7 of the questionnaire helped us to look deeper into the institutional structure of the Order and some of its institutional positions. It asked “*Do you currently serve in the position of...*”. The principal objective of this question was aimed at getting a suitable indicator that is sufficiently articulated and useful. This allowed us to note from the different questions in the questionnaire what explicitly are some categories the Brothers, are qualitatively diversified, especially in the function of their institutional role. Thus this question offers us a double answer. Firstly it allows us to see the organic distribution of the Order group according to some roles, and secondly to explicitly see how the Brothers respond to all the questions of the questionnaire.

The replies obtained in the questionnaire present the following global view.

	Brothers	Percentage
1. Members of the General government	9	0.9
2. Members of the Provincial government	78	7.7
3. Local Priors	136	13.4
4. Directors or Managers of a Centro	86	8.5
5. Formators of postulants, novices, scholastics	36	3.6
6. Vocation Promoters	34	3.4
7. Brothers not holding any office	597	59.0

3.6% of the Brothers interviewed did not respond to this question. It introduces the Order to us as an organic structure rather to be regulated and to which nothing can be objected.

Only one doubt arises to us in reading the results related to the Formators (item 5) and the Vocation Promoters (item 6). Since the question asked for only one answer, the low percentage of whom has answered to this item, in comparison to the data received in questions 5.2 and 5.3 surprised us. Probably this was influenced by the formality to reply to this item in respect to the data received in questions 5.2 and 5.3. Probably it was also influenced the formality by instructions and that was necessity to choose only one of the proposed items, and if there was any overlap of positions that could be confusing.

Continuing our analytical-sociological reading of the printouts at our disposition, we analysed them in accordance with some interesting variable crossovers. The first variable that we analysed (Tab.1.17) introduced us to an image of the organic one according to the distribution of geographical zones: it allowed us to individualise the consistence and distribution of the Brothers who hold positions of responsibility in the different areas where the Order is present.

At first glance, while the consistence of the organic image emerges, the consistence of Latin America relatively introduces some elevated percentages in all the other sectors such as Africa and Asia where it appears they prevail in the centres. Brothers in the two intermediary classes from 36 to 74 years of age, as is shown in table 1.18 in relationship to age and years of profession.

Tab.1.17 - Distribution of Brothers holding office, by geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	Z O N E of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C,Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
General Government	9	3	2	1	1	2	0
	.9	.8	1.1	1.2	.6	1.6	.0
Provincial Goernment	78	24	20	5	13	8	8
	7.7	6.3	10.6	6.0	7.6	6.3	13.3
Prior	136	63	35	7	18	6	7
	13.4	16.6	18.5	8.3	10.5	4.7	11.7
Director of a centre	86	21	12	13	20	17	3
	8.5	5.5	6.3	15.5	11.6	13.4	5.0
Formator	36	5	5	5	10	8	3
	3.6	1.3	2.6	6.0	5.8	6.3	5.0
Vocation promoter	34	8	6	6	9	3	2
	3.4	2.1	3.2	7.1	5.2	2.4	3.3
No office held	597	233	107	46	94	81	36
	59.0	61.3	56.6	54.8	54.7	63.8	60.0

Tab. 1.18 – Dstribution by age groups and years of religious profession (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS OF PROFESSION			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
General Government	9	0	3	6	0	0	1	8	0
	.9	.0	1.0	1.9	.0	.0	.4	2.3	.0
Provincial Government	78	7	43	26	2	1	36	34	6
	7.7	2.9	14.0	8.0	1.5	.5	12.9	9.7	4.1
Prior	136	7	58	60	11	1	52	68	14
	13.4	2.9	18.9	18.5	8.3	.5	18.6	19.5	9.5
Diector of a centre	86	13	45	25	3	6	41	35	4
	8.5	5.4	14.7	7.7	2.3	2.9	14.6	10.0	2.7
Formator	36	11	17	5	2	7	20	7	2
	3.6	4.6	5.5	1.5	1.5	3.4	7.1	2.0	1.4
Vocation promoter	34	20	9	4	1	16	14	2	2
	3.4	8.4	2.9	1.2	.8	7.7	5.0	.6	1.4
No office held	597	175	131	183	102	171	116	181	107
	59.0	73.2	42.7	56.5	77.3	82.2	41.4	51.9	72.3

10. THE TRAINING OF FORMATORS (Question 9)

One of the problems that concern the Church, and particularly the major superiors of religious Orders and congregations, is the formation of their members. With that in mind, Vatican Council II advised them to update and their Constitutions and to substantially reform their respective *ratio studiorum*.

In reference to this promptness to comply with the Council they all began to investigate their situation and specifically directed themselves to this purpose. We have tried to specify and verify the direction and sensibility of the Brothers, questioning them on their preparation to offer their service in one or another of the present sectors of the **formation** in the Order, through a direct question expressly to sound out this availability: **“For which sector of formation do you feel yourself prepared to lend your service”?** (question 9).

We have received the followings results relating to the various sectors in which the Brothers felt prepared to work in. Given that 7.6% did not reply to the question, the valid answers are distributed in the following order:

1. 14.4% feel prepared to take on Vocation promotion,	146 Brothers
2. 8.8% “ “ “ for postulants	89
3. 7.4% “ “ “ for novices	75
4. 8.5% “ “ “ for scholastics	86
5. 53.4% do not want to work in any of these sectors	540

Putting aside that half the number of Brothers (53.4%, equal to 540 Brothers) do not feel prepared to work within the field of formation; nevertheless, the 39.1% of the Brothers who feel to some extent that they would fit into this very precious formative activity today is a good sign. The Hospitaller Order intends to walk with the times, but that often introduces a great deal of problems and difficulties that often are not always adequately appreciated.

Wanting to enter into the details of every single sector, that of vocation promotion received the greatest adhesions in all the geographical areas, except those of Eastern Europe, North America and Australia. Tab. 1.19 shows that the Brothers prepared to be available for such an appointment in the Order are from Central Europe 22.8%, Africa 20.2%, Latin America 18.8% and Asia 15%, equal in the total to one in 146 Brothers.

If we refer to the choices in the age groups (Tab. 1.20), the younger group are most prepared to take on vocation promotion, 24.7%, that is one younger Brother in four). Accordingly, those who feel prepared for the formation of postulants (13.4%); for novices (10%), and much less for scholastics (7.1%). In the latter two groups the percentage age of Brothers who are available is much less. Nevertheless there is still a limited group of Brothers among the 56 and the 74 years of age groups who are prepared to undertake the responsibility, especially for the Scholastics.

The analysis according to the years of religious profession serves to confirm the preceding reflections. If instead we consider the relationship with the various academic titles, it is pleasing to see that those Brothers with higher academic degrees feel more inclined and available for the formation of novices and scholastics.

Tab. 1.19 – Brothers who are prepared to work in the various sectors of formation in accordance with geographic zones (in V.A and %)

	Z O N E O F O R I G I N						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	76	49	9	2	10	6	0
	7.5	12.9	4.8	2.4	5.8	4.7	.0
Vocation promoter	146	28	43	17	31	19	8
	14.4	7.4	22.8	20.2	18.0	15.0	13.3
Formator of postulants	89	17	9	14	23	23	3
	8.8	4.5	4.8	16.7	13.4	18.1	5.0
Formator of novices	75	6	14	11	14	27	3
	7.4	1.6	7.4	13.1	8.1	21.3	5.0
Formator of scholastics	86	18	16	4	15	27	6
	8.5	4.7	8.5	4.8	8.7	21.3	10.0
No office held	540	262	98	36	79	25	40
	53.4	68.9	51.9	42.9	45.9	19.7	66.7

The replies we received from the geographical zones, tell us that Southern Europe has not answered this question

Tab 1. 20 - Brothers who are prepared to work in the various sectors of formation in accordance with age groups and religious profession (in V.A. and %)

	A G E G R O U P					Y E A R S P R O F E S S E D			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reoly	76	11	15	28	19	11	9	30	21
	7.5	4.6	4.9	8.6	14.4	5.3	3.2	8.6	14.2
Vocation promoter	146	59	43	32	10	52	46	32	12
	14.4	24.7	14.0	9.9	7.6	25.0	16.4	9.2	8.1
Formator of posulants	89	32	43	14	0	33	36	17	2
	8.8	13.4	14.0	4.3	.0	15.9	12.9	4.9	1.4
Formator of novices	75	24	36	14	1	17	32	23	1
	7.4	10.0	11.7	4.3	.8	8.2	11.4	6.6	.7
Formator of scholastics	86	17	39	27	3	15	35	33	2
	8.5	7.1	12.7	8.3	2.3	7.2	12.5	9.5	1.4
No office held	540	96	131	209	99	80	122	214	110
	53.4	40.2	42.7	64.5	75.0	38.5	43.6	61.3	74.3

In Eastern Europe there is a movement to start vocation promotion 22.8% (= 43 Brothers) but they seem less inclined to work with postulants (4.8%). The Brothers in Africa are particularly active in all the sectors but are less attracted toward the scholastics (4.8%). Latin America shows certain vitality for vocation promotion and postulants, but is less keen to work with novices and scholastics. Asia is very active in all the formative sectors with percentages elevated everywhere. A certain problem exists with listing Latin America, Southern Europe, North America and Australia, especially in regards to the formation of novices and scholastics.

11. PREPARED TO TAKE ON THE DUTY OF FORMATION (question 10.)

This question is not as concerned to see how many are prepared, as it was in the preceding question, but rather the availability and positiveness of their attitudes towards the formative activity of the Order. Obviously, availability presupposes an awareness of a suitable preparation, as the relation of the percentages of academic qualifications show that the higher the qualifications the grater is the offer to take on formation duties. Evidently, where actual competence is lacking, there is nevertheless a clear and generous availability that constitutes a good predisposition to have suitable preparation.

Such availability shows quite a generous and generalized readiness in 25.9%, namely one Brother in four. This is especially so in Latin America, Asia and Africa, with half the young Brothers between the ages of 18 and 35 years (121 Brothers) and of those between the ages of 36 and 55 (103 Brothers), among whom there are holders of degrees or doctorates. There is an increase in the resistances of Brothers from Southern Europe especially among the elderly ones. There are explicit signs showing that this availability could be developed further and this is confirmed by the data so far introduced.

12. CONCLUSION

This first part of the study is the chapter relating to *general information* on the Brothers who have answered the questionnaire. It already introduces a very rich data of documentaries, reflections, stimuli and orientations that can stimulate action in the Order's renewal and development in its apostolic activity. In the following pages we will try to synthesise the most salient elements in order to give a panorama underling the most important dimensions, the critical and problematic elements and the available points of strength that stimulate active development.

12.1 First of all, it is worthwhile emphasising some positive elements:

1. We appreciated the positive and constructive attitude by which the Brothers welcomed the questionnaire and collaborated with it. Although a consistent number of Brothers did not, or did not wish to, answer for different reasons, those who did answer showed great attentiveness and seriousness in completing the answers to the questions.

2. The precise information that was given, permitted us to more correctly construct a series of variable and very important indicators to continue the study and to build up a picture of indicators that are very pertinent to the analytical deepening of each answer to the questionnaire.

3. Of the 1362 Brothers in the Hospitaller Order, we received 1012 replies to the questionnaire that sufficiently gave us a representative "sample" of the Order, that we divided into 6 geographical areas: Southern Europe with 380 interviewed (equal to 37.5%), Central Europe with 189 Brothers (equal to 18.7%), Africa with 84 Brothers, equal to 8.3%, Latin

America with 172 Brothers equal to 17%, Asia with 127 Brothers equal to 12.5% and North America and Australia with 60 Brothers equal to 5.9%. The proportion of the distribution of Brothers seems to correspond sufficiently with the Order's presence in the different zones of the world.

4. The study of the age structure in a positive way underlines a consistent group of younger Brothers in the 35 age group. This is a quarter of the total number of Brothers (one in four), in comparison to 13% of Brothers over 75 years. The group between the age groups of 36 and 74 years consists of Brothers who are still active, 62.3% Brothers, and are mostly employed in managerial positions.

The percentage of those who are under 70 years of age and are still sufficiently active today is about 80%, equal to 806 Brothers. This also indicates to us that they are young enough and a rich resource of the Order. These Brothers are generally younger and are in Asia and Africa; while those who are more elderly are generally found in Southern Europe and North America and Australia. The position of Latin America lies about halfway between the two previously mentioned.

The relationship between the younger and elderly Brothers is balanced in favour of the younger group on a global (0.81); those who are sufficiently younger are specifically found in the sectors of the General and Provincial government, and the younger group in formation and vocation promotion.

5. The age of Brothers entering the novitiate, while recognising the presence of adult vocations in the Order, shows us on the global scale that more than a third 36.1% (= 365 Brothers) entered between the ages of 16 and 20. This is especially so in the areas of ancient Christian tradition. Almost another third (31.7%) entered between 21 and 25 years of age, and 18.5% between the ages of 26 and 30 years.

With the increase in the entrance age of the Brothers there is also a decrease in the late entries: between 31 and 35 years 7.1% Brothers and over 35 years 5.2% (= 53 Brothers). Adult vocations seem to prevail today and in Latin America and Central Europe, while in Southern Europe the majority is in the younger group.

Entry at a younger age favours a better religious and spiritual formation, and also the opportunity for better academic qualifications. These days in the groups of a more advanced age there is prevalence in titles of simple diplomas of professional qualification or technique. They are more directly operational in the medical field, but they seem to lack a good grounding in the Order's formative and vocational programs. These require a higher academic and humanistic formation and therefore a larger curriculum than those of a longer permanence in the Order such as those who entered the novitiate at a younger age. In fact, of those Brothers having responsibilities in the sector of the formation, three quarters (75.4%) entered before the 25 years of age.

6. A deeper study of the duration of the Brothers' religious profession helps to relatively confirm the structure of younger age group in the Order and the individualisation of the geographical zones, slower (Southern Europe) and/or in the more recent development of the Order in Asia and Africa.

7. Our studies of the Brothers' religious situation, distributed in the varied sectors of oblates, novices, scholastics, professed of solemn vows and priests tells us nothing new,

however it helps to highlight the nature and composition of status in the Order. This ascertains a strong presence of novices in Asia, scholastics in Africa, solemn professed in the two European zones and priests in Southern Europe and Latin America. In comparing our data with that of the General Secretariat we were able to observe where the greatest lacks of answers to the questionnaire came from.

More interesting is the distribution percentage of the Brothers in age groups: the greater part of the novices (55 Brothers) is less than 35 years; there is only one elderly Brothers over 56 years. Of the 160 scholastics interviewed, 122 are in the younger group, and 35 have less than 55 years. Among the solemn professed (122 Brothers), there are also 57 in the youngest group. The priests (67 Brothers) are generally over the 56 years group, however there is a small group 28.3% (19 Brothers), three of them quite young.

It appears to us that a not unimportant dimension relates to the academic titles, of which only 15 of the 160 scholastic (9.4%) hold an ecclesiastical licence or a doctorate, while 78 (equal to 48.7% of them) hold a diploma of professional qualification or technique. It is pleasing to note that among the 67 priests interviewed, 46 of them, equal to 68.6%, have achieved an ecclesiastical license or degree. This is an asset of notable importance for formation.

Nevertheless, we retain that this can constitute a matter for attention since more than half of the younger solemn professed (376 Brothers) have only a diploma of technical or professional qualification and only 23.8% (169 Brothers) hold a university baccalaureate.

8. A further positive element to be used as a precious resource is the formative capital of Brothers who are currently operational, or have been formators in the past. There are quite a few of them so serving now or in the past. They constitute 41.3% of the total number of Brothers. Fortunately the Order can count on them, not only on the social level of transmission of religious values but also in respect to passing on the simple, personal and individual spiritual formation that he has gained during his years of experience.

The actual formators (110 Brothers) are generally distributed in homogeneous way throughout the whole Order. However, they are more prevalent in Africa (21.4% = 18 Brothers) and in Latin America (14.5% = 25). They are in the first two groups of younger Brothers, 14.6% and 15.6% respectively; while the two last more mature groups, both of age and of religious profession, have more former formators.

Another detail emerges in this ambience and it often returns in other answers. It is the certain overlap of charges we observed among the Brothers occupied in formation and those who are in vocation promotion. One would think that joining these two duties together would make both of them more difficult to manage. In fact of the 110 Brothers who are active in formation, 72 (equal to 65.4%) also handle vocation promotion; only 38 Brothers have a fulltime formative appointments.

9. The Brothers responsible for vocation promotions are fewer (82) in comparison to the formators, but they are younger. In the majority of cases they hold higher academic qualifications, generally of the humanistic type and they are mostly present in Africa and in Latin America. Also they have the problem of overlapping appointments, generally of management. We notice a small methodological problem due to the discrepancy of some data in comparison to the questions 7 and 9.

10. The problem of the academic titles, mentioned above is already under scrutiny by the superiors and the General government of the Order. We simply mention this because almost half of the Brothers said they only have a diploma of technical or professional qualification. This seems to us rather a limitation in the number of titles of a higher level, especially of a humanistic and theological character. These last mentioned seem to be concentrated in both European zones and Latin America. Nevertheless around 2/5 of the total number of Brothers interviewed declared to also have other specialisations.

11. A further element of great importance for the better understanding of the institutional structure of the Order, and to construct an indicator of quality, is the variation of the cross sections in the whole questionnaire in regards to the distribution of responsibilities currently covered in the Order. At first glance we notice an image of the organic one proportionally distributed according to the different geographical areas. However, that of Latin America appears more homogeneous, structured and consistent, because it relatively introduces an elevated percentages in all the sectors, while in Africa and in Asia they seem far more tied up with the structures of the Centres.

We were positively impressed by the fact that the positions of the government both General and Provincial, as well as local, are occupied by more mature Brothers with a certain experience. They belong to the two groups of intermediary age from the 36 to the 74 years, however there are still quite a few younger Brothers.

The problem relative to the very reduced number of active Brothers (question 7) in the field of vocation promotion (34 Brothers), in respect to other data, could perhaps find a solution in an interpretative hypothesis by choosing only one of the 7 positions indicated by the items, and in the case of overlap that of a more binding nature of time or concern. In fact only a few, effectively 34 are assembled (3.4%) that fulfil this assignment.

12. Finally, another positive element is seen in the generous and generalised availability of Brothers to give a priority to devoting himself to being available to take on the duty of formation: 25.9% (=262 Brothers) interviewed say they are prepared to take on this responsibility. This is a great resource that needs to be sensibly utilised.

Some 39.1% of the Brothers interviewed said they are willing to take on the various sectors of formation: vocation promotion (14.4%), postulants (8.8%), novices (7.4%) and scholastics (8.5%). Most of these Brothers who volunteered are in the first three younger age groups leaving the formation of scholastics to the more mature Brothers.

In confirmation of our preceding observations, it is an extraordinarily comforting factor that the Brothers who are the most willing to take part in the formation program are those with high academic qualification, especially in the humanistic and theological subjects.

12.2 Critical and problematic elements

Among the critical elements gleaned from these first analyses, is the lack of young vocations emerging in Southern Europe, a trend observed in other religious congregations and Orders. Perhaps to this you can add a dearth in higher academic studies, especially those of a humanistic nature. We have seen how very valuable and necessary higher academic studies is for formators and those entrusted with vocation promotion. Our investigations tell us that there is a prevalence of diplomas in technical or professional qualifications, which, in our opinions, seems to lower the level of the humanistic and theological formation in Order.

Also, the overlap of duties among the busy personnel charged with vocation promotion among youth and at the same time busy with the formation program, provokes a certain uneasiness in those who are interested and this is reflected in the observations of the questionnaire.

12.3 Theoretic resources

All the positive elements highlighted above already constitute a solid base of available resources for a systematic work of renewal. However, we wish to highlight a few more points.

1. A ready resource of great importance is made up in the relatively younger age groups throughout the Order. This is confirmed by the positive relationship between the younger and the elderly Brothers. In fact half the number of Brothers interviewed, that is equal to 508, are under the age of 52 years, while those with over 80 years number 55, about one Brothers in ten.

This resource supplied by the younger Brothers predominating the age groups is evidence of how many of them are engaged in formation and vocation promotion over the number with responsibilities of General and Provincial government.

2. Entry into the novitiate at a younger age is more favourable for the best religious formation, as well as a better academic and humanistic formation, over that of those of a more advanced age.

3. The plentiful and generous availability of the Brothers interviewed to undertake tasks of formation and vocation promotion constitutes a positive factor, a valuable and rich resource.

4. The apostolic activity of the Order in Africa and Asia seems promising enough, especially in the field of the formation and vocation promotion. However, in Europe this seems rather to stagnate and to find some resistances, even if there is a greater number of Brothers specifically prepared for this purpose.

In conclusion, in the logic of this first chapter a great deal of data of a structural character has emerged. This gives us a photo of the Order on a world-wide scale. It is also very articulate and deep in its diverse components. The analysis detailed with the variable cross sections, has permitted us to underline aspects that otherwise would perhaps be passed over unnoticed; while now they can constitute a point of departure for further studies of the Order's formative, religious and governance characteristics in the light of the renewal of the Church in the new millennium that we have just begun.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF GOD.

The requirements of fidelity to vocation and the intensifying of one's consecrated life, constantly asks us to defend and verify its quality, consistence, dimension and religious orientation in order to keep us on the right path to strengthen and develop our religious life. It deals with the dynamic fidelity to our own charism, outlined in the Apostolic Exhortation "*The Consecrated Life*" (1996). Faced with the difficulties of the present day and the strong challenges of contemporary society that present some charismatic and apostolic developments over that of progressive maturation of one's own religious identity: a religious identity that is given by consecration and mission. Consecration that is a gift of God, is a divine action given to the religious and is a grace freely lavished upon him. But it is also consecration of the religious to God in answer to his vocation in the Church when he professed the evangelical counsels. The emphasis on the problem of identity helps to give safety to the person and the institution, but it also helps to make the consecrated life more proper for its mission. Thus in the 1980s it became more frequent to read theological articles on religious life as a key to consecration, replacing the category of "*religious life*" with that of "*consecrated life*". In this theology of consecration there is a concern to affirm that religious life exists not as a priority for doing something, but to belong to Someone and to live for Him through the profession and exercise of the evangelical counsels.

"Dynamic fidelity" and profession of the evangelical counsels have therefore become the most binding objectives for Religious Orders which have a constant concern for verification and need to be confronted. Also, in our case such detailed study has assumed value and special importance that is translated in a specific area of study in the questionnaire, precisely to bring about a reflection on the identity of our consecration in the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

Therefore in this first section we have considered five dimensions held to be constitutive to verify the consistence and quality of our consecration and that is the study of:

- 1. the greatest difficulties in living our hospitaller consecration (Q.11)
- 2. the original motivations of our entrance into the Order (Q.12),
- 3. the reasons for abandonment and leaving the Order (Q. 18)
- 4. spiritual direction as an instrument of perseverance in vocation (Q.13),
- 5. difficulties placed in the way of practicing religious vows (QQ.14-17).

1. THE GREATEST DIFFICULTIES IN LIVING OUR HOSPITALLER CONSECRATION (Q.11)

It is not easy living our hospitaller consecration in contemporary society where it does not find any support, even if the service we give is urgently needed. Various challenges that severely provoke the dynamic fidelity to our charism arise from all sides. We therefore have sought to make a general study of some of the possible difficulties that the St. John of God Brothers can meet in the way of living the identity of their hospitaller consecration.

1.1. Let us look at this together

To the question “What difficulty you meet with in living the identity of the hospitaller consecration”? The followings results can be seen in the following panel.

0.	<i>No reply</i>		5.2. %
1.	No difficulty	32.5	
2.	Scarcely any faith or prayer life		26.5
3.	Insufficient human formation		22.7
4.	Insufficient Christian and Religious formation		20.2
5.	little clarity on identity of the hospitaller vocation		15.6
6.	inability to assume appointments in consecrated hospitaller life		8.8
7.	<i>Other</i>		7.7

This first question immediately introduces us to one of the most delicate problems of religious life, namely that of interiorising one’s own identity and vocational personal consecration. It is with sense of satisfaction that about a third of the Brothers openly declared not to find any difficulty. However, for the rest, there are difficulties of various kinds that cannot be overlooked. Here alarm bells are ringing that urge us to open our eyes and to make a very strong effort in the formation of the Brothers.

For at least one Brother in four has the difficulty of an inadequate life of faith and prayer (26,5%). Following this, more than one in five (22.7%) recognise in his formation a lack of sufficient human maturity, to which is another 20.2% is added insisting that aspects of Christian and religious formation are lacking. There is besides 15.6% who identify the hospitaller vocation as becoming obscure, even saying this has already happened. It cannot be passed over that 8.8% of the Brothers (more or less one in ten) accuse themselves of being incapable of assuming responsible appointments in the consecrated hospitaller life. If you add to this 7.7% who report other difficulties it comes to 16.5% - that is equal to 167 Brothers.

What we have here is a warning sign that urgently calls for a increasingly precise clarification and deepening of our religious charism, especially in these times of uncertainty, in which contemporary society in many countries in general also faces a crisis, unless we do something about our formation now. Unless our formation does not wake up to a precise sense of evangelical transcendence, in a climate of diffused comfort and efficient health organisations, what would our religious consecration serve us?

1.2. Specific analysis

The detailed analysis, through a more analytical tables of the single sections with their variations will allow us to subsequently to delve deeper into the these general indications. The 53 Brothers who have not given any answers mostly originate from Africa and Southern Europe, and from many of the elderly.

Tab. 2.1 – Principal difficulties in living one’s hospitaller consecration, according to geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

Z O N E of ORIGIN*

	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	53	21	9	11	7	2	3
	5.2	5.5	4.8	13.1	4.1	1.6	5.0
Lack of personal formation	230	72	28	24	50	48	8
	22.7	18.9	14.8	28.6	29.1	37.8	13.3
Lack of Christian formation	204	78	33	20	30	40	3
	20.2	20.5	17.5	23.8	17.4	31.5	5.0
Lack of O.H. Charism	158	57	37	11	13	23	17
	15.6	15.0	19.6	13.1	7.6	18.1	28.3
Lack of faith	268	93	35	24	38	65	13
	26.5	24.5	18.5	28.6	22.1	51.2	21.7
Incapacity for religious life	89	26	12	7	18	15	11
	8.8	6.8	6.3	8.3	10.5	11.8	18.3
No difficulties	329	141	73	12	58	23	22
	32.5	37.1	38.6	14.3	33.7	18.1	36.7
Other	78	29	19	5	17	2	6
	7.7	7.6	10.1	6.0	9.9	1.6	10.0

* Throughout this report all the tables will show the Total in the first column followed by 100%. This is because they were disclosed by selections of the same question.

The 32.5% of those Brothers serenely living the identity of their hospitaller consecration who don't find any difficulty, principally reside in the two European zones, SE (37.1%) and CE (38.6%) and in the USA (36.7%). Relatively scarcer are the percentages in Africa and Asia. Above all are the elderly Brothers who are happy living their hospitaller identity. The same applies to the Brothers who hold professional credentials and university degree, and particularly those who do not hold positions of responsibility (35.1%), and 24.1% of the members of the General and Provincial governments, the 33.8% of the local superiors and 15.7% of the formators.

In conclusion, a third of the Brothers find no difficulty in living their identity of hospitaller consecration. This is a confirmation of how important it is to always maintain a constant vigilance in their lives, and to persist in the ascetic strengthening of their religious consecration, which these days is particularly under pressure from the various tendencies and life-styles in contemporary society.

The most serious difficulties are recognized in the scarce life of faith and prayer (26.5%) reported above by the Brothers in Asia (51.2%), Africa (28.6%), and Southern Europe (24.5%); from the two younger age groups, from those with diplomas and graduates (31.4%), from those responsible for General and Provincial government (35.6%), and also from Brothers who direct formation (33.2%).

Tab. 2.1 – Principal difficulties in living one’s hospitaller consecration, according to age groups and years of profession (in V.A. and %)

AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFFED			
TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+

T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	53	13	13	15	11	12	13	17	9
	5.2	5.4	4.2	4.6	8.3	5.8	4.6	4.9	6.1
Lack personal formation	230	76	70	60	23	63	71	64	30
	22.7	31.8	22.8	18.5	17.4	30.3	25.4	18.3	20.3
Lack Christian formation	204	49	76	61	18	44	70	63	25
	20.2	20.5	24.8	18.8	13.6	21.2	25.0	18.1	16.9
Lack O.H. Charism	158	49	45	50	13	41	44	49	20
	15.6	20.5	14.7	15.4	9.8	19.7	15.7	14.0	13.5
Lack faith	268	74	99	77	16	73	85	84	16
	26.5	31.0	32.2	23.8	12.1	35.1	30.4	24.1	10.8
Incapacity for religious life	89	32	20	25	12	24	26	23	12
	8.8	13.4	6.5	7.7	9.1	11.5	9.3	6.6	8.1
No difficulty	329	40	85	131	67	39	67	141	74
	32.5	16.7	27.7	40.4	50.8	18.8	23.9	40.4	50.0
Other	78	17	23	25	12	13	19	30	13

Tab. 2.3 - Principal difficulties in living the consecrated hospitaller life according to the Brothers in charge of formation and vocation promotion and the Brothers with academic titles (in V.A. and %)

5.2 FORMAT | 5.3 Vov.Pro | TITLE OF STUDIES |
|TOTAL| Yes | No | Yes | No | Techn | Diploma | Dr. |

T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No Reply	53	20	33	16	37	23	7	10
	5.2	4.8	5.6	5.6	5.1	4.7	3.2	5.8
Lack personal formation	230	77	153	56	174	123	38	26
	22.7	18.4	25.8	19.5	24.0	25.2	17.3	15.1
Lack Christian formation	204	87	117	47	157	116	39	29
	20.2	20.8	19.7	16.4	21.7	23.7	17.7	16.9
Lack Christian formation	158	60	98	45	113	71	35	31
	15.6	14.4	16.5	15.7	15.6	14.5	15.9	18.0
Lack faith	268	114	154	64	204	119	60	54
	26.5	27.3	25.9	22.3	28.1	24.3	27.3	31.4
Incapacity for religious life	89	29	60	25	64	43	18	9
	8.8	6.9	10.1	8.7	8.8	8.8	8.2	5.2
No difficulty	329	146	183	99	230	154	84	57
	32.5	34.9	30.8	34.5	31.7	31.5	38.2	33.1
Other	78	40	38	29	49	33	24	16
	7.7	9.6	6.4	10.1	6.8	6.7	10.9	9.3

If greatest difficulty is noticed in the scarcity a faith life, there immediately follows a couple of difficulties found in the ambience of their formation as being insufficient both in the field of the human formation (22.7%), and in that of Christian and religious formation (20.2%).

It is lamentable that in the first place are the Brothers in Asia (37.8%), Africa (28.6%) and Latin America (29.1%). These are the young Brothers between the ages of 18 and 35 years (31.8%) who have less than 5 years of profession (30.3%) and only a simple diploma (25.2%). The second group of Brothers in Asia and Africa, aged between 36 and 55 years hold a higher diploma, the same applies to the Brothers Provincial.

There is a similarity with the preceding difficulties that must be studied, namely that 8.8% of the Brothers stated that they were incapable of assuming appointments in the consecrated hospitaller life such as vocation promoters and superiors. These are especially found in the USA (18.3%) and Asia (11.8%); among the younger ones (13.4%) with less than 5 years of profession.

Finally one in seven of the Brothers interviewed complained about a lack of clarity on the identity of the hospitaller vocation (15.6%), especially in the USA (28.3%), Central Europe (19.6%) and Asia (18.1%), in the younger age groups with less than 5 years of religious profession, among those holding diplomas or doctorates are the formators (20%), especially those in vocation promotion.

Tab. 2.4 - principal difficulties in living the identity of the hospitaller consecration, according to the office held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD					
	TOTAL	G&P	Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633	
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5	
No Reply	53	2	15	4	32	
	5.2	2.3	6.8	5.7	5.1	
Lack personal formation	230	19	47	14	150	
	22.7	21.8	21.2	20.0	23.7	
Lack Christian formation	204	26	51	13	114	
	20.2	29.9	23.0	18.6	18.0	
Lack O.H. Charism	158	14	32	14	98	
	15.6	16.1	14.4	20.0	15.5	
Lack faith	268	31	61	17	159	
	26.5	35.6	27.5	24.3	25.1	
Incapacity for religious life	89	9	9	9	62	
	8.8	10.3	4.1	12.9	9.8	
No difficulty	329	21	75	11	222	
	32.5	24.1	33.8	15.7	35.1	
Other	78	7	19	10	42	
	7.7	8.0	8.6	14.3	6.6	

Picking up the principal elements of this question, we notice that about a third of the Brothers say they have no difficulty in living their identity of hospitaller consecration. They point out that the greatest difficulties are in distinguishing the lack of faith life, prayer, insufficient human, Christian and religious formation. A smaller percentage had a more reduced percentage in regards to the lack clarity in the Order's charism, as well as the difficulty to assume appointments in the consecrated life. This emerges especially in the younger age groups in the USA, but a great deal more among the Brothers of Asia and Africa.

A positive homogeneity must be noticed also in the distribution of the all the answers that came in, about 20-30%. This is a sign of a notable reflection and attention given to the answers. Being also the first question in this the section, we retain that the appointment of Brothers has been very high. A certain methodological and interpretative perplexity remains however in the reading of the data, that is, even if the text of the question was clearly particularised to perceive one's own difficulties, it sometimes caused us to suspect that the subject has responded both as to what refers to him alone or maybe, in some cases, to the Brothers in general; in every case the answers received were very precise and easy to identify.

2. ORIGINAL MOTIVATION OF ONE’S VOCATION. (Question 12)

The search of the motivations of one’s choices constitutes a central dimension of human action, and much more so when it needs to come up with a definitive orientation of one’s own life. Therefore, to study the reasons why a person chooses to enter the consecrated life according to the charism of St. John of God is a very important aspect to bring together the foundations upon which a life could be constructed and to appraise its possibility of applying it in the actual situation.

2.1. Looking at it together

The answers received on the five items to question 12 of the questionnaire, introduce a very interesting development. First of all this deals with a question welcomed by everybody, only 1% did not respond. Around 19% of the Brother added other motivations according to the places they came from. In third place the remaining answers were perfectly polarised around two separate blocks of the choices. There was a group of reasons they put forth, dealing with the patients as the object of a particular example of charity (40% Brothers = 813). A second nucleus was less clearly outlined and more heterogeneous, around 20% (390 Brothers), leaving a more individual item isolated.

0. No response	1.0 %
1. Dealing with the poor and/or patients	42.3
2. Testimony of a confrere in serving the sick	38.0
3. Advice of a spiritual director	20.5
4. Fraternal life of the Brothers	18.1
5. An illness in my personal life	8.9
6. Another	19.3

This makes a strong impact, each of the 80% of the Brothers interviewed said they had personal experiences with sick persons, or were influenced by the example of another Brother’s charity in the service he extended to the suffering. Therefore, these are very meaningful in influencing one’s decision.

In second place of importance is the valuable guide of a spiritual director which clearly emerges (20.5%) in the Accompaniment stage and in the orientation of one’s choices. This can subsequently be seen (immediately in the following question, but then also in the suggestions proposed at the end of the questionnaire) and it still constitutes one of the fundamental cornerstones of the blossoming and perseverance of vocations.

The third meaningful element always remains as the example of the fraternal life of the Brothers (18.1%): it is the “*see how they love one another.*” In the social climate when we search for love and affection, this can be sought in religious communities if they open their heart and genuinely experience it.

2.2. Specific analysis

Moving on to a more specific analysis, we notice that: *an encounter with a poor and/or the sick*, was the principal reason for one’s vocation for 42.3%, equal to 428 Brothers. This was

especially so in Asia (63%), Central Europe (57.1%), Africa, and much less so in Southern Europe (27.4%); among the younger Brothers (60.3%) and the second age group (52.8%), and far less among the Brothers over 56 years of age. This means that this motivation was not very strong in the past, but is becoming more and more so today, especially among those who are willing to undertake vocation promotion.

**Tab. 2.5- Motivation for one's vocation.
Distributed per geographic zone (in V.A. and %)**

Z O N E of ORIGIN							
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	10	5	2	0	1	1	1
Example of a Brother	385	158	45	34	66	66	16
A spiritual director	38.0	41.6	23.8	40.5	38.4	52.0	26.7
Experience with the poor	207	99	24	26	24	22	12
	20.5	26.1	12.7	31.0	14.0	17.3	20.0
Fraternal life	428	104	108	40	70	80	26
	42.3	27.4	57.1	47.6	40.7	63.0	43.3
Personal illness	183	55	24	14	39	30	21
	18.1	14.5	12.7	16.7	22.7	23.6	35.0
Other	90	20	28	12	13	14	3
	8.9	5.3	14.8	14.3	7.6	11.0	5.0
	195	98	41	9	32	7	8
	19.3	25.8	21.7	10.7	18.6	5.5	13.3

A larger group of Brothers instead, gave the main reasons shown in the higher percentage, the charitable example of a Brother (44.1%). Besides that, there is a marginal percentage of other reasons given (Other, 27.5%), as shown in Tab. 2.6.

In the second place there are more, and a third of the Brothers say they were influenced by *the example of a confrere in the service of the sick* (38%). The majority come from Asia (52%) and Southern Europe (41.6%); here the age group is mainly between 36 to the 74 years of age; those with diplomas are 45% as shown in Tab. 2.7.

Tab.2.6- Motivation for one's vocation. Distributed by age and profession (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	Other
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	10	1	2	3	2	0	2	4	2
	1.0	.4	.7	.9	1.5	.0	.7	1.1	1.4
Example of a Brother	385	80	117	143	44	64	109	154	53
	38.0	33.5	38.1	44.1	33.3	30.8	38.9	44.1	35.8
A spiritual director	207	36	56	72	41	29	61	72	41
	20.5	15.1	18.2	22.2	31.1	13.9	21.8	20.6	27.7
Experience with the poor	428	144	162	92	28	130	151	107	30
	42.3	60.3	52.8	28.4	21.2	62.5	53.9	30.7	20.3
Fraternal life	183	64	49	48	20	55	52	46	25
	18.1	26.8	16.0	14.8	15.2	26.4	18.6	13.2	16.9
Personal illness	90	28	35	16	10	30	30	20	7
	8.9	11.7	11.4	4.9	7.6	14.4	10.7	5.7	4.7
Other	195	24	42	89	37	24	30	88	44
	19.3	10.0	13.7	27.5	28.0	11.5	10.7	25.2	29.7

Tab.2.7 – Motivation for one's vocation. Distributed by formation duties and academic studies (in V.A. and %)

	TOTAL	5.2 Formator		5.3 Voc. Pro.		Title of Study		
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Techn.	Diploma	Dr
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No Reply	10	4	6	5	5	5	3	0
	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.7	.7	1.0	1.4	.0
Example of a Brother	385	154	231	111	274	220	70	58
	38.0	36.8	38.9	38.7	37.8	45.0	31.8	33.7
A spiritual director	207	89	118	63	144	106	49	29
	20.5	21.3	19.9	22.0	19.9	21.7	22.3	16.9
Experience with the poor	428	157	271	110	318	208	87	76
	42.3	37.6	45.6	38.3	43.9	42.5	39.5	44.2
Fraternal life	183	83	100	63	120	80	43	30
	18.1	19.9	16.8	22.0	16.6	16.4	19.5	17.4
Personal illness	90	32	58	21	69	40	17	15
	8.9	7.7	9.8	7.3	9.5	8.2	7.7	8.7
Other	195	90	105	53	142	82	53	36
	19.3	21.5	17.7	18.5	19.6	16.8	24.1	20.9

At about a distance of 20 points comes *the orientation of a spiritual director (20.5%)*, that was the choice of 31% Brothers in Africa and 26.1% in Southern Europe, but it was also second in order of priority from the more elderly (31.1%) and loner in profession; but only in a small measure among the graduates and major superiors as seen in Tab.2.8.

The fraternal life of the Brothers was the prevailing reason for 18.1% (183 Brothers) of the Brothers interviewed. This was especially in the USA ((35%), among the younger group (26.4%), Provincials (24.1%) and those entrusted with vocation promotion (27.4%).

**Tab.2.8 – Motivation for vocation.
Distribution by office held (in V.A. and %)**

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Priorc	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	10	1	4	0	5
	1.0	1.1	1.8	.0	.8
Example of a Brother	385	30	85	25	245
	38.0	34.5	38.3	35.7	38.7
Spiritual director	207	10	45	10	142
	20.5	11.5	20.3	14.3	22.4
Experience with the poor	428	39	96	34	259
	42.3	44.8	43.2	48.6	40.9
Fraternal life	183	21	26	14	122
	18.1	24.1	11.7	20.0	19.3
Personal illness	90	8	13	13	56
	8.9	9.2	5.9	18.6	8.8
Other	195	15	51	12	117
	19.3	17.2	23.0	17.1	18.5

In conclusion, we want to confirm the importance that some Brothers have had for their vocation by reason of their experience with the sick and the witness of charity towards them. An appreciation is also attributed to the fact that spiritual direction and guidance had in forming their vocation. This confirms the necessity and importance to have a guide in the most important circumstances of one's religious life.

The following paragraph will study the other reasons that, instead, don't favour the perseverance in a vocation and are mainly held to be responsible for the loss of perseverance in the Order.

3. REASONS GIVEN FOR ABANDONING AND LEAVING THE ORDER (question 18).

Religious congregations in the Church have often faced this question in a systematic way with seminars and various studies. However our objective here is to study the perception and the awareness that the Brothers have of this phenomenon, so that brought out into the open they can be aware of it and seek the remedy.

3.1. Let us look at this

In studying this paragraph we would like to show the conscience of the entire Order in regards to prevailing reasons for which a Brother leaves the Order. This constitutes a tool of great importance in order to analyse the various differentiations of evaluation in the different geographical zones, age groups and institutional office. The answer to this question was unanimous: only 1.8% did not respond, while 7.7% retain valid other reasons.

In the following panel we point out the evaluation of the Brothers on this matter according to the distribution in numerical order.

0	No reply	1.8%
1.	Neglect of the spiritual life	55.1
2.	Difficulty with interpersonal relations in community life	37.0
3.	Loss of motivation for vocation	33.74.
4.	Activism that extinguished the identity of consecrated life	20.8 5.
5	Other motives affecting vocation	18.3
6	Family pressure	2.5
7	Other	7.7

Unlike the other answers of this section, here the 55.1% percentage is the highest number of questions received and this clearly stands out. More than half the Brothers agreed that it was *negelct of the spiritual life* (55.1%). The strong agreement for this reason tells us that the Brothers want to correct this situation in the Order and give high consideration improving the supernatural life in the formation of the Brothers, for when this is absent the effects are disastrous to vocational perseverance. In second place they said the reasons were in the human order, such as life in common and Fraternal life. In fact, only only about 20 points of difference mark this couple of reasons tha had an almost identical evaluation; namely *difficulties of interpersonal relationships in community life* (37%). Following this about a third of the Brothers (33.7%) said it was a weakening and disappearance of vocational motivations.

A few secondary judgments with similar percentages reports of the *activism that extinguishes the identity of the consecrated life*(20.8%) and of motivations of a sentimental type (18.3%). The Order is barely aware of the difficulties deriving from the family pressures (2.5%). It was considered more frequent by the Brothers in the USA (6.7%), Africa (4.8%) and Asia (4.7%), as well as from the younger age group. (5.4%).

3.2. Specific analysis

In entering this analysis let us specifically look deeper into its details.

Indeed, *neglect of the spiritual life* (55.1%) was the reply given by more than half of the Brothers, in Asia (65.4%), among the most elderly (65.2%), the formators (58.1%), the Priors (59%); less than the average was the judgment of the other geographic zones, above all the USA (as much as 40%), but also of the groups younger in age (52.3%) and profession (49%): which comes agrees more with the judgment above.

Difficulties in interpersonai relationships in the community life (37%) on the human level is a factor that stands out as the second motivation recognised, and this is prevelant in Africa (52.4%), then in Asia (48.8%), the USA (43.3%) and in Ventral Europe (40.7%); in the first two age groups, and the same finding is expressed by the Provincials and those entrusted with vocation promotion (43.8%). Much less is the opinion given by Brothers in Southern Europe (32.6%), and those over 56 years of age (36,4%) ,particularly for the most elderly (24.2%), and the local Priors.

Tab. 2.9 – Reasons given for the abandonment of vocation from the Order, distributed by geographic zone (in Brothers and %)

	Z O N E of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	18	7	6	0	3	0	2
	1.8	1.8	3.2	.0	1.7	.0	3.3
Loss of motivation	341	137	68	28	55	32	21
	33.7	36.1	36.0	33.3	32.0	25.2	35.0
Activism	211	75	40	15	53	19	9
	20.8	19.7	21.2	17.9	30.8	15.0	15.0
Outside influences	185	73	26	7	37	30	12
	18.3	19.2	13.8	8.3	21.5	23.6	20.0
Poor interpersonal relations	374	124	77	44	41	62	26
	37.0	32.6	40.7	52.4	23.8	48.8	43.3
Neglect spiritual life	558	215	100	44	92	83	24
	55.1	56.6	52.9	52.4	53.5	65.4	40.0
Family pressures	25	3	3	4	5	6	4
	2.5	.8	1.6	4.8	2.9	4.7	6.7
Other	78	35	16	6	13	3	5
	7.7	9.2	8.5	7.1	7.6	2.4	8.3

Tab. 2.10 – Reasons given for the abandonment of vocation from the Order. Distributed per age and profession groups (in Brothers and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	18	3	2	5	7	1	2	7	5
	1.8	1.3	.7	1.5	5.3	.5	.7	2.0	3.4
Loss of motivation	341	83	96	116	40	68	88	127	47
	33.7	34.7	31.3	35.8	30.3	32.7	31.4	36.4	31.8
Activism	211	55	75	56	25	45	64	70	29
	20.8	23.0	24.4	17.3	18.9	21.6	22.9	20.1	19.6
Outside influences	185	43	53	70	17	41	47	63	28
	18.3	18.0	17.3	21.6	12.9	19.7	16.8	18.1	18.9
Poor interpersonal relations	374	95	128	118	32	87	116	130	34
	37.0	39.7	41.7	36.4	24.2	41.8	41.4	37.2	23.0
Neglect of spiritual life	558	125	165	174	86	102	159	193	89
	55.1	52.3	53.7	53.7	65.2	49.0	56.8	55.3	60.1
Family pressures	25	13	3	5	4	9	6	5	3
	2.5	5.4	1.0	1.5	3.0	4.3	2.1	1.4	2.0
Other	78	12	22	30	14	13	20	28	16
	7.7	5.0	7.2	9.3	10.6	6.3	7.1	8.0	10.8

Loss of motivation for vocation (33.7%) comes above all from the Brothers of the two European zones, the USA (35%), and from those who hold positions of responsibility, as well as from the younger groups; but a great deal less is this reason given by the Brothers in Asia (25.2%).

Tab. 2.11 – Reasons given for the abandonment of vocation from the Order. Distributed per positions held in office (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P	Gvt	Prior	Forma- None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	18	0	4	0	14
	1.8	.0	1.8	.0	2.2
Loss of motivation	341	31	77	24	209
	33.7	35.6	34.7	34.3	33.0
Activism	211	23	48	15	125
	20.8	26.4	21.6	21.4	19.7
Outside influence	185	16	45	16	108
	18.3	18.4	20.3	22.9	17.1
Poor interpersonal relations	374	34	76	27	237
	37.0	39.1	34.2	38.6	37.4
Neglect of spiritual life	558	50	131	30	347
	55.1	57.5	59.0	42.9	54.8
Family pressure	25	0	2	0	23
	2.5	.0	.9	.0	3.6
Other	78	4	14	13	47
	7.7	4.6	6.3	18.6	7.4

One of the last two items regarding motivations for abandonment was considered to be the *activism that extinguishes the identity of the consecrated life (20.8%)*: this is especially so in Latin America (30.8%), among the Brothers under the 55 years of age, and among the holders of diplomas (26.2%), the Provincials (26.4%) and those entrusted with vocation promotion.

Lesser importance is attributed to motivations of a sentimental type (18.3), also from Provincials, not however from the Brothers in Asia (23.6%), Latin America (21.5%), and the USA (20%); from the age group of 56-74 years, (21.6%), the formators (22.9%), and from diploma holders and graduates (26.7%).

In conclusion, the Brothers generally consider among the motivations for the abandonment of the Order, prevailing reasons of a spiritual sort, such as carelessness of the spiritual life. These could fall far short of the real reason for abandoning one's vocation, and generally it is not negligence, but rather (the younger group and formators note this) it is experiencing real difficulties in interpersonal relationships within community life. Excessive activism and sentimentality are problems that surround thing issues, one of former being basic and the latter effectual, but both always accompany moments of crisis.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION (question 13)

"Going it alone! But when one falls down there is no one to lift him up again". Spiritual direction is one of the most frequent recommendations of the spiritual and ascetical life and while in the past it took a passive form, today it has become active.

4.1. Let us look carefully

Particularly today the importance and value of the *spiritual director* seems to resurface strongly as a spiritual companion, for which they need to have a particular gift and an accurate preparation. This is because he/she has not only been called only to be a kind of technical

instructor on things that concern the religious life, but has also to have the difficult yet beautiful task to intelligently and wisely interpret of the heart of a person and the action of God. He/she needs to have the ability to raise questions that today are often hidden and to work through them with courage and trust. However hidden, they are still there. His/her assignment is to touch young people deeply and to arouse in them a sense of wonder, to comfort and conduct them to a positive experience of silence, to ask them to look into themselves, and help them with the gift of spiritual discernment and suggestion to perceive the action of God, and to find the correct words to express and indicate what in a familiar way, interprets the prophecy of each vocation.

Our research confirms this necessity in a tangible way from the majority of the Brothers interviewed (only 1% did not respond). In replying to this question a variety of answers came in articulating various proposals to what the questionnaire required.

Even more than 9.2% of the Brothers proposed other solutions in regard to the question: *“When you are faced with difficulties in your consecrated life, to whom do you go to for counsel?”*

0. No reply	1.0%
1. Spiritual director	39.9
2. Confessor	38.0
3 A confrere	30.8
4 The Prior/Provincial	18.8
5. Formator	9.2
6. No one	6.6
7. Other	9.2

We see from this overview that there are three figures that emerge more than others that apply to difficult situations. Indeed, we see a similarity in the elevated percentages to the two classical institutions of spiritual director (39.9%) and confessor (38%) To this is added these days the figure of a trustworthy Brother (30.8%) which we see in the majority cases. On a lower scale are the percentages for the local Prior/Provincial (18.6%), only one Brother in ten says a formator; and 6.6% don't confide with anybody.

It cannot be underestimated that the 9.2% who are not in the classical and traditional groups can be applied to other figures. This applies mainly to Brothers who are 36 years onwards.

4.2. Specific analysis

The analytical study of the single items in comparison to the different variables brings forth some very typical illuminating elements for some of the main choices.

Tab. 2.12 – Brothers who seek counselling for difficulties in the consecrated life. Distribution per geographical zones (in V.A. and %)

	ZONE of Origin						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	10	6	3	0	0	1	0
	1.0	1.6	1.6	.0	.0	.8	.0
Spiritual director	404	117	63	36	80	76	32
	39.9	30.8	33.3	42.9	46.5	59.8	53.3
Prior	188	90	24	18	31	17	8
	18.6	23.7	12.7	21.4	18.0	13.4	13.3
A formator	93	15	13	9	30	25	1
	9.2	3.9	6.9	10.7	17.4	19.7	1.7
A confrere	312	108	41	50	41	49	23
	30.8	28.4	21.7	59.5	23.8	38.6	38.3
A Confessor	385	153	109	14	53	39	17
	38.0	40.3	57.7	16.7	30.8	30.7	28.3
No one	67	34	12	2	9	9	1
	6.6	8.9	6.3	2.4	5.2	7.1	1.7
Other	93	29	28	3	18	5	10
	9.2	7.6	14.8	3.6	10.5	3.9	16.7

In all the geographical zones and in all the age groups, the spiritual director and the confessor remain the two classical figures of reference over all the others. Particularly for the more elderly Brothers it is the confessor who constitutes the central person, even more so than the spiritual director who realistically decreases in importance with the passing of the years. However, for the younger Brothers the spiritual director constitutes a more important and necessary person of referral.

All of this also effects our consideration of the geographical zones, because the appeal of a person as a spiritual director is mostly found in those zones where the presence of the younger age groups prevail; as in Asia (59.8%), Africa (42.9%) and Latin America (59.8%). But also in the USA (53.3%) (Tab. 2.12); and somewhat lesser in the two European zones where there is a prevalence of elderly Brothers.

Reporting more directly are the Brothers' years in profession. Spiritual direction is sought by half the younger age groups, followed in small measure by those in their sixties and the majority of the most elderly (Tab.2.13).

It is more valued by the formators and vocation promoters who seem to prefer the spiritual director to the confessor (Tab. 2.14). The same attitude is also held by the graduates and those with diplomas.

Finally there is growing confidence *toward some confrere* (30.8%), that is assuming far more importance and frequency especially in Africa (59.5%) besides holding the first place for the confessor and of the spiritual director. Also in Asia (38.6%) and in the USA (38.3%), as also the younger age groups, but the Brothers who hold no special responsibilities feel less to have this need.

Tab. 2.13 – Brothers who ask for counsel in the difficulties of the consecrated life. Distributed per age groups and years of profession (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5 a	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	10	3	1	3	2	2	1	3	2
	1.0	1.3	.3	.9	1.5	1.0	.4	.9	1.4
Spiritual director	404	117	144	108	31	109	132	117	36
	39.9	49.0	46.9	33.3	23.5	52.4	47.1	33.5	24.3
Prior	188	29	62	67	29	30	44	77	35
	18.6	12.1	20.2	20.7	22.0	14.4	15.7	22.1	23.6
A Formator	93	69	17	3	3	69	11	3	4
	9.2	28.9	5.5	.9	2.3	33.2	3.9	.9	2.7
A confrere	312	84	131	84	12	62	125	101	15
	30.8	35.1	42.7	25.9	9.1	29.8	44.6	28.9	10.1
A Confessor	385	73	80	147	81	65	79	145	86
	38.0	30.5	26.1	45.4	61.4	31.3	28.2	41.5	58.1
No one	67	8	19	24	15	5	19	27	15
	6.6	3.3	6.2	7.4	11.4	2.4	6.8	7.7	10.1
Other	93	13	33	31	15	10	31	33	15
	9.2	5.4	10.7	9.6	11.4	4.8	11.1	9.5	10.1

Tab. 2.14 – Brothers who ask for counsel in the difficulties of the consecrated life. Distributed per formation duties and academic titles (in V.A. and %)

	TOTAL	5.2 FORMATOR		5.3 VOV.PRO		TITLE OF STUDY		
		Yes	No	Ys	No	Techn.	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L I	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No reply	10	4	6	2	8	3	3	1
	1.0	1.0	1.0	.7	1.1	.6	1.4	.6
A spiritual director	404	174	230	142	262	193	77	77
	39.9	41.6	38.7	49.5	36.1	39.5	35.0	44.8
The prior	188	83	105	56	132	101	43	27
	18.6	19.9	17.7	19.5	18.2	20.7	19.5	15.7
A formator	93	16	77	13	80	47	16	7
	9.2	3.8	13.0	4.5	11.0	9.6	7.3	4.1
A confrere	312	126	186	90	222	133	87	63
	30.8	30.1	31.3	31.4	30.6	27.2	39.5	36.6
A confessor	385	172	213	102	283	204	72	54
	38.0	41.1	35.9	35.5	39.0	41.7	32.7	31.4
No one	67	17	50	10	57	38	10	10
	6.6	4.1	8.4	3.5	7.9	7.8	4.5	5.8
Other	93	38	55	33	60	40	26	18
	9.2	9.1	9.3	11.5	8.3	8.2	11.8	10.5

Having recourse to the *formator* (9.2%) is rather generally neglected, but not however in Latin America and Asia, nor in the younger age groups. 9.2%, equal to 93 Brothers, ask *advice from others*, especially the Brothers in Central Europe and the USA, and also among the middle-aged Brothers and the Priors.

In conclusion, while not finding a high percentages or great difference in the various figures of reference, there is enough evidence in favour of the classical cases of the spiritual director and the confessor.

5. DIFFICULTIES FOUND IN THE PRACTICE OF THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS (QUESTIONS 14-17)

Each religious institute in searching to identify the answer to the need of a precise physiognomy, invokes the theology of the charism that is embodied in the different procedures in every day observance of the evangelical counsels. It would be utopian to imagine that their practice is absolutely easy and painless. The theology of the Cross, also illuminated by the Easter Resurrection, marks the centre point of the consecrated life, the exercise of the evangelical counsels and how they are applied. It would seem a futile sociological exercise to study the difficulties that arise from it. However, it would be wise to put them into practice during spiritual formation since they are the actual social transformations (the John of God way) that are now confronting religious institutes and the Church.

From here on the reason for this new paragraph that intends to individualise the perception, judgment and feelings of the Brothers in respect to the ways of exercising this fundamental sector of religious life, constituted by the three evangelical counsels and the Hospitaller Order's fourth vow of hospitality.

5.1. Difficulties met with today in living the vow of chastity (question 14)

In the most recent doctrine of Vatican Council II and also in the Constitutions of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, consecrated chastity "is an excellent gift of grace" (Const. ,10-11) that helps us to live our own sexuality in the Holy Spirit and with the help of the Holy Spirit", consequently to do so is energised in a relationship and life that aids one to grow in both human and Christian dimensions.

0.	No reply	6.6%
1.	Emotional immaturity	33.9
2.	Inability to live interpersonal relationships	33.9
3.	Difficulty in living an integrated emotional-sexual life	32.7
4.	Abuse of the means of social communications.	29.2
5.	The vow of chastity has little value today	6.2
6.	The vow of chastity not helping personal development	1.6
7.	Other	9.1

For this the religious, with the help of the Holy Spirit, sublimates his sexuality and in so doing energises an open relationship with everybody, a real source of a relationship to all to the salvation of the Christ. In this sense it finds in the formation of authentic mature interpersonal relationships according to the conditions of one's religious state and to his fidelity and the apostolate.

We have come across 6 dimensions in our analysis that today could present some obstacles to serenely in living the evangelical counsels and the vow of chastity. We asked all the Brothers in the Order to express themselves by answering this question: "***Which difficulty do you come across today for living the vow of chastity?***" Their opinions on this subject appear in the preceding panel.

The results received first of all confirm a clear opposition of the totally of the Brothers to the current mentality according to which the vow of chastity would not help in the development

of the person (1.6%) these days. However, there are around 63 Brothers who retain that today is does not have so much value (6.2%), especially in Africa (13.1%), Asia (13.2%), Latin America (7.6%), and from the younger age groups (10.5%), the 63 and over groups who constitute 40% of the Brothers, and especially the 62% of the diploma holder in comparison to the graduates (17%) and doctorates (6%).

In second place it seems that the most frequent difficulties pertain to an affective immaturity (33.9%); the inability to authentically live interpersonal relationships (33.9%), and difficulty in living an affective-sexual dimension in an integrated way.

Tab 2.15 - Difficulties in living the vow of chastity. Distributed per geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	Z O N E of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	67	36	13	3	7	6	2
	6.6	9.5	6.9	3.6	4.1	4.7	3.3
Immaturity	343	103	66	29	65	59	21
	33.9	27.1	34.9	34.5	37.8	46.5	35.0
Superficiality	331	114	59	41	54	43	20
	32.7	30.0	31.2	48.8	31.4	33.9	33.3
Poor interpersonal relations	343	132	51	27	51	48	34
	33.9	34.7	27.0	32.1	29.7	37.8	56.7
Chastity does not help	16	6	3	0	1	4	2
	1.6	1.6	1.6	.0	.6	3.1	3.3
Abuse of the media	295	105	58	20	52	52	8
	29.2	27.6	30.7	23.8	30.2	40.9	13.3
No value these days	63	15	7	11	13	13	4
	6.2	3.9	3.7	13.1	7.6	10.2	6.7
Other	92	44	23	2	15	5	3
	9.1	11.6	12.2	2.4	8.7	3.9	5.0

These three situations received the same percentages, since they are considered all on the same level and are interconnected. By contrast and with the same strength of data, we hear that there are protective factors for serenely living in chastity within the fullness of human maturity. What is required is to have a knowledge on how to integrate feelings and sexuality in the widest sense of personality besides the fact that it is important to establish authentic interpersonal relationships. It is the ability to manage one's own human relationships in a proper way to make choices and to understand their real virtuosity, emotional integration, rational and physical in the whole human person in functioning for the Kingdom. This can be a suitable formative subject to work at in both initial and permanent formation. The middle-age Brothers have indicated this for particular attention.

Thirdly, a little less than a third of the Brothers (29.2%) recognise that the abuse of the social communications and/or the inability to check their use is a precise difficulty to serenely living a life of chastity.

Going deeper into the matter with a more analytical study we can notice some particular situations. The situation of affective immaturity (33.9%) is still fairly generic and is easy to attribute. However it is especially noticed by the Brothers in Asia (46.5%) and Latin America

(37.8%), but less so in Southern Europe (27.1%) where interpersonal relationships is seen to be higher (34.7%).

Tab 2.16 - Difficulties in living the vow of chastity. Distributed per age groups and years professed (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP				YEARS PROFESSED				
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	67	11	5	29	20	8	7	29	18
	6.6	4.6	1.6	9.0	15.2	3.8	2.5	8.3	12.2
Immaturity	343	92	114	99	35	89	90	116	41
	33.9	38.5	37.1	30.6	26.5	42.8	32.1	33.2	27.7
Superficiality	331	88	124	98	18	79	111	106	26
	32.7	36.8	40.4	30.2	13.6	38.0	39.6	30.4	17.6
Poor interpersonal relations	343	76	113	121	32	61	104	135	37
	33.9	31.8	36.8	37.3	24.2	29.3	37.1	38.7	25.0
Chastity no help	16	2	8	6	0	1	8	6	0
	1.6	.8	2.6	1.9	.0	.5	2.9	1.7	.0
Abuse of the media	295	68	88	90	46	56	90	87	54
	29.2	28.5	28.7	27.8	34.8	26.9	32.1	24.9	36.5
No value these days	63	25	18	11	9	19	21	14	7
	6.2	10.5	5.9	3.4	6.8	9.1	7.5	4.0	4.7
Other	92	13	23	29	26	12	21	34	23
	9.1	5.4	7.5	9.0	19.7	5.8	7.5	9.7	15.5

In regards to the groups of age and profession, it is the first two groups that particularly pinpoint this, as also do the formators (38.8%) and Priors(34.2%), but less so the Provincials (28.7%).

Difficulty to live in an affective-sexual dimension in a integrated way (32.7%) is especially found in Africa (48,8%) with 16 points of difference in comparison to the general average: this is observed among the younger Brothers in the first groups of age and profession. Much less so are the more elderly Brothers. This is also seen among those with who hold technical diplomas and university degrees, and those who hold positions of responsibility both in government and formation.

Also the abuse of the means of social communication (29.2%) is a risk factor to be considered in living the vow of chastity. This came especially from the elderly Brothers (34.8%), the diploma holders (31.9%), the Brothers in Asia (40.9%) and above all from the superiors in the General and Provincial governments (41.4%).

Tab 2.17 - Difficulties in living the vow of chastity. Distributed by office held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt.	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	67	0	13	1	53
	6.6	.0	5.9	1.4	8.4
Immaturity	343	25	76	22	220
	33.9	28.7	34.2	31.4	34.8
Superficiality	331	37	93	27	174
	32.7	42.5	41.9	38.6	27.5
Poor interpersonal relations	343	33	81	19	210
	33.9	37.9	36.5	27.1	33.2
Chastity no help	16	0	4	2	10
	1.6	.0	1.8	2.9	1.6
Abuse of the media	295	36	57	20	182
	29.2	41.4	25.7	28.6	28.8
No value these days	63	2	8	12	41
	6.2	2.3	3.6	17.1	6.5
Other	92	4	17	7	64
	9.1	4.6	7.7	10.0	10.1

In conclusion ,the greatest difficulties have especially been seen in Asia, among the younger Brothers, but also among the middle aged ones and from the superiors and those with university degrees.

5.2. Difficulties found today in living the vow of poverty (question 15)

In today's consumer society, personal austerity and the vow of poverty constitute a witness of separation from possessions and of counterculture, often debated a great deal today both within and outside of religious Orders and religious congregations both with the individual and community levels.

1. Misuse of the means destined for the hospitaller mission.	38.2%
2. Not enough time to share my time with the poor	31.4
3. Not enough time for the apostolate	24.8
4. No separation of goods of the community from goods of the works	18.3
5. Little availability for service inside the work (external appointments)	14.0
6. other	
7. No reply	7.4

Here you can see some diversified responses in comparison with the data of the preceding question on the vow of chastity where consensus uniformly hung upon three particular situations. From the items chosen by the Brothers we can pick out concrete dimensions that come generally from their understanding of poverty these days, not just for the individual but also for the institution. The preceding panel clearly illustrates the answers the Brothers gave to the question: ***“What difficulties do you meet with in living the vow of poverty today?”***

Indeed, a little less than 40% of the Brothers maintain that the principal difficulty is the misuse of the means destined for the hospitaller mission, to which another 18.3% is added, in relation to the non separation of the possessions of the community from the those of the work,

which brings the total to 56.5%. These are two dimensions of a predominant structural and institutional character. These especially touch the decisions of the competent authority, therefore the responsible superior, whose reaction will better be able to be illustrated by the following analysis of the details.

There is a second group of answers that concern the predominant individual aspects and report on the scarce sensitivity to sharing one’s time and qualities with the poor (31.4%). Those who do not find much time in their apostolic work (24.8%) and in the little availability for service inside the work (14%) can be translated into an escape to search for external appointments. They add up to reach in a differentiated way to 70.2% of the Brothers.

Finally there is 15.3%, equal to 155 Brothers, who declare to have other opinions in comparison to the preceding ones. It would be worth while considering them, and adding those who did not reply, we come up with the figure of 22.7% of the replies which we agreed was not a small number.

Tab 2.18 - Difficulties in living the vow of poverty. Distributed by geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	Z O N E o f O R I G I N						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	75	40	15	6	7	2	5
	7.4	10.5	7.9	7.1	4.1	1.6	8.3
Misuse of money	387	113	57	53	67	79	18
	38.2	29.7	30.2	63.1	39.0	62.2	30.0
Misuse of time	318	110	61	17	45	54	31
	31.4	28.9	32.3	20.2	26.2	42.5	51.7
Misuse of goods	185	64	45	25	25	19	7
	18.3	16.8	23.8	29.8	14.5	15.0	11.7
Neglecting the apostolate	251	90	38	22	47	43	11
	24.8	23.7	20.1	26.2	27.3	33.9	18.3
Outside interest	142	48	19	9	28	26	12
	14.0	12.6	10.1	10.7	16.3	20.5	20.0
Other	155	71	34	7	30	7	6
	15.3	18.7	18.0	8.3	17.4	5.5	10.0

Returning to a more specific analysis of the subject, we want to face this according to the two great blocks of answers: firstly those that are structural and secondly those that are more individual.

Responding with answers of the institutional type, we observe that *the misuse of the means destined for the hospitaller mission (38.2%)* is a difficulty considered by most Brothers, especially in Africa (63.1%) and Asia (62.2%) with elevated percentages. This comes from almost half the younger Brothers (49.8%) and from the 46.1% of those between in the 6 to 25 years of profession, and 44.4% of formators. However, it is not particularly seen so by the Priors and Provincials.

The separation of the goods of the community from the goods of the work (18.3%) is a particularly sensitive issue among the Brothers in Africa (29.8%), and the Brothers in the 36-55 years age group (22.5%), and also the General government (21.8%) and the Provincials (20.7%).

The most individual and personal dimension of the poverty was verified on three aspects, *sharing of one's own time and quality, appointment in the apostolic work and fidelity to service in the work.*

The difficulties found in the first case are mostly seen in the USA (51.7%) and Asia (42.5%), where it seems the lack of time seems to be the issue and this is confirmed by the Brothers in their replies (cfr.Tab.2.19). This is especially so in the two intermediary age groups (32-34%), but also in the younger group (30.1%) and those who have diplomas (33.9%). This gap has been emphasised and also strengthened from all the Brothers who hold responsible positions on the Provincial (37.9%) and local levels (36.5%), and also the formators (40%).

Tab. 2.19 - Difficulties in living the vow of poverty. Distributed by age groups and years professed (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PRIFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	75	13	15	23	22	13	11	28	18
	7.4	5.4	4.9	7.1	16.7	6.3	3.9	8.0	12.2
Misuse of money	387	119	116	109	40	97	129	109	44
	38.2	49.8	37.8	33.6	30.3	46.6	46.1	31.2	29.7
Misuse of time	318	72	99	112	34	67	76	124	43
	31.4	30.1	32.2	34.6	25.8	32.2	27.1	35.5	29.1
Misuse of goods	185	41	69	62	12	32	71	63	16
	18.3	17.2	22.5	19.1	9.1	15.4	25.4	18.1	10.8
Neglecting the apostolate	251	66	76	79	28	56	68	88	33
	24.8	27.6	24.8	24.4	21.2	26.9	24.3	25.2	22.3
Outside interests	142	37	51	36	16	34	43	45	16
	14.0	15.5	16.6	11.1	12.1	16.3	15.4	12.9	10.8
Other	155	28	43	53	29	25	37	56	33
	15.3	11.7	14.0	16.4	22.0	12.0	13.2	16.0	22.3

Limited responsibility in one's apostolate (24.8%) is considered to be a difficulty in relationship by one Brother in four, especially in Asia (33.9%), Latin America (27.3%) and Africa (26.2%), in the younger age group (27.6%), and the Provincials (28.7%), but especially so from the formators and vocation promoters (31.4%)

The way of escape from work (14%) is complex with results that are relatively limited. This is more so in the zones of Asia, the USA and Latin America, and in both age and profession groups of the younger Brothers, those with degrees and diplomas, but above all from those who do not hold positions of responsibility (15%).

In conclusion, most notable difficulties were reported by the Brothers who live in Asia, Africa and Latin America, from among those Brothers who are less than 55 years of age, and especially among the younger ones, and holders of diplomas or degrees and the Priors and holders of responsible positions In the USA it was found to be difficult to share time and availability; while in Asia, Africa and Latin America it was the misuse of the means destined for use in the hospitaller mission. Both European zones said there was not enough time for sharing services with the poor.

Tab. 2.20 - Difficulties in living the vow of poverty. Distributed per responsible offices held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTALE	G&P.Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	75	1	13	0	61
	7.4	1.1	5.9	.0	9.6
Misuse of money	387	32	76	31	248
	38.2	36.8	34.2	44.3	39.2
Misuse of time	318	33	81	28	176
	31.4	37.9	36.5	40.0	27.8
Misuse of goods	185	19	46	13	107
	18.3	21.8	20.7	18.6	16.9
Neglecting the apostolate	251	25	57	22	147
	24.8	28.7	25.7	31.4	23.2
Outside interests	142	13	30	4	95
	14.0	14.9	13.5	5.7	15.0
Other	155	15	28	15	97
	15.3	17.2	12.6	21.4	15.3

5.3. Difficulties found in living the vow of obedience. (question 16)

The verification about the vow of obedience was taken in the fullest examination of dimensions (7) and has found to be quite a minor percentage of refusals (3.6%) and digressions (about: 6.8%). The panel shows the results to the question *“What difficulty do you meet with today in living the vow of obedience?”*

1.	<i>No reply</i>	3.6%
2.	Profound lack of communication with superiors	29.9
3.	Incapable of renouncing one’s own ideas for a community project	24.1
4.	Strong assertion of one’s own autonomy	23.3
5.	Not understanding the concept of authority as service	23.3
6.	Lack of community meetings to discern the project of life	21.3
7.	Personal proud and haughty attitude	18.3
8.	Little willingness to assume requests of the superiors	17.4
9.	Other	6.8

The lack of sincere communication with the superior (29.9%) clearly stands out above the others and in general emerges as the most diffused difficulty. Apart from this first difficulty, the other answers present quite a diversified panorama treating of other matters almost equally.

In fact, with only a few points of difference, here follow other problems of an individual, spiritual, internal and ascetic character that are tied up closely to one’s personal formation. These days they mostly derive from the current mentality and lifestyles diffused as individualism, the inability to abdicate one’s own ideas for a community project (24.1%) and the strong search of one’s own autonomy (23.3%). They are all elements that structure the personality of the Brothers and that they are also expressed in attitudes of pride and personal haughtiness (18.3%) that results in little availability to take on the requests and responsibilities proposed by the Superior (17.4%).

In regards to these very individualistic and disregarding aspects, it seems necessary to do much intensive work on the level of formation, both initial and permanent, of the religious life, because indeed they are also a condition of the lifestyle of the community and the spirit of its organizational structure.

In fact, there are they who ascertain that the community only gathers a few times to discern about the project of life (21.3%); but on the other hand there have been complaints made to us (and it is a strong enough criticism) that the one who holds the role of responsibility does not live it any more as a service (23.3%). Much more than in the preceding answers, the Brothers in their articulation to this question, have bravely and frankly opened up a window to the Order. Soon we will go into this analysis more with more detail to better discern meaning of these assertions.

Tab. 2.21 - Difficulties in living the vow of obedience. Distributed by geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	ZONE of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	36	21	10	0	3	0	2
	3.6	5.5	5.3	.0	1.7	.0	3.3
Unwilling for responsibility	176	51	34	13	30	42	6
	17.4	13.4	18.0	15.5	17.4	33.1	10.0
Personal interests over com.	244	88	44	22	38	37	15
	24.1	23.2	23.3	26.2	22.1	29.1	25.0
Few community meetings	216	75	52	18	27	29	15
	21.3	19.7	27.5	21.4	15.7	22.8	25.0
Authority not service	236	84	29	25	53	31	14
	23.3	22.1	15.3	29.8	30.8	24.4	23.3
No communication with prior.	303	120	45	22	60	35	21
	29.9	31.6	23.8	26.2	34.9	27.6	35.0
Personal pride	185	53	38	17	35	37	5
	18.3	13.9	20.1	20.2	20.3	29.1	8.3
Seeking one's independence	236	89	50	34	27	25	11
	23.3	23.4	26.5	40.5	15.7	19.7	18.3
Other	69	29	14	3	13	3	7
	6.8	7.6	7.4	3.6	7.6	2.4	11.7

The lack of communication with superiors (29.9%) is noticed especially in the USA (35%), Latin America (34.9%) and Southern Europe (31.6%). The Brothers in the two older groups complain mostly about the superior not communicating with the Brothers, but this is more evident among the older groups (40.9%) with over 50 years of profession (41.9%); the holders of diplomas (32.9%), and those who have never held positions of responsibility; in a word, perhaps you could say that the Brothers feel neglected and/or left out of the community or have scarce personal resources.

Inability to renounce personal ideas for community projects (24.1%). This is the clearest expression of the sort of individualism that seems to insert itself in a rather covert measure in all communities. We find that this situation is especially reported in Asia (29.1%) and Africa (26.2%); from the two younger age groups respectively 29.7% (among the 18-35 years old) and 28% among those of (36-55 years). It is clearly confirmed by the Brothers with less than 5 years of profession (29.8%) in contrast with the older groups 12.1%. It is an evident sign of a

very different initial formation. The replies of the formators are different (38.6%) as are those occupied in vocation promotion (32.2%).

A strong seeking of one's own autonomy (23.3%) is another of the aspects that several Brothers maintain is very present in conditioning their religious obedience, especially so in Africa (40.5%) where they said it was the main reason for difficulties in observing the vow. This is mainly in the two intermediate age groups of Brothers; those occupying positions of responsibility and apostolic activity, namely the 36-55 years of age (27.7%); a little bit less are those between 56-74 years (25%). This is also confirmed by the opinions of the Provincials (31%) and Priors (31.5%), as well as the formators (31.2%)

Tab. 2.22 - Difficulties in living the vow of obedience. Distributed by age and profession groups (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
TOTAL	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	36	4	5	11	15	1	7	14	11
	3.6	1.7	1.6	3.4	11.4	.5	2.5	4.0	7.4
Unwilling for responsibility	176	46	72	37	19	44	55	52	21
	17.4	19.2	23.5	11.4	14.4	21.2	19.6	14.9	14.2
Personal ideas over community	244	71	86	67	16	62	74	80	19
	24.1	29.7	28.0	20.7	12.1	29.8	26.4	22.9	12.8
Few community meetings	216	51	56	81	27	44	62	76	31
	21.3	21.3	18.2	25.0	20.5	21.2	22.1	21.8	20.9
Authority not service	236	49	80	78	28	47	70	82	33
	23.3	20.5	26.1	24.1	21.2	22.6	25.0	23.5	22.3
No communication with prior	303	70	75	103	54	59	80	99	62
	29.9	29.3	24.4	31.8	40.9	28.4	28.6	28.4	41.9
Personal pride	185	62	66	43	11	54	58	52	11
	18.3	25.9	21.5	13.3	8.3	26.0	20.7	14.9	7.4
Seeking personal autonomy	236	54	85	81	15	42	74	93	19
	23.3	22.6	27.7	25.0	11.4	20.2	26.4	26.6	12.8
Other	69	11	16	25	16	10	16	23	19
	6.8	4.6	5.2	7.7	12.1	4.8	5.7	6.6	12.8

The concept of authority as service is not understood (23.3%) was the criticism especially made by many Brothers in Latin America (30.8%, reported this as the main difficulty). Africa was next (29.8%), where the Brothers said the search for individual autonomy was the second most notable difficulty. This was greatly reduced in Central Europe (15.3% where they said it was the least of their difficulties). A third of the Brothers in the 36-55 age group (26.1%) said this was a difficulty, but less so from those who had never held a position of responsibility (24.8%).

Few community meetings on the personal project of life 21.3%): This comes as a verification of what seems to be a depressive attitude towards the community. The Brothers seem to be telling us “such meetings are not worth the effort.” One Brother in five maintains that this is a factor that the circulation of the ideas could facilitate a mutual understanding and strengthening fraternity, while also being of great advantage in undertaking a common project and therefore to better live the vow of obedience. A certain discomfort about this was seen in Central Europe (27.5%) who placed this as number one among their difficulties. Next came the USA (25%) and Asia (but they said it was not the greatest difficulty); also the group between the ages of 56-74 and the holders of diplomas (23.1%). The General and Provincial government

agreed (24.1%), the formators (26%), but the Priors disagreed (18.5%: considering it to be the least of the difficulties).

The greatest difficulty is certainly that of one's own pride and the haughty attitude (18.3%) that it produces. This is recognised particularly in Asia (29.1%) where it receives the highest number of responses. Not so in the USA (8.3%); but also the younger age groups (25.9%) maintain that this is one of the greatest difficulties for them to declare. Then come the Brothers with less than 5 years of religious profession (26%); graduates (20.3%) and also the General and Provincial government (19.5%) and the vocation promoters (21.9%).

Tab. 2.23 - Difficulties found in living the vow of obedience. Distributed per office held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	36	0	9	0	27
	3.6	.0	4.1	.0	4.3
Unwilling for duty	176	23	47	12	94
	17.4	26.4	21.2	17.1	14.8
Personal ideas over community	244	22	58	27	137
	24.1	25.3	26.1	38.6	21.6
Few community meetings	216	21	41	15	139
	21.3	24.1	18.5	21.4	22.0
Authority not service	236	14	52	13	157
	23.3	16.1	23.4	18.6	24.8
No communication with prior	303	24	45	23	211
	29.9	27.6	20.3	32.9	33.3
Personal pride	185	17	42	11	115
	18.3	19.5	18.9	15.7	18.2
Seeking personal autonomy	236	27	70	17	122
	23.3	31.0	31.5	24.3	19.3
Other	69	4	11	7	47
	6.8	4.6	5.0	10.0	7.4

An unwillingness and lacking of availability to take on the duties and the responsibilities of the superior (17.4%) constitutes one of the effects of all these formative gaps set forth in this question. This attitude mostly constitutes and expresses the choice (33.1%) of the Brothers from Asia (these Brothers found it as the first emergent difficulty in comparison to the vow of obedience). The other zones were less remarkable, averaging only 17%. This was frequently expressed by the second age group of Brothers between 36-55 years (23%) with almost 6 points more than the average and it is also what the General and Provincial governments identify as one of the more common (26.4%: coming second in difficulties from what they noticed about relating to searching for personal autonomy 31%).

In concluding the reading of these answers with some lines of synthesis, we can affirm to finding a good awareness of the Brothers around the varied dimensions that touch the difficulties in the observance of the vow of obedience. With notable frankness they have recognized these aspects that are found upon predominantly individualistic values, tied up to one's own past formation or to the tendencies of the modernism; but that they ask to learn more about taking on as urgent and essential, the new attitudes regarding cooperation, communication, and even abnegation of oneself in overcoming one's own pride, in favour sacrificing their own ideas for projects directed to the welfare of the community and the development of the mission.

5.3. Difficulties found today in living the vow of hospitality (question 17)

The presentation of the meaning and the value of the vow of hospitality occupies five articles of the Constitutions (art.20-24). This signified the great importance that the Order assigns to it. In fact for the same reason that it so specific and characteristic it is evident in the way it is compared to all the other vows in the Church and the way it regards the world of the suffering and the pain.

For this reason it has been the object of our thorough study with a specific question to the Brothers, whose answers appear in the panel below. We have tried to individualise some of the difficulties in observing the vow today. They are set out in order of their perception to seek balanced opportune remedies to overcome their difficulties.

The following panel gives an overview of the results to the question: *“What difficulty do you meet with today in living the vow of hospitality?”*

1.	<i>No repose</i>	5.6%
2.	Lack of openness to the new forms of hospitality	34.3
3.	The daily routine dulls the sense of feeling for the suffering	32.8
4.	Identifying hospitality exclusively with our professional work	29.2
5.	The exclusive attention to those we attend in our centres	19.7
6.	Difficulty in working with lay people	17.4
7.	The formation does not respond to hospitality today	16.1

Faced with these six situations, the Brothers interviewed seem to have made a precise separation into two distinct groups that can be identified from the consistence of the same percentages. There is a clean separation of at least ten points between the one and the other of these two groups.

The first group gave answers that wandered around 30% or more. They individualised the recognised difficulties and gave a background to the situation of an ideal picture. This included formation or de-formation of a mentality, *to renew and remotivate what is lacking in opening up to new forms of hospitality (34.3%)*. *To exclusively identify hospitality with the professional work (29.2%) and the tiring of the daily routine that risks losing the sensitivity towards suffering humanity (32.8%)*.

The second group seemed rather to firmly focus itself on referable and correlated observations in a more specific way to the *“lack of opening up to the new forms of hospitality.”* This in fact means new situations that call for new precedents in management of the works and *the collaboration with the laity in managerial roles (17.4%)*. *Reference to the tradition and formation of the past (16.1%) that are now challenged by today's new demands and this includes the exclusiveness for those cared for in our centres (19.7%)*.

The detailed analysis of the single items will allow us to go deeper into other interesting elements for a better understanding of the difficulties found in living this vow.

Tab. 2.24 - Difficulties in living the vow of hospitality. Distributed per geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	57	30	11	4	6	1	5
	5.6	7.9	5.8	4.8	3.5	.8	8.3
Only our own patients	199	56	27	18	53	36	9
	19.7	14.7	14.3	21.4	30.8	28.3	15.0
Daily routine	332	126	71	34	48	45	8
	32.8	33.2	37.6	40.5	27.9	35.4	13.3
Hospitality as a job	296	111	65	23	41	40	16
	29.2	29.2	34.4	27.4	23.8	31.5	26.7
Inadequate formation	163	57	29	11	25	28	13
	16.1	15.0	15.3	13.1	14.5	22.0	21.7
Lack of openness	347	109	51	38	58	65	26
	34.3	28.7	27.0	45.2	33.7	51.2	43.3
Working with lay people	176	72	27	18	30	18	11
	17.4	18.9	14.3	21.4	17.4	14.2	18.3
Other	78	40	14	1	15	1	7
	7.7	10.5	7.4	1.2	8.7	.8	11.7

The lack of opening up to the new forms of hospitality (34.3%). We have to emphasise a not irrelevant detail, and that is that this item which received the highest degree of consent to question 17 of the questionnaire, in the disposition of the items it only occupies the penultima position. This is to say that it was not the first one to that could be easily answered, for it was almost hidden among all the others. Therefore I suggest it is well worth giving more attention to it.

The Brothers in Asia noticed it and gave it the highest percentage of all the items in the question (51.2%). Africa was next (45.2%, the same) and then the USA (43.3% also the same). The Brothers in the first two age groups were confirmed by the corresponding two profession groups and the Priors with 40%. In a smaller percentage, but noticing more difficulties, were the General and Provincial governments (36.8%), with the formators and vocation promoters.

Tab. 2.25 - Difficulties in living the vow of hospitality. Distributed in age and profession groups (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	57	8	9	21	16	5	9	23	14
	5.6	3.3	2.9	6.5	12.1	2.4	3.2	6.6	9.5
Only our own patients	199	54	62	57	24	51	55	55	34
	19.7	22.6	20.2	17.6	18.2	24.5	19.6	15.8	23.0
Daily routine	332	92	112	96	30	77	104	110	30
	32.8	38.5	36.5	29.6	22.7	37.0	37.1	31.5	20.3
Hospitality as a job	296	65	103	99	27	52	92	111	36
	29.2	27.2	33.6	30.6	20.5	25.0	32.9	31.8	24.3
Inadequate formation	163	27	54	61	21	27	45	63	28
	16.1	11.3	17.6	18.8	15.9	13.0	16.1	18.1	18.9
Lack of openness	347	99	118	96	34	85	116	102	36
	34.3	41.4	38.4	29.6	25.8	40.9	41.4	29.2	24.3
Working with lay people	176	36	48	66	24	30	42	69	30
	17.4	15.1	15.6	20.4	18.2	14.4	15.0	19.8	20.3
Other	78	12	13	30	22	9	14	34	20
	7.7	5.0	4.2	9.3	16.7	4.3	5.0	9.7	13.5

A daily routine that causes a loss in sensivity towards the suffering (32.8%). The strain of the habitual routine came to be the second of the difficulties experienced by the Brothers, with only the slight difference of one and a half points from the first of the difficulties.

Tab. 2.26 - Difficulties in living the vow of hospitality, distributed by formators and academic studies (in V.A. and %).

	5.2 FORMATOR		5.3 Voc. Pro		Title of STUDY			
	TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techn.	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No Reply	57	23	34	9	48	24	16	6
	5.6	5.5	5.7	3.1	6.6	4.9	7.3	3.5
Only our own patients	199	76	123	57	142	106	37	36
	19.7	18.2	20.7	19.9	19.6	21.7	16.8	20.9
Daily routine	332	123	209	90	242	172	59	51
	32.8	29.4	35.2	31.4	33.4	35.2	26.8	29.7
Hospitality as a job	296	134	162	90	206	139	66	68
	29.2	32.1	27.3	31.4	28.4	28.4	30.0	39.5
Inadequate formation	163	68	95	50	113	88	31	33
	16.1	16.3	16.0	17.4	15.6	18.0	14.1	19.2
Lack of openness	347	152	195	105	242	166	78	58
	34.3	36.4	32.8	36.6	33.4	33.9	35.5	33.7
Working with lay people	176	81	95	58	118	81	44	27
	17.4	19.4	16.0	20.2	16.3	16.6	20.0	15.7
Other	78	33	45	24	54	37	21	11
	7.7	7.9	7.6	8.4	7.4	7.6	9.5	6.4

An analysis of the answers tells us that these difficulties are mostly experienced by the two younger groups with up to 25 years of profession. This is a difficulty that these Brothers who have direct contact with the sick and needy face every day. In fact they have always put this above all other Brothers who don't have any position of authority and responsibility (34.3%), and

those with diplomas (35.2%), those who are not involved in formation (35.2%) or vocation promotion (33.4%). This is how it is seen in Africa (40.5%), Central Europe (37.6%) and Asia (35.4%), and also with a poor response from the USA (13,3% perhaps less so in positions of responsibility) and Southern Europe with (33.2%, equal to 126 Brothers). Therefore, this gives the impression of setting a referable hypothesis about the Brothers who have a more direct contact with the concrete suffering of people every day.

In synthesis, we could say that throughout the Order this has the most diffused appeal to what is related to the question of being open to the charism. Therefore it is necessary to discover and work out suitable means to overcome the weariness and exhaustion of the Brothers in their daily activity.

To exclusively identify hospitality with professional work or simply just as a job (29.2%) was held to be the third obstacle to being at ease with living the vow of hospitality. Here the Brothers denounced the risk of a purely bureaucratic approach to the charism and an excessive emphasis on materialisation.

The Brothers in Central Europe especially warn about this (34.4%, and put it in the second place in their classification) as did Asia (31.5%), and to a lesser degree Latin America (23.8%). Such a risk has caused the Brothers in the middle-aged groups between 36 and 74 years (33%-30%), the graduates (39.5% who put this in the first place of their classification), but it is mostly the Provincials and Priors (39.1% who place this as the number one difficulty as also do the formators and vocation promoters (32.1%).

Tab. 2.27 - Difficulties in living the vow of hospitality. Distributed in office held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	57	1	10	1	45
	5.6	1.1	4.5	1.4	7.1
Only our own patients	199	13	40	19	127
	19.7	14.9	18.0	27.1	20.1
Daily routine	332	24	69	22	217
	32.8	27.6	31.1	31.4	34.3
Hospitality seen as a job	296	34	72	21	169
	29.2	39.1	32.4	30.0	26.7
Inadequate formation	163	17	42	14	90
	16.1	19.5	18.9	20.0	14.2
Lack of openness	347	32	80	26	209
	34.3	36.8	36.0	37.1	33.0
Working with lay people	176	21	40	11	104
	17.4	24.1	18.0	15.7	16.4
Also	78	4	20	6	48
	7.7	4.6	9.0	8.6	7.6

Faced with the examination of the other three aspects, it seems to us that this material is more concrete and their choice appears to be a lesser percentage when it comes to just *caring for the sick and needy in the works of the Order (19.7%)*.

This seems to be the case especially in Latin America (30.8% where it is given second place in order of importance), but in Asia (28.3%) and Africa (a great deal less), while it is rather neglected in the other regions. A certain awareness of this exclusiveness is worrisome in the two groups of profession: the younger ones (24.5%) and the older ones (23%); perhaps for different motive the holders of diplomas (21.7%) and the formators (27.1%).

This difficulty could have particularly come about by the recent social conditions in which the health sector stands in today's society, but also the progressive reduction of the religious personnel, that has brought about opening managerial roles formerly held by the Brothers to the laity. This difficulty is not a small matter to **17.4% of the Brothers who need to be prepared to accept the collaboration of lay managerial roles.**

This especially occurs in Africa (21,4%), in Eastern Europe (18.9%) and the USA (18.3%), especially among the two older age and profession groups. However, with 7 points above the average, this arouses a certain concern among the General and Provincial government (24.1%).

Finally having received enough limited comparisons, it almost serves to conclude that the observations made up to now, show the last difficulty found by **16.1% of the Brothers who maintain that there is an inadequacy of the formation being imparted when seen in comparison to the demands of today's hospitality.**

The Brothers in Asia (22%) above all those of middle age (around 18%), then come the graduates (19.3%), the diploma holders and formators (18%). Relief is obvious enough, especially when observing the rapid social transformations of the day and the early obsolescence of professional competences. This calls for a deeper religious and human formation of the Brothers to prepare them against these innovations of cultural and technological advances. For this reason it means opening up new horizons for the formation of the new generations, and to offer them the means to read the cultural tendencies of the society, namely a mature personality, virtuous character and religious formation, and to be able to adequately face without fears the complications of innovations, which they inevitably will meeting in the not too remote future.

6. CONCLUSION

After having started in the first chapter with the study of some structural parameters of the entire investigation, in this second chapter we confronted the analysis of the answers of the Brothers on the cornerstone theme of **charismatic identity of religious consecration.**

For this reason we have developed our reflections around five dimensions of the consecrated life, both in key positive and negative aspects. In the first sense we have studied the original motivations of one's vocational choice, and to tightly connect the value and importance that is currently attributed to the figure of the vocational companion who in our case is identified as the spiritual director. This helps us to understand the great consensus that it enjoys in the Order and the importance that is attributed to this for an effective vocational orientation and not just for initial formation.

On a negative note, but only to better discover the weak elements to oppose and to better activate the contemplated resources for the formation of suitable antibodies to arrest any reasons to abandon one's vocation. To face up to difficulties and generally to live one's hospitaller consecration, and specifically the observance of the four religious vows which includes that of hospitality.

At the first glance we make together on the difficulties met with in one's religious life, it is comforting the note that about a third of the Brothers declare they do not to find any difficulty. However, for the greater part of the Brothers say the difficulties of their religious life are mostly attributed to motivations of character, both spiritual and material, and that is to say the scarcity of a life of faith and the fragility of initial human, Christian and religious formation. There is also a third element that is not to be underestimated and that is to brush aside the brilliance of the charismatic identity, both personally lived and is perceivable in comparison with the external reality of the image that is resonant with how people today see the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God. The geographical zones that mostly show this are Asia and Africa and that can also be observed as the chapter proceeds showing sparks of excellence and weakness in additional aspects.

Therefore in studying the *examination of the original motivations* for one's religious choice, it clearly and strongly emerges that the witness of service offered to the sick was the choice of the older Brothers rather than the younger ones. In fact in the younger age group, as well as the formators, the particular statistic value of confronting poverty today is frequently found and strongly stands out. Only later in a second instant the importance of the value of vocational orientation is acquired, especially in the spiritual direction constituting a person to refer to in the moments of crisis for every Brother.

Similarity, the cause of abandoning religious life are listed by more than half of the Brothers as carelessness of the spiritual life. This was reported above all by the Brothers in Asia and Southern Europe, but not so in the USA, for which the principal cause was attributed to instead to difficulties in interpersonal relationships and the decline of original self-sacrifice. Indeed on the human plan it is recognised by all that difficulties in interpersonal relationships in community life is a crucial cause. This is a call to communities to live and work together in harmony. Above all learning to overcome conflicts and misunderstandings, that are inevitable in every human group, (even in the family, constituted by just a few persons), and to overcome those things that upset one, as this is so important in religious life. It however does not mean neglecting that constant vigilance to overcome activism and its associated problems. This helps to keep alive and foster the motivations of one's own religious choice. The younger Brothers are also quite aware of this.

A powerful resource of support is, as we had already mentioned, the presence of a person whom we can refer to in times of difficulty. This is of course the very important *spiritual director*, who together with the *confessor*, and also the *friend* among the Brothers with whom we can share our confidences. For the younger Brothers this figure constitutes the second choice among the 7 proposals, even if it is placed side by side with the classical presence of the spiritual director, formator and confessor.

The extent of the difficulties is very precisely lowered when carefully *living the evangelical counsels and the vow of hospitality*, and this is evident when these factors are specifically extended. We have put this in because it can be a valuable help to the formators and vocation promoters in planing opportune formative programs suitable to the challenges of today.

In the first place, in comparison to the *vow of chastity*, the Brothers positively express two very important two elements of verification. Indeed, they openly declared an utmost respect that is still attributed to the vow of chastity. It still preserves today its high value in open opposition to those who do not place any more value to it as being any help to the development of personality. According to the zones, the Brothers have individualised four situations. These are recognised identically as being the most important difficulties in living the evangelical

counsels. An affective immaturity brings about the inability to authentically live interpersonal relationships according to the life we chose, and the limited integration of the overall affective-sexual dimension of one's human and religious life and the abuse of the means of social communication. Above all the younger Brothers are influenced and bombarded by the erotic climate of contemporary society, which does not offer any stimulation to situations in tune with religious choices and the consecrated life that they profess. At the same time none of the geographical zones of the Order are exempt for the perversity and the strength of the incursion that the means of social communication has on our lives that are ever so fragile. The help of grace and the invitation of the Word of God are important calls to be vigilant and prayerful, but it is often necessary to put to use those tools of science and education that can be of great help to bring into effect the development of a healthy personality and humanly mature. It is not rare that discordant situations or even conflicts sometimes inside the religious communities that weaken the motivations leading to other reasons that immediately facilitate the passage to other brighter and tempting choices.

In respect to the vow of poverty the direction of the answers kept two things: that of the institution and that of the individual. In the first case a third of the Brothers were concerned that there was a misuse of the means destined to the hospitaller mission, and in a lesser degree, the lack of separation of the goods of the community from the goods of the work. This is especially in evidence in Africa and to some measure in Asia; but also from the superiors and middle-aged Brothers). Secondly, in respect to the vow individually lived, where more than the material dimension of the use of the money they added further immaterial aspects, such as the use of time, the lack of sensibility sharing of their possessions with the poor, forms of laziness in the appropriate apostolate (especially among the younger ones) and the search of external activities almost as compensations for escaping from the routine of the daily life in the apostolate. It would be interesting however, to make a study of the 15.3% of the Brothers who had given some original answers besides those proposed in the questionnaire. Some interesting observations could be found here. Such observations mostly came from the Brothers in Europe and Latin America as well as the older Brothers, graduates and formators.

In regards to the vow of obedience the verification developed in a more articulated way. However, it brought together three typical symbolic attitudes: the great lack of communication with the superiors, the defence of one's own autonomy as well as compared with community projects, and self-knowledge the one's haughtiness and personal pride. At the same time they complained about the lack of innovation in activating initiatives and means of communication to create a climate of greater collaboration and dialogue. The younger Brothers recognise their pride, but the middle-aged, and those in Asia, showed little availability to take on responsibility. The holders of diplomas said they had difficulty in communicating with the superiors, while the superiors looked for autonomy. The Brother in Southern Europe and those who had never held responsible office, said they had difficulty in dialogue and that there were not enough community meetings.

In respect to the observance in living the vow of hospitality, it seems that most agree that the perspective of innovation seems to be diffused in the Order. It appears that there is a new birth in the forms of hospitality. It appears that difficulties enunciated by the questionnaire make reference to a precedent structural formulation and to a formation in the past that is not in conformity with all the demands of today's hospitality. Perhaps with this in mind the Brothers throughout the world are questioning the Order's priorities. In fact a third of the Brothers state that there is a lack of opening out and reduction of hospitality to professionalism, routine, and perhaps bureaucracy (as health services today seem to thrive). Probably this fourth vow is the pivoting point whereupon the Order's charism and renewed identity for mission is built. And it is

here where we see a marked difference between the younger and older Brothers. The lack of openness is especially complained about in Africa, Asia and the USA; Asia and Latin America complain of exclusiveness towards patients inside the Order's works. The Brothers in Central and Southern Europe uphold that it is professionalism and routine and this is also the opinion of graduates. The Brothers in Southern Europe, and the Provincials said it was the problematic relationship with the laity.

In the spirit of renewal of the consecrated life, the dimension of the charismatic identity of our consecration to God becomes central and constitutes, together with the mission, the nucleus of every Order and Congregation in the Church. The world today challenges us on the new fronts of the modernity and the new evangelisation. The reflections of this chapter have in fact privileged us with the verification of the identity of the consecrated life and its different dimensions. The study about the vow of hospitality has introduced us partly to the verification on the mission to which the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God is called and that will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY OF THE ST. JOHN OF GOD BROTHER

The position of the mission in the consecrated life constitutes one of the two poles of identity common to every religious institute. It makes us religious in an institute where we consecrate our life to God in the service of the neighbour: a service that can be expressed many ways, but in the secular tradition of the Church it is particularly expressed in two major sectors: that of education and that of the charity.

Consecration is expressed with one unusual specification of its reality because of the mission, and that characterises every religious institution and underlines their identity in comparison to all the other Orders and Congregations in the Church. Therefore to study the charismatic identity of the mission of the St. John of God Brothers means entering upon a study of that unique, typical and differentiating dimension that characterises the Hospitaller Order in relationship to all the other forms of religious life. This will bring us into its special role within the world of health.

This is why we are examining the meaning of the charismatic identity of Brothers' consecration in the Order, and **the multiple dimensions that constitute the charismatic identity of their mission in the life of the Church.** This will be the theme of our study of the:

- 1. New role of the Hospitaller Brother in his mission (questions. 19-20)
- 2. Balance between activism and the interior life (questions.21-22)
- 3. Pastoral care in health services (questions.23-25)
- 4. Relationship with co-workers (question.29)
- 5. Formation in the initial and ongoing mission: (questions 26-28)

1. THE NEW ROLE IN THE MISSION (questions 19-20)

The Hospitaller Order of St. John of God enthusiastically embraced the spirit of fervour and renewal of the consecrated life in the light of Vatican Council II. The Order wanted to express itself in an explicit new role in the Church, characterised by five fundamental factors in the substance and expressions in the following five categories submitted to us by the Brothers; namely *a critical conscience, moral guide, prophetic presence, openness to new needs, and close collaboration with co-workers.*

For each of these dimensions we have endeavoured to deepen the degree of progressive assimilation that every Brother in the Order holds to be present today.

In this evaluation we are started with an optimal level (many) of assimilation, to a more lesser but still positive (enough) level, to pass to a verification of little assimilation of the new role (few) necessary for further slight effort to a totally negative evaluation, to the lowest level (nothing), who maintain that there is nothing left to be done in this matter. To the statistical data of percentages we wanted to add a artificial describer, very more precise and refined, one that I punctuate as midpoint (**M**), that is the level to which the global judgment of the Brothers is set (I

excluded those that have not responded (NR) to the questions) on a ladder of 5 levels going from 1 (the *maximum* is for convention, therefore it is a more positive judgment) to 5 (the *least* is a more critical judgment) in this progression: I have punctuated from 1 to 2 corresponding to the 1st level, (many) to 2 and 3 (enough), from 3 to 4 (few), then from 4 to 5 (nothing).

1.1. Global analysis (question 19)

Having made this premise of a methodological character, we now pass to the reading of the data drawn from the answers of the questionnaire and represented in the panel below corresponding to the question “*In what measure is assimilated the new role that has to be lived by the Brother of St. John of God today?*”(question 19)

	<i>N. R.</i>	Many	Enough	Few	None	<i>M</i>
1. Critical conscience	<i>11.8</i>	17.5	32.6	33.3	4.8	2.29
2. Moral guide	<i>12.1</i>	17.3	36.7	30.2	3.8	2.23
3. Prophetic presence	<i>12.2</i>	17.4	31.6	31.2	7.6	2.33
4. Mixing with co-workers	<i>9.0</i>	22.8	41.9	23.5	2.8	2.07*
5. Openness to new needs	<i>9.1</i>	23.5	34.6	27.2	5.6	2.16*

About 10% of the Brothers gave no reply (N.R.), especially the elderly and particularly in respect to the last two items.

Around 20% of the Brothers retain that a very good assimilation of the different dimensions of the new role is generally in operation, particularly in regards to last two items. This judgment is also confirmed by the percentages of the second level of ‘enough’ where the percentages are higher (over a third of the Brothers) above all in comparison to the integration with the co-workers (41.9%). However there are still 25% to 30% of the Brothers who maintain that ‘few’ is their opinion and less than 5% replied ‘none’.

Particularly, in observing the middle (M), the positive judgments of satisfaction affirm much has been done by appointing co-workers to responsible positions; (M:2.07), saying this is progress that opens up to new needs (M:2.16). The opinions in third place are less in agreement on the role of moral guide (M:2.23); then of a critical conscience (M:2.29) and lastly of a prophetic presence (M:2.33).

The most critical judgments in almost all of the 5 items considered, repeatedly originate from Southern Europe, from the third age group, that is from the 56 a 74 years, and from the local Priors, the graduates and from those who do not hold positions of responsibility. The most positive evaluations are expressed from the younger Brothers and from the most elderly ones.

1.2. Analytical development of each item

We start with those who have made a more positive judgment, then move down to those who gave a more critical evaluation and say there is still a lot to work on and to plan. We will make a methodological basis of the comparisons from the middle point in respect to the 30 variables used for the analysis together with a confirmation of the respective percentages. We are not going to overload this with corresponding charts nor excessive documentation

1.2.1. Integration with co-workers

64.7% of the Brothers gave a judgment (M:2.07) substantially positive (much + enough) to become more cooperative with co-workers and to heavily involve them in a close integration and to involve them in sharing our charism. More than one Brother in five says this has been greatly achieved in, especially in Australia, the USA, Central Europe, the younger profession group, the holders of diplomas, the formators and the General and Provincial governments.

However, more critical were the Brothers in Southern Europe and the two profession groups of many years. Even more critical were the Brothers in Southern Europe, and to a certain degree in Latin America as well, and also the Brothers in the 56-74 age group, and the two more senior profession groups, the graduates, the local Priors and those who do not hold responsible positions

1.2.2. Open to new requirements

The Brothers already have a good perception regarding this matter, and probably have already taken positive steps in this regard. In fact 23.5% of them judge that this role has been assimilated in an optimal way for some time. If we add to this number, the positive evaluation of the 34.6% who said 'enough' we get 68.1%, more than 2 out of three Brothers. They have expressed this in a satisfactory measure, greater than the study of the role of integration with co-workers (64.7%).

More criticalal in this case, is the fact that the numerous Brothers (32.8%) who expressed their view rather coolly, were especially those in Southern Europe and Latin America, the middle-aged group in religious profession, the graduates, the formators, the Priors and Provincials.

1.2.3. The role of moral guide

The assimilation of the new role of moral guide was definitely judged by 54% of the Brothers (*very*: 17.3% and *enough*: 36.7%), while 34% were lesser or not at all positive. However, in regards to this matter, some did not answer at all (12.1%); these were mostly the elderly Brothers, and the zones were the USA (18.3%) and Southern Europe (16.3%) and the Brothers without positions of responsibility.

The greatest agreement came from Asia (31.5%) and Central Europe (19.6%), from both ends of the age groups, namely the younger Brothers and the elder ones. (M:2.08); also the diploma holders and formators, as well as from the Priors and the General and Provincial governments.

The most critical however, came from the Brothers in Central Europe (M:2.33) and the USA (M:2.29), the 56-74 age groups, those who hold academic titles (M:2.34) and the local Priors (M:2.29).

1.2.4. The role of critical conscience

This was given considerable thought (32.6%), but not much was done about it (17.6%). When summed up the positive judgments came to 50.1% of the Brothers, especially those in

Asia (M:1.96) and Africa (M:2.19), more younger ones (M: 2.19), and the more senior Brothers in age (M:2.21) and profession (M:2.28), and the holders of diplomas (M:2.18).

However, 38.1% of the Brothers were not convinced that the role of being a critical conscience is understood throughout the Order, especially by the Brothers in Southern Europe, the USA, the Priors and the graduates of ecclesiastic universities.

1.2.5. The role of a prophetic presence

The greater part of the Order has the role of aiming to be a critical conscience, but this has still to be realised (M:2.33). In fact the statistics show only a positive response of 49% while the criticisms are 38.8%.

A rundown of the Brothers who were most critical shows that they were from Southern Europe (M:2.45) and Central Europe (M:2.48), those between the 56 and the 74 age group (M:2.46), the formators, the Priors and the General and Provincial government.

In conclusion, it appears that previous General Chapters have extensively treated the subject of a critical conscience and prophetic presence in society. It seems that a lot more has to be done to bring this about.

This deals with a very delicate matter and perhaps one that is not always easy to define, consequently much more remains to be done. It would be worthwhile to concentrate on verifying this matter.

The other two roles considered, namely collaboration and assimilation with co-workers and opening up to the new needs of that are only too obvious in the world today.

The role of moral guide seems to serve as connection between the two things we have just considered. This means the Brother has to consider himself in an intermediary position here.

Therefore, in considering these five dimensions of the image of the St. John of God Brother, we can see that there are aspects of formation that already show a good level of assimilation in regards to the first two, in comparison to those that still need a further deepening in ideal and motivational, in help and strategic support so that there can be a growth in spiritual and formative renewal of individual Brothers as well as the whole community.

We now move on to analyse the difficulties confronting the obstacles facing the development of the process of formation.

1.3. Difficulties met with in exercising a new role (question 20)

The new challenges to be faced in the world of today and the process of interior renewal involving every Brother in the Order, assumes a new role with social transformation. This is because it realises the great effectiveness and visibility of its Christian witness in the Church of contemporary society. We have already studied the dimensions and objectives that face this duty to which each St. John of God Brother feels responsible.

The assimilation of such a role for the Brothers has come up against a series of difficulties. We have seen its limitations and restrictions. We now want to study those sectors where they mostly have been present, to understand in what measure and weight they are now

being lived, in order to plan strategies of support, suitable to the situations that every Brother meets with. The study of the answers to question 20 will allow us to go deeper into this.

1.3.1. A global analysis

The question being asked is “*Faced with this new role what are the principle difficulties that arise?* (question 20)

The following is a synthesis of the global situation.

0.	No response	3.9%
1.	Lack of adequate formation	41.6
2.	Fear of insecurity when faced with change	30.4
3.	The force of traditionalism	29.2
4.	Have not yet understood the validity of the new role	20.8
5.	Not sufficiently prepared to undergo a new role	18.6
6.	Fear of not being accepted by the co-workers	11.6
7.	Not sharing the new role	4.8
8.	Other	6.9

A distribution percentage of the answers points to an absolute priority amongst the complaints, namely the lack of a suitable formation (41.6%).

With around 10 points percentages of difference between them were the replies that correlated the fear of change that produces insecurity and the strength of the traditionalism that chains one to the past. This deals with a common but deep feeling of a third of the Brothers.

If these two difficulties can be almost considered as almost institutional, then those that follow can be considered in connection with the first item, almost as an appeal for further formation to get a better understanding of the validity of the new role (20.8%). The reality is that a fifth of the Brothers feel unprepared to adequately grasp this fact (18%) which in all probability can also influence them in the delicate relationship with co-workers. One in ten of the Brothers (11.6%) admit to a sense of inferiority and subjection accompanied by a vague fear of been disapproved. They feel that it is almost a form of subjection that that can be traced to an accentuated secular atmosphere present in some nations, but also to a lack of trust in the Brothers and the strength-value of their mission.

We were rather limited by those who did not reply to the question to give confirmation of the seriousness with which the questionnaire was faced, especially in regards to those questions perceived as more you personalise.

In each case 4.8% of the Brothers share the proposals put forward by the Order. This was especially so from the Brothers in Southern Europe, the USA and Latin America. The ages were mainly from the middle age group and with over 25 years of profession, and also those in the General and Provincial governments and some of the formators.

1.3.2. Examining each individual item

The lack of suitable formation (41.6%) is maintained by two out of five Brothers; above all more than half of them in Asia (59.1%) and Africa (58.3%). The main age group is up

to 55 years and most of the diploma holders (44.4%). It is refreshing to know that this is also observed from the formators and vocation promoters.

Fear and insecurity when faced with change (30.4%) and also the pressure of traditionalism, which is held by 29.2%, which tells us that there are forms of resistance and uncertainties when faced with the future. If taken separately they tell us that one in three of the Brothers understand and are ready to assimilate to the reality of the new roles

Tab. 3.1 – Principal difficulties met with assimilating the new role, by geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	ZONE of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S,Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	39	16	8	1	9	0	5
	3.9	4.2	4.2	1.2	5.2	.0	8.3
Not understanding its value	211	67	46	13	25	42	18
	20.8	17.6	24.3	15.5	14.5	33.1	30.0
Fear of unacceptance	117	48	25	19	13	9	3
	11.6	12.6	13.2	22.6	7.6	7.1	5.0
Unprepared for new roles	182	83	30	13	27	19	10
	18.0	21.8	15.9	15.5	15.7	15.0	16.7
Inadequate formation	421	146	58	49	74	75	19
	41.6	38.4	30.7	58.3	43.0	59.1	31.7
Fear of change	308	115	62	32	42	41	16
	30.4	30.3	32.8	38.1	24.4	32.3	26.7
Traditionalism	295	108	52	13	70	38	14
	29.2	28.4	27.5	15.5	40.7	29.9	23.3
Not sharing	49	23	5	4	7	7	3
	4.8	6.1	2.6	4.8	4.1	5.5	5.0
Other	70	33	13	3	13	3	5
	6.9	8.7	6.9	3.6	7.6	2.4	8.3

Fear and insecurity in the face of change seems to be stronger among the Brothers of Africa (38.1%), in the two age groups between 36 and 74 years, but above all between those of 36 and the 55 years of age; between the technicians and the diploma holders who said this constituted the second greatest difficulty. Such fear and insecurity was expressed by 39.1% of the General and Provincial governments, as also from the local Priors and formators.

This was especially expressed by the Brothers in Latin America (40.7%) with 11 points on an average, from the formators, but above all from the Provincials (41.4%) as well as the vocation promoters.

Consequently another couple of difficulties in the Order arose about this, with around 20% of the Brothers saying that they do not fully understand the validity of the new role (20.8%); and those Brothers (18%) who don't sufficiently feel prepared to develop this. Both of these point out the necessity and urgency of start at once to bring about a further assimilation to fully accept the new roles proposed by the last General Chapters.

Tab. 3.2 – Principal difficulties met with in assimilating the new role, per age groups and religious profession (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	39	6	7	12	13	3	8	14	11
	3.9	2.5	2.3	3.7	9.8	1.4	2.9	4.0	7.4
Not understanding its value	211	49	69	61	31	47	61	67	30
	20.8	20.5	22.5	18.8	23.5	22.6	21.8	19.2	20.3
Fear of unacceptance	117	26	34	42	14	26	30	42	17
	11.6	10.9	11.1	13.0	10.6	12.5	10.7	12.0	11.5
Unprepared for new roles	182	43	49	56	32	40	44	61	34
	18.0	18.0	16.0	17.3	24.2	19.2	15.7	17.5	23.0
Inadequate formation	421	115	144	120	41	107	129	128	52
	41.6	48.1	46.9	37.0	31.1	51.4	46.1	36.7	35.1
Fear of change	308	71	102	101	31	52	97	113	36
	30.4	29.7	33.2	31.2	23.5	25.0	34.6	32.4	24.3
Traditionalism	295	66	93	98	33	49	85	109	40
	29.2	27.6	30.3	30.2	25.0	23.6	30.4	31.2	27.0
Not sharing	49	7	14	17	10	7	11	19	10
	4.8	2.9	4.6	5.2	7.6	3.4	3.9	5.4	6.8
Other	70	8	17	34	11	6	15	37	12
	6.9	3.3	5.5	10.5	8.3	2.9	5.4	10.6	8.1

This deals with an imperfect way of thinking about operating on a wide-ranging level. In fact the first difficulty mentioned above is emphasised by the Brothers in Asia (33.1%) and the USA (30%), as also the elderly Brothers, and also some of the younger ones in the years professed group (22.6%), the formators (25%), as well as the General and Provincial governments (23%).

The inadequacy perceived for developing these new roles mostly comes from a misunderstanding by the more elderly in age and profession groups and also some of the vocation promoters.

Finally it emerges in a somewhat reduced measure (11.6%), but it is not meaningless, that a certain difficulty is felt by some Brothers in being compared with the lay co-workers and not being approved by them. This is especially so in Africa (22.6%) where it is considered to be the third greatest difficulty. But it is also present in Central and Southern Europe (particularly in a secular society); and above all among the 56-74 age group, especially where Brothers are in a situation of activity and responsibility and are holders of diplomas and are expected to bring the proposed new roles into existence. This also applies to the Priors and directors of centres and vocation promoters (13.1%).

In conclusion: These are the three types of difficulties mostly frequently noticed by the Brothers. They all refer to the only common denominator that calls for a suitable formation to face up to the challenges of change these days.

The three main weaknesses in this are the lack of formation and suitable preparation, which brings about resistance to change and diffuses a sense of inferiority, both in self-esteem and the value of one's consecration. This seems to have affected the Brothers in secularised and technically developed Europe, especially the middle aged ones who hold positions of responsibility both on general and local levels, who are responsible for facing up to the challenges of the renewal, above all in regards to future vocations.

Tab. 3.3 – Principal difficulties met with in taking on board new roles in the management of institutions (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None-
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	39	1	8	0	30
	3.9	1.1	3.6	.0	4.7
Unappreciated	211	20	43	13	135
	20.8	23.0	19.4	18.6	21.3
Fear of unacceptance	117	2	29	4	82
	11.6	2.3	13.1	5.7	13.0
Unprepared for the role	182	9	37	16	120
	18.0	10.3	16.7	22.9	19.0
Inadequate formation	421	37	79	41	264
	41.6	42.5	35.6	58.6	41.7
Fear of change	308	34	79	22	173
	30.4	39.1	35.6	31.4	27.3
Traditionalism	295	36	73	22	164
	29.2	41.4	32.9	31.4	25.9
Unwilling to share	49	5	9	1	34
	4.8	5.7	4.1	1.4	5.4
Other	70	9	14	7	40
	6.9	10.3	6.3	10.0	6.3

It is possible also to read these difficulties as being the necessary price to pay in a period of transition and very rapid social changes, in which various Brothers are unable to accept the changes clearly taking place about them. Nor do they understand the validity of the new role to develop, and therefore to be in step with the times. Therefore it will take time, patience and further formation, because it deals with a cultural passing that is not easily managed. There is also a personal psychological slowness in the understanding of the new roles, especially seen in a certain group of Brothers.

2. THE BALANCE BETWEEN ACTIVISM AND THE INTERIOR LIFE (questions 21-22)

To question (21): *“Are you able to establish a balance in your life between action and contemplation (between work and prayer)”?*, to which most of the Brothers answered (NR:1.3%), that is to say around 80%, respond in the affirmative, including some in a different measure (19.7% *“much”* + 58.7% *“enough”*). However, there is about 20% who find various difficulties, almost serving as a counterweight to that 19.7% who answered in the affirmative to emphasize the result in an optimal measure (*“much”*).

While the data received is gratifying, nevertheless, it would perhaps be in need of much more strengthening. In any case it deserves attention since 20% of the Brothers don't seem to succeed in realising the facts. Analysing the average points we see that this is especially so among the Brothers in Central and Southern Europe as well as Latin America, and the younger age and profession group.

2.1. Global analysis

It is very important for the Brothers to confront the difficulties they meet with in finding a balance between activism and the interior life or better said, between work and a life of prayer. Here we give the result of the Brothers' replies to question 22.

This is a global view of the situation that allows us to pinpoint the major personal problems.

- 1. Insufficient attention to personal prayer 29.1 %**
- 2. Lack of a sense of the spiritual life 28.4**
- 3. Lack of stimulation by the religious community 24.6**
- 4. Absence of an adequate personal project of life 23.0**
- 5. Excessive activism 22.0**
- 6. Overburdened workload 21.5**
- 7. Lack of creativity in community liturgical celebrations 12.6**

An image that strikes us more directly is that from these answers not one reply emerges with enough clarity about any particular difficulty that stands out from all the others to claim a greater attention.

Instead there is a range of problems that in equal measure, although rather high (from 21% to 29%), are equally something for the Brothers to be concerned about. In fact with only seven points percentage there are at least seven types of difficulty that scarcely differentiate one from another. A certain demarcation is highlighted between the highest and lowest percentages; however it is only a small matter. Perhaps a greater differentiation can be verified on the level of our 30 variable cross-sections.

We want to emphasise once more the seriousness of the compilation of the questionnaire, whose indicative signs are the high percentage of the Brothers who have answered it (more than the 95% of them). The questions have been the object of a very careful consideration, so much so that not responding to instinct about the classification we proposed, but rather the highest percentage has been given us an insight to the scale related to personal prayer; and finally that the 1667 replies tells us that two thirds of the Brothers gave at least two answers, as was requested.

2.2. A deeper analysis of each item

The scarce and insufficient care of personal prayer (meditation, spiritual reading...) has been indicated by 29.1% of the answers, above all from the Brothers in Asia (47.2%) and Africa (35.7%). In the USA this problem (23.3%) was secondary to the lack of stimuli from the community (35%), which is no less serious. The varying ages and years of profession don't manifest any particular differences, indicating that there is a common and positive feeling at all levels generalising the importance of personal prayer in their lives and this is particularly stated by the holders of diplomas, formators, Priors and the General and Provincial governments.

Tab. 3.4 – Difficulties relevant to the balance of work and prayer life, according to geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	ZONE of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L I	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	48	19	14	2	6	1	6
	4.7	5.0	7.4	2.4	3.5	.8	10.0
Excessive activism	223	75	43	21	55	22	7
	22.0	19.7	22.8	25.0	32.0	17.3	11.7
Too many duties to perform	218	76	42	23	42	27	8
	21.5	20.0	22.2	27.4	24.4	21.3	13.3
No sense of the spiritual life	287	147	27	13	58	35	7
	28.4	38.7	14.3	15.5	33.7	27.6	11.7
No personal project	233	94	31	26	38	31	13
	23.0	24.7	16.4	31.0	22.1	24.4	21.7
No community spirit	249	106	49	20	24	29	21
	24.6	27.9	25.9	23.8	14.0	22.8	35.0
No creative liturgy	128	34	27	8	18	27	14
	12.6	8.9	14.3	9.5	10.5	21.3	23.3
No personal prayer	294	100	51	30	39	60	14
	29.1	26.3	27.0	35.7	22.7	47.2	23.3
other	35	8	13	1	7	1	5
	3.5	2.1	6.9	1.2	4.1	.8	8.3

Tab. 3.5 – The most relevant difficulties in the balance between work and prayer-life according to the various age and religious profession groups (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUP					PROFESSION GROUP				
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+	
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148	
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6	
No Reply	48	4	9	23	10	5	7	20	14	
	4.7	1.7	2.9	7.1	7.6	2.4	2.5	5.7	9.5	
Excessive activism	223	66	78	54	23	49	79	67	23	
	22.0	27.6	25.4	16.7	17.4	23.6	28.2	19.2	15.5	
Too many work duties	218	63	78	57	19	53	72	66	20	
	21.5	26.4	25.4	17.6	14.4	25.5	25.7	18.9	13.5	
No sense of spiritual life	287	51	89	97	47	43	78	102	54	
	28.4	21.3	29.0	29.9	35.6	20.7	27.9	29.2	36.5	
No personal project	233	54	63	95	20	47	55	94	31	
	23.0	22.6	20.5	29.3	15.2	22.6	19.6	26.9	20.9	
No community spirit	249	45	70	87	43	44	61	100	39	
	24.6	18.8	22.8	26.9	32.6	21.2	21.8	28.7	26.4	
No creative liturgy	128	34	40	38	14	27	42	43	14	
	12.6	14.2	13.0	11.7	10.6	13.0	15.0	12.3	9.5	
No personal prayer	294	73	91	88	40	61	81	100	44	
	29.1	30.5	29.6	27.2	30.3	29.3	28.9	28.7	29.7	
Other	35	9	12	9	5	10	9	10	4	
	3.5	3.8	3.9	2.8	3.8	4.8	3.2	2.9	2.7	

An attitude that shows a notable importance is the thinking of **28.4% of the Brothers who say there is a lack of a sense of the spiritual life because of the influence of secularism**. It seems that this is a discriminating thing behind the processes of disaffection and crisis. Above all the Brothers in Southern Europe lead with ten major points (38.7%) then come the Brothers in Latin

America (33.7%), the elder in age (35.6%) and profession (36.5%), the graduates and the Brothers without any office 31.9%. Those who don't consider this in the least are those in the USA (11.7%), central Europe (14.3%), Africa (15.5%), the younger ones (21.3%) and the Priors.

Tab. 3.6 – Most relevant difficulties in the balance between work and prayer-life according to the formators and diploma holders (in V.A. and %)

	5.2. Formator		5.3 Voc.Pro.		TITLE of STUDIES			
	TOTALE	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techn.	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No Reply	48	23	25	13	35	20	12	8
	4.7	5.5	4.2	4.5	4.8	4.1	5.5	4.7
Excessive activism	223	89	134	71	152	117	37	32
	22.0	21.3	22.6	24.7	21.0	23.9	16.8	18.6
Too many work duties	218	91	127	73	145	105	47	44
	21.5	21.8	21.4	25.4	20.0	21.5	21.4	25.6
No sense of spiritual life	287	127	160	74	213	127	66	56
	28.4	30.4	26.9	25.8	29.4	26.0	30.0	32.6
No personal project	233	90	143	53	180	117	58	28
	23.0	21.5	24.1	18.5	24.8	23.9	26.4	16.3
No community spirit	249	102	147	81	168	119	61	45
	24.6	24.4	24.7	28.2	23.2	24.3	27.7	26.2
No creative liturgy	128	59	69	41	87	64	27	26
	12.6	14.1	11.6	14.3	12.0	13.1	12.3	15.1
No personal prayer	294	123	171	80	214	152	58	47
	Other1	29.4	28.8	27.9	29.5	31.1	26.4	27.3
Other	35	14	21	9	26	13	12	6
	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.6	2.7	5.5	3.5

With 4 points less, 24.6% of the Brothers say that the religious community does not offer enough stimuli. This is especially expressed by the Brothers in the USA (35%) with 10 points higher than the average; almost the same results come in from the older Brothers (32.6%), the vocation promoters (28.2%), the graduates (26.2%), the formators and the other Brothers (26.2%). The Brothers in Latin America don't attribute this as a remarkable priority (14%), relegating it to the penultimate position of their difficulties. The same applies to the younger Brothers (but here it will remain to be seen how they retain the importance of the community in this aspect).

How will a suitable project of personal life be an incisive force on the equilibrium between action and contemplation? 23% of the Brothers interviewed retain its absence as one of the most serious difficulties for this balance. The personal project of religious life is an important balancing element and factor of personal unity. That is how the African Brothers especially consider it with (31%), that is eight points higher than the average. Those who consider its absence as a difficulty are the older Brothers (29.3%), those with 26 to 50 years of religious profession and the Priors (26.6%). Less convinced are the Brothers of Central Europe (16.4%), the elderly ones (15.2%), the graduates (16.3%), and surprisingly, the vocation formators (12.9%).

A further difficulty is pinpointed as *excessive activism (22%) and specifically too many work duties (21.5%)* that weaken and lose an awareness of one's true mission. This perspective seems to grow on a basis of chaos and general disorder in one's life, causing a loss of the aim of the apostolate by placing it in a dimension of functionality and structure that risks breaking up the most beautiful ideals: it is a situation structured on the present, without any organized

perspective, almost in playing around events as they take place and being fearful of being out of step with current events. It deals with a phenomenon that is especially reported in Latin America and Africa, among the younger Brothers, the graduates, Priors, and vocation formators (34.5%) which is equal to 13 points higher than the average. Obviously the problem is less felt among the more elderly Brothers and those who do not hold positions of responsibility.

Tab. 3.7 – Difficulties considered to be more relevant in the balance of work and prayer. Distributed by office held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	48	3	11	3	31
	4.7	3.4	5.0	4.3	4.9
Excessive activism	223	24	49	18	132
	22.0	27.6	22.1	25.7	20.9
Too many work duties	218	30	60	19	109
	21.5	34.5	27.0	27.1	17.2
No sense of spiritual life	287	20	47	18	202
	28.4	23.0	21.2	25.7	31.9
No personal project	233	14	59	9	151
	23.0	16.1	26.6	12.9	23.9
No community spirit	249	19	46	18	166
	24.6	21.8	20.7	25.7	26.2
No creative liturgy	128	12	23	10	83
	12.6	13.8	10.4	14.3	13.1
No personal prayer	294	31	70	21	172
	29.1	35.6	31.5	30.0	27.2
Other	35	2	4	5	24
	3.5	2.3	1.8	7.1	3.8

Certainly community liturgical celebrations of a creative kind constitute an important source of nourishment for the spirit of faith and the interior of one's consecrated life. However the importance of such creativeness has been blown out of proportion to the centrality of its substance by going beyond the formalities of realisation.

It is also true that the daily routine often runs the risk of reducing it to a banal formative impact rather than being sacramental, thereby negatively influencing a time-wasting and distractingly poor lifestyle of bustling about. In fact *the lack of creativeness in community liturgical functions* had some impact upon 12.6% of the Brothers, especially in the USA (23.3%), Asia (21.3%) and among the vocation formators.

In conclusion, the quantity of elaborate data obviously allows us to observe that the perturbing factor of equilibrium between prayer life and work is considered above that of insufficient care of personal prayer, perhaps already skipped over at times with the alibi that community prayer is enough to contribute to the development of one's consecrated life. The insignificant and commonplace puts one at risk when faced with a climate of secularism and laicism. This is particularly noted by the Brothers in Southern Europe and the elderly Brothers.

The younger Brothers and those in the age group of 36-55 years, accuse an excessive workload and an exasperated activism; instead they say this risks leaving only the purely functional Brothers to do the remaining work, and as time goes by they will wither and weaken

the consecrated life. The lack of stimuli from the community and the absence of a project of personal life, are considered as contributing factors toward severely upsetting the balance between the active life and spiritual life, while the promotion of their vitality and vivacity can turn it into an opportune antidote and an useful resource to bring about this unity in the personality: the Brothers in Africa especially point this out as also do those in Latin America and the elderly Brothers.

It is surprising that little attention seems to cover this, especially by those entrusted with vocation promotion (18.5% and elsewhere 12.9% in comparison to 23%) to a personal project of life. That would instead constitute an element of regulation and finalisation of one's activity, so that this doesn't become chaotic or allow one to easily absorb the anxieties and pressures of daily cares. A lack of creativeness in the community liturgical celebrations could contribute to creating a climate of self-pity, missed opportunities and increase difficulties.

3. PASTORAL CARE IN HEALTH SERVICES (QUESTIONS 23-25)

We now move on to the important issue of the Hospitaller Order's pastoral care in its services. We will investigate the quality of this service that is shared by the Brothers and their co-workers for the benefit of those they serve. We will analyse the pastoral care given by each community in the fabric of the local Church as well as that of the civil society. The picture that is derived from this offers us the part that the Brothers value in this widely diversified service.

3.1. Participation of the various components of the hospitaller community (question 23).

We now look into the community, its co-workers and volunteers, others associated with it, on a global scale. While we notice that around 10-15% of the Brothers did not reply to this question, the rest of the results are not very flattering. They attest that an average of 2 out of 3 reaches the levels of "enough" and "few" that set the most elevated percentages of the whole chart. 53.6% (19.2% "very" + 44.4% "enough") of the Brothers giving a certain attention to participating in pastoral care. But this participation progressively diminished and much more so where the co-workers are concerned (45.3%), and that includes the volunteers (38.8%) and "outsiders" associated with the Brothers (19.2%).

The panel below gives a more precise image of the situation derived from the answers to question 23 from the various geographical zones where the Order is situated. Although pastoral care is generally organised by the local Church in various ways, as far as the Order is concerned, it has to fulfil its own pastoral duties and make its own decisions.

To the question "*In what measure do the components of the hospital community participate in the realisation of pastoral care in health services?*" (question 23); we received the followings answers that are distributed in percentage and average points.

	<i>No Reply</i>	Much	Enough	Little	None	<i>Average</i>
1. Brothers	6.1	19.2	44.4	27.1	3.3	2.15*
2. Co-workers	10.1	10.4	34.9	37.8	6.8	2.46
3. Volunteers	12.8	7.6	31.2	34.5	13.8	2.63
4. "Outsiders".	15.4	5.4	13.8	40.3	25.0	3.00

The Brothers contribute the most (53.6%), however, as the average shows this differs in the various geographic zones. In fact the greatest participation particularly is in Asia (M:1.78) and in Central Europe (M:2.02), among the Brothers younger in age and religious profession. This also applies to those who do not hold positions of direct responsibility in the daily routine and have more spare time to take on pastoral care duties. There is a certain difficulty to such participation in the USA (M:2.41), Latin America (M:2.26) and Southern Europe (M:2.25); and also from the Brothers between the ages of 56 and the 74 years, and the directors and Priors of the various centres, the formators and vocation promoters.

In the opinion of the Brothers, only 10.4% of the co-workers participate greatly in pastoral care; 72.7% say “few” or “enough”, however, 6.8% say they do nothing at all. It is noticeable that this is mostly comes from the Brothers in Southern Europe (M:2.62), Latin America (M:2.65), Africa (M:2.60), the most elderly in age and of profession and the formators (M:2.49). Less critical toward the co-workers are the General and Provincial governments (M:2.39) and the younger Brothers (M:2.33).

The participation of volunteers is judged to be satisfactory by only 38.8% of the Brothers, while 65.8% say it is “enough” or “few” with the M average more at 2.60. The greatest criticism comes from the zones of Africa (M:3.00), Central Europe (M:2.73) and from the vocation promoters (M:2.74).

Even more severe is the judgment of the Brothers involved in pastoral care with outsiders. One Brother in seven puts no value upon them at all, as much as 19.2% retain they participate enough, while 65.3%, two out of three, express a rather negative judgment. This especially comes from the Brothers in Latin America (M:3.17), Southern Europe (M:3.06), Brothers between the ages of 36 and 55 years and those over 75 years. However, the Brothers in the USA (M:2.74) and Asia (M:2.86) were more positive.

3.2. The recipients of pastoral care (question 24)

Pastoral care in health services is destined to a plurality of subjects, who are classified according to four categories in the makeup of the questionnaire: those who are assisted inside the centre, their relatives, co-workers and the poor in the general population. Also relative to this question is the elevated percents of those who did not reply, 10% and the judgments are similar to those of the preceding question.

There is a positive aspect however, and that is what characterises what underlines the greatest pastoral care concern is that exercised towards the 68.9% people in the Order’s centres. In this case the average rises to the 1.95. Here the opinion of 49.4% of the Brothers say pastoral care of co-workers is “enough” and also for the relatives of those who are assisted (35.4%) and finally to the poor in the general population (25.1%). There is a priority given to internal patients, the co-workers, the patients’ relatives and the general poor.

The distribution of the answers is illustrated by the following chart that shows the data received from the question: *“In what measure is pastoral care practiced?”*

	<i>No reply</i>	Much	Enough	Little	None	<i>Average</i>
1. Internal patients	<i>8.6</i>	32.0	36.9	17.7	4.8	<i>1.95*</i>
2. Their relatives	<i>11.2</i>	7.3	28.1	41.8	11.7	<i>2.65</i>
3. Co-workers	<i>11.0</i>	9.2	40.2	34.9	4.7	<i>2.40</i>
4. General poor	<i>12.6</i>	6.1	19.0	40.7	21.5	<i>2.89</i>

The greater part of the Brothers’ pastoral care, 68.9%, is extended to the patients and others in the Order’s centres. A third of the replies show that this is a very accurate measure; while another third (36.9%) say care in “enough” and is satisfactory. A substantial positive judgment comes from the Brothers in Southern Europe (M:1.84), the USA (M:1.76), and Asia (M:1.78), the age group between the 56 and the 74 years, the General and Provincial governments (M:1.81) and the formators.

In comparison to the other categories of recipients of pastoral care who are given less consideration, is the pastoral care given to co-workers, with 49.4% of the Brothers saying this significant enough. In other words, almost half the Brothers say that the pastoral care is the duty of the parish priests. Those who disagree (39.6%) do not supersede 40% of the general judgments and they especially originate from the zones of Southern Europe, (M:2.54), Africa (M:2.50), the more elderly (M:2.48), and from those with academic titles (M:2.46). More positive expressions come from Asia (M:2.22), Central Europe (M:2.24) the USA (M:2.31), the General and Provincial governments and the formators (M:2.30).

It is interesting to observe that even with regard to the poor, pastoral care is expressed as directed to the relatives of those who are assisted (M:2.65). At least a third of the Brothers notice this (35.4%), especially in the USA and Asia; then a less positive view is expressed by more than half (53.5%), primarily in Latin America (M:2.88) and the elderly Brothers who are over the 75 years of age (M:2.73).

The pastoral care of the external poor (M:2.89) was considered by 25.1% of the Brothers; however diffused with this view were those who said “few” (40.7%) or “none” (21.5%). Which brings the medium of three more than two. However this is not a unified judgment. There are some differences of opinion in the zones of Asia and Africa, and from the younger Brothers (M:2.69), the formators and vocation promoters (M:2.69). Criticisms arise from Southern Europe and Latin America, the older Brothers between the ages of 56 and 74 years and also the Priors. All this makes us think.

The convergence of some variable data leads us to hypothesise that already there is a change in the mentality of the Brothers, especially the younger ones, the formators and vocation promoters who have more contact with young people. In other words, it seems that there is emerging a more pronounced movement toward external new frontiers of poverty and need, rather than to the older structures of the Order that are already consolidated, therefore it is now towards the sick in their own homes. As we have noticed in the preceding pages, this has already been enthusiastically expressed by the Brothers as a valuable drawcard for those who contemplate entering the Order to serve the sick and poor. The presence therefore, of these signs must not simply be passed over unnoticed, but rather perhaps be the object of a more careful reflection at a community level.

3.3. Integration of the community in the social and ecclesial context (question 25).

There is an awareness of a certain global integration with a territorial context that is rather diffused in the Order. However this does not cover half the Brothers. We note that over 40% of the Brothers do not perceive this in satisfactory terms. Its presence is not denied in some zones and there is a small group of about 8%, especially in Latin America, Southern Europe and the USA that reproachs a certain closing down on the social and ecclesial scale; this is also expressed by some of the elderly Brothers who are over 56 years of age and the Brothers who do not hold positions of responsibility.

The underlying panel gives a precise global description in the various articulations of which the question is composed: *“In what measure does the community regard the charism, and is it integrated...?”*

Integration...	Much	Enough	Little	None	<i>Average</i>
1. into the local Church	14.4	34.5	37.7	7.9	2.41
2. into the local society	11.8	35.6	35.1	9.9	2.47

Examining the average points a higher integration is observed in the local Church (M:2.41) but not so much in civil society (M:2.47), even though there is little difference between the two averages. The percentages of “much” is somewhat lower and makes it worth while to question this in the light of a general plan.

Looking at the geographical zones, we note that there is a positive judgment on the integration between Church and society by the Brothers in Africa and Asia, the younger Brothers, formators and vocation promoters. More critical however, are the Brothers in Southern Europe and Latin America.

Particularly, the diploma holders and technicians are more critical and less satisfied about the insertion of the community in civil society (M:2.51 in comparison to 2:47). Opposed to this view are the Priors and directors of the centres (M:2.40).

In conclusion, we have studied the formalities by which pastoral care is faced by some health services within the Order and this is a remarkable part of the mission of the Hospitaller Order. That is why we have analysed the operations of the Order’s wide service in pastoral care and the remarkable range of its privileged recipients. Besides the Brothers this also embraces all who are involved in this pastoral care service on an individual or community level. Besides we wondered about a global appraisal on the way in which the integration of the community is perceived in the social and ecclesial fabric of the territory.

The general vision that emerges on the Order’s pastoral care does not seem very positive, even though there are appropriate exceptions and diversified evaluations expressed in some particular sectors.

Answers give to the question 25 that were aimed at a deepening of the judgment of the Brothers on territorial integration, give the impression that the Brothers are quite divided on the subject, and only about half of them said “enough” in regards to integration (one in eight said it is already achieved) so what else has to be done? It is noticed that 45% of the Brothers are rather critical and say much more has to be done regarding Church and civil society on the local scene.

In regards to the frequent and active participation of the Brothers in pastoral care, they are less critical with about 30% agreeing. More problematic however is their judgement regarding the co-workers (around 44%), and also the volunteers while they have no idea about the situation regarding outsiders whom they considered relatively absent.

Who are the ones who receive the most attention of the Brothers regarding pastoral care? First of all, two-thirds of the Brothers say these are the people they care for in their institutions, therefore that takes in the co-workers: here the positive judgment is reduced by half; finally the relatives of those who are assisted and then the poor on general.

It appears to us that it is very interesting what emerges from this last analysis, in how substantial is the reference of the younger Brothers in their concern for pastoral care; especially those Brothers entrusted with vocation promotion and the care of the poor. This special attention is not isolated or purely occasional. If we return to the motivations that have urged the younger Brothers to enter the Order, we notice that this experience and association with the poor and needy sick, has been one of their strongest urgings inducing them to follow the vocation of special consecration in the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

4. RAPPORT WITH THE CO-WORKERS (question 29).

The problem of the Brothers' relationship with the co-workers seems to emerge as one of the most problematic situations to confront and to be satisfactorily studied. It seems that this is appearing to emerge with certain uneasiness. Some indication is already noticed in the study of the Brothers' involvement in pastoral care in health services.

The Brothers are now aware of the creaky situation that creates some difficulty in their relationship with collaborating on a more realistic scale that is very useful, important and necessary. The work performed by the co-workers today is vital and irreplaceable, especially in positions of responsibility. There appears to be a necessity to bureaucratically make such a collaborative relationship fluid, vital, easy, harmonious, reasonable and devoid of conflict and any rigid tension.

Question #29 tries to point out the hypothetical difficulties that the Brothers might perceive in sharing their mission with secular co-workers. The table below answers the question: ***“In what measure do you agree on the grade of influence that each of the following difficulties can have on rapport with co-workers?” (question 29).*** The answers are given in average points and percentages.

A quick glance at the first column introduces us to a discreet percentage of around 7-10% of those Brothers who did not replying to the question (NR). There were about a hundred Brothers who did not know, or did not wish to comment on the matter. The data from this study came primarily from the elderly Brothers, those about 75 years of age came to 25-30% but they abstained from replying to all the rest of the questions. About 50% of the Brothers were in accord with the other items with only a few in disagreement.

	<i>NR</i>	Much	Enough	Little	None	<i>Avera.</i>
1. Our incapacity to work in a team	9.5	17.2	37.2	27.6	8.6	2.30
2. Diffidence of co-workers: they see us as the owners	7.4	21.5	35.9	28.8	6.4	2.22
3. Resistance of the Brothers to accept co-works in responsible positions	7.6	20.4	36.0	27.1	9.0	2.27
4. Lack of the Brothers' formation to work with co-workers	8.5	18.4	38.4	26.7	8.0	2.27
5. Lack of preparation of the co-workers to work with the Brothers	9.6	19.9	37.7	26.2	6.6	2.22
6. Some co-workers do not share our principles and values	8.1	26.1	36.8	24.6	4.4	2.08
7. Lack of confidence between the co-works (competitiveness, jealousies, etc.)	10.1	22.9	36.0	26.1	4.9	2.15
8. Lack of our knowledge and esteem of the lay identity and vocation	10.6	17.2	40.1	26.5	5.6	2.23

This serves to indicate a strong and repeated convergence of the Brothers on some aspects, although there were repetitions of some of the difficulties in a couple of the average points that have same quantitative judgment value. This dealt with the couple of items, 2 and 5 (M:2.22) and 3 and 4 (M:2.27). In other words the Brothers express the same judgement to these two problems.

In almost all the 8 answers the full accord almost always touches around 20% of the Brothers who agree, while the maximum disagreement reaches 9%, that added only to the partial disagreement, in any case it comes close to a third of the Brothers.

Now in considering the difficulties that cause problems, this immediately lets loose *a double set of problems*: a series of difficulties caused by the Brothers in regards to the co-workers and another that derives from the Brothers themselves.

In the first case we can pick out the imbalance and the differences of values and principles that do not tally with those of the Order (M:2.08); the lack of trust existing between the co-workers and themselves, a climate of competitiveness, of scheming and jealousies (M:2.15) that can erupt in these relationships, the inadequacy of preparedness to work with the Brothers (M:2.22), and distrusting them because they are considered as masters (M:2.22).

In the second case, the questionnaire also recognises a series of difficulties that the Brothers replied to with tremendous clarity and frankness in identifying the experience of the Brothers' poor knowledge and consideration of the vocation and identity of the co-workers (M:2.23). This covers a wide scope, such as a lack of preparedness by the Brothers to work with co-workers (M:2.27); their resistance to accept them working in managerial positions (M:2.27), and the incapability of the Brothers to work in a team (M:2.30).

Seven points interpose the replies of all the Brothers interviewed, and some four difficulties arise that have to be recognised with full sincerity and frankness, as they depend upon the Brothers' formation of character.

Besides a splendid attitude of truth and humility, this constitutes a precious and fundamental contribution to translating these difficulties into an objective formation program for both the young Brothers and the older ones to prepare themselves better for a more positive and constructive collaboration with the laity. This would certainly improve their relationships and create positive interactive competences and effective strategies for a constructive and mutual building up of management without any conflict.

4.1. Difficulties regarding co-workers

Entering the analysis with more detail of the single problems we are able to classify and distinguish these difficulties in two separate groups. Firstly, on the basis of recognising the attributes of the co-workers, then according to position derived by the self-image of the Brothers who have to recognise their personal limitations with frankness and truth.

We will firstly analyse the critical judgments of the Brothers in comparison to the present negativity of co-workers.

It was stated with particular insistence that *the difference of values and principles (M:2.08)*, often did not adhere to the Christian principles professed by the Order and its Brothers. Indeed, it deals with the great difficulty that influences the quality of relationships with co-workers; at least without silencing them and thereby hindering the daily routine at the cost of the efficiency of the mission and the advantage of a peaceful acceptance of a pragmatic compromise that would be contrary to the basic principles of the Brothers.

In another more prepositive perspective, this would open an immense field of pastoral care in effectively evangelising health services, as it would free up the Brothers to be more involved with the patients and those in their services. This would of necessity demand the creation of a formative time for the co-workers: a time set apart for formation in pastoral care in health services, a service often provided by various dioceses.

In regards to this problem, as the table shows, there is a most definite agreement between 26.1% of the Brothers (the highest percentage of the whole column), that comes up to 62.9%, and then there is the percentage of the partial agreements (36.8%). This is an extremely positive data, in comparison to that only partial (24.6%) agreements and the 4.4% who clearly disagree, come up to 29%, that counts for more than a quarter of all the Brothers interviewed.

It would be interesting to go deeper into the causes of this disagreement, as some Brothers have dissociated themselves from the rest and do not retain an actual conflict of values. In fact they do not hold that this problem constitutes such a serious difficulty as the majority of the Brothers maintain. The elimination of this difference of opinion could also derive from a puffed up opinion of one's own religious values over those of the laity. Perhaps that would not turn out very well for the life of the Order.

In every case, dissenting from the major judgment of the Brothers, to those who did not agree on the fact that the values of the co-workers diverge from those of the Brothers (29%), were mainly the Brothers in the USA (M:2.38), Asia, (M:2.23) and Central Europe (M:2.16); the two intermediary age groups who have much contact with the co-workers (M:2.11), especially those with 26 to 50 years of religious profession (M:2.12); and (...somewhat puzzling) those Brothers in positions of formation and vocation promotion (M:2.12); and the directors of the centres (M:2.18). those who point out this discrepancy are the Brothers in Southern Europe

(M:1.99), Africa (M:1.94), Latin America (M:2.03), and the elderly and younger Brothers (M:2.03).

After this first and important revelation of the quality of the consonance of the co-workers regarding religious values, it goes on to appraise their world, reporting 58.9% are agreed quite enough to ascertain a mutual lack of trust in the co-workers (M:2.15), dictated by jealousies, competitiveness and from other conflicting attitudes. Also noted is a dynamic interpersonal situation between the Brothers and the co-workers with negative attitudes regarding professional collaboration. Above all this is the opinion of the Brothers in Southern Europe (M:2.09), (M:1.81), Latin America (M:1.99), the younger Brothers (2.02) and the elderly ones (M:2.12), the vocation promoters and formators and the Brothers who do not hold important positions but still have direct contact with the personnel. These Brothers maintain instead that this climate of mistrust is not present in 31% of them. Among these are the General and Provincial governments (M:2.32 in 36% of the cases), as well as the directors of the centres and the local Priors (M:2.27 in 37.8% of the cases); then come the Brothers in Central Europe, Asia and the USA (M:2.52; 46.7%) followed by the more elderly Brothers aged between 56 and 74 years (M:2.21; 32.8%).

As indicated in table 2.22, there are difficulties that originate from the co-workers themselves. These are the judgments related to *a distrust of the co-workers towards the Brothers who are perceived as their masters (57.4%), and to the lack of preparation of the co-workers with the Brothers (57.6%)*.

The relationship of collaboration is also made difficult by the perceived idea that the Brothers, being the employers, are the masters. This attitude is mostly held by more than half the Brothers, especially in Africa (in 76% of the cases), the younger Brothers (in 65.6% of the cases), the professional technicians (in 67.4% of the cases), and from 57.5% of the Brothers who don't hold positions of responsibility, but still work directly with co-workers. Not so is the opinion (few + none at all) of 35% of the Brothers, especially the General and Provincial government in 42.5% of the cases, the USA (37.4%) and Central Europe (38.1%).

The 57.6% of the Brothers who maintained that the laity is not prepared for collaboration with the Brothers come mainly from Africa and Latin America, and both ends of the age scale, the technicians, formators and the Brothers not holding any office. Not so the Brothers in the USA, Asia and Central Europe, those between the ages of 36 to 55 years, the General and Provincial governments and local Priors and the directors of the centres.

In synthesis, we observe that in all the factors emerging from the answers there are some common critical elements of favour towards the co-workers. The Brothers in Africa are constantly more critical, as are also those in Latin America, Southern Europe, the younger Brothers and the professional technicians, the vocational formators and the Brothers not holding any positions of responsibility. The judgment doesn't appear instead so critical from the General and Provincial governments, the local Priors, the Brothers in the USA, Asia and Central Europe, whose perceptions are less harsh and less negative.

4.2. Difficulties coming from the Brothers

The analysis of these difficulties will touch upon that series of limitations that the self-consciousness of the Brothers is relatively attributed to their formation, and that leads to them being unprepared to work with the co-workers as a team, and to their resistance to accepting them in managerial positions. It means that they still have to duly appreciate the identity and

vocation of the laity. From a more positive perspective, these disparities should constitute the point of departure to be transformed in an objective new method for programs of formation and preparation for the young Brothers in the apostolate works in the various geographical zones.

It is observed from the above that 57.6% of the Brothers interviewed state that the preparation given to co-workers is more or less sufficient (M:2.7). But it also recognises that in a great measure there is **a lack of formation of the Brothers to work with the co-workers (56.8%)**, this contrasts with 34.7% of Brothers who seem to disagree.

Firstly, this self-awareness is more so in Asia (M:2.14, 67.7%), Southern Europe (M:2.21, 57.1%), Latin America (M:2.20, 61.6%) and the USA (M:2.25, 60%), the older Brothers (M:2.14, 48.5%) and some of the younger ones (60.3%).

Secondly, the dissent in recognising such unpreparedness of the Brothers is found in the zones of Central Europe (47.1%), Africa (39.3%), and also the General and Provincial governments (39.1%) and local Priors (38.8%).

A difficulty of a psychological type, is also determined by the preceding tradition where the abundance of the vocations developed all the roles of the Brothers, and that was the opinion of 56.4% of them. This is especially so in Africa, the USA and Latin America, where there is a **resistance from the Brothers to accepting co-workers in managerial positions (M:2.27)**. This is recognised by the vocation promoters (60.3%) and the graduates (M: 2.13, 62.8%). However, there are more than a third of the Brothers (36.1%) who say there is not much or none at all, this comes mainly from both European zones, most of the older Brothers, the professional technicians and the General government and Provincial governments.

If the psychological resistance to change materialises in a difficulty to accept the managerial roles of lay co-workers, even more (57.3%) is the Brothers' lack of knowledge and consideration of the vocation and identity of the laity (M:2.23) and this calls for a complete change of the Brothers' mentality.

The analysis recognises the average opinions of the Brothers in recognising the identity, the vocation and the nature of the role of the laity, especially in the USA, Africa and Latin America, about half the Brothers between the ages of 56 and 74 years, from 65.7% of the graduates and from 74.3% of the vocation formators.

More than half the Brothers do not accept this negative judgment regarding the laity. They are from Central Europe, the first two age groups, the professional technicians and of the local Priors.

Lastly comes the self knowledge of the **incapability of the Brothers (57.4%) to work in a team (M:2.30)**. Indeed those interviewed think that there still remains a lot to be done to change this difficult cultural situation of our times. The urgency of updating and professional reconversion is a very important duty on both the theoretical level and practical levels, but above all it needs to be done individually. This is recognised by the Brothers in Asia, Africa and the USA, the elderly Brothers, graduates, formators and the General and Provincial governments.

The most critical and contrary evaluations originate from 36.2% of the Brothers, especially in the Central Europe, among the younger ones, the professional technicians, and from Brothers without positions of responsibility and from the formators.

In conclusion, from the analyses of the answers received, the Brothers' relationship with the co-workers is the object of contrasting evaluations. They are not in equal measure, because within these various recognized difficulties, there can be distinguished at least *two sorts of problems*: difficulties originating directly by the Brothers who attribute this to the co-workers themselves and difficulties expressly recognised by the lack of a personal preparation to face up to the new changes, especially cultural change.

As we have delineated above, there is also a lacking attributable to the co-workers. Here we especially notice those recognised by the Brothers themselves as being derived from an adequate preparation to accept and take in the culture acquired by the new roles of the laity in society and the Church. It calls for an understanding of the vocation and identity of the laity, especially when it comes to their managerial positions in the running of the Order's hospitals. This deficiency on the part of the Brothers can be traced to a lack of individual preparation for such collaboration. The most glaring deficiency is seen in the direct manifestation of those Brothers who are incapable of working as a team.

It is noticed that more than half the Brothers have some real problems in the relationship with co-workers. There are however some plusses that can be counted in a more diversified measure. These cross the varied categories of the Brothers interviewed, as we have described in the analysis detailed of the single answers. In other words there is:

- a convergence in Africa, Latin America and the USA in recognising the presence of different problems;
- these are emphasised better by those who have direct contact with the sick;
- those less involved appear to have a softer attitude;
- a great deal difference is the attitude of the superiors, above all those who recognise the principles and values of the secular personnel: their judgment appears much less harsh and is better articulated.

5. INITIAL AND ONGOING FORMATION (questions 26-28)

The Constitutions of the Hospitaller Order devotes the entire fourth chapter (art.53-73) to the study and organisation of the Brothers' formation. After introducing the spirit of the hospitaller vocation (art.53-54), it goes on to declare the Order's constitutive elements (art.55-62) that call for an integral, solid and ongoing formation. This emphasises a careful personal attitude to the different signs of the times (art.55). It is directed towards the construction of the charismatic identity of the Brother and his mission in the world. All this is first of all entrusted to the responsibility of the major superiors (art.57), but actually it is more directly in the hands of the formators because they have to pass on to the candidates the witness of faith, fraternity and apostolic service in an effective discernment and vocational orientation (art.58-59) whose criterion-guide has to be individualised in a very precise and privileged way in this initial phase. Then comes the very delicate phase of progressive insertion (art.60-62) for the mission in the various communities where they will live in a climate of prayer, study and hands-on experience leading them to his happy integration of human, apostolic and supernatural values.

The paragraph related to the initial formation (art.63-71) is very articulated and analytical. It calls for various stages in the objectives and methodologies entrusted to formators and the competence of teachers in the centres of formation (art.64-65), for postulants (art.66), novices (art.67-68), and scholastics (art.69-71).

It is indisputably important that the principles enunciated in the articles 72 and 73 be observed regarding the lines set down for ongoing formation of one's whole lifetime as a renewing force by the Holy Spirit. In this matter each Brother is responsible through obedience to develop the charismatic apostolic mission of the Order.

The questionnaire sent to the Brothers asked them to consider all these different dimensions of both of initial and ongoing formation, but the emphasis is especially focused upon the problems of the insertion of the young Brothers in the communities and the apostolic mission (questions 26-28).

5.1. Insertion into the community and the abandonment of a vocation (question 26)

Insertion into the religious community often constitutes one of the most delicate moments in initial formation, even the most critical, because of the impact it has with the reality of religious communities. It introduces the Brother into the apostolic work, and this will afford him the opportunity to test all the theory of the first formation period to prepare him for developing a mature approach to further development in the years ahead when he is faced with the actual apostolic mission today. A resource, that is strongly present in these first years, is constituted by the cheerful and generous position of enthusiasm that accompanies these first experiences and helps him to overcome difficulties and resist moments of discouragement. They will observe that in normal communities where they are inserted, the Brothers are fully occupied and busy and are not always attentive and mindful of the new arrivals. It is necessary to be explicit, generous, make sacrifices and to be considerate.

We wanted the questionnaire to go deeper into the study of the insertion of young Brothers into the communities. For this reason we included a series of stimuli destined to provoke an immediate answer and therefore, perhaps, also get a more realistic view of the situation from the various inputs of the Brothers already active in the community. We have also considered that on the other hand there is the hypothesis of those who abandon the Order, and not just the young ones. The examination of the difficulties and the very extraordinary motives that these days can provoke the abandonment of the religious vocation has to be examined. Already in the preceding question #18 we looked into this problem, but we did so in more general terms. Here we want to study it with a particular reference to the problem of the apostolic insertion of the young Brothers.

In this regard question #26 looks into the Brothers' evaluation of the causes of abandonment and the difficulties that young Brothers can face when they are inserted into the communities. Then question #27 puts forward a series of factors facilitating positive conditions for the process of initial insertion into the apostolic mission.

5.1.1. Global analysis

The panel below introduces us to a series of difficulties that can cause abandonment of the Order, to which the Brothers have been called upon to pronounce a judgment of their own, and these are graduated by a maximum (very) to a minimum (none), that is indicated in the last column; and an average point (from 1 to 4) that classifies the different priorities that influence this from maximum to minimum.

Question 26 proposes the following formulation: *“This introduces you to a series of causes which burdens young Brothers when they are inserted into the mission; given that they have difficulty integrating themselves and/or they abandon the Order. In that measure do you agree with every of them”?* (question 26), Their answers are introduced here in the average points and percentage.

	<i>NR.</i>	Much	Enou- gh	Little	None	<i>Pt.M.</i>
1. Insertion too soon	10.1	18.6	30.9	29.9	10.5	2.36
2. No Accompaniment	11.9	18.7	36.9	28.1	4.5	2.21
3. Lack a vision of charism and mission	14.3	17.7	32.4	29.0	6.6	2.29
4. Difficulty for long term duties	11.3	26.7	40.0	18.4	3.7	1.99*
5. Lack formation by the formators	13.5	19.3	30.8	28.0	8.4	2.29
6. Negative witness by the Brothers	13.5	16.0	29.2	32.6	8.6	2.39
7. Negative witness by the community	14.1	14.0	30.4	33.0	8.4	2.42
8. Unclear religious motivation	13.2	18.5	40.5	22.6	5.1	2.17
9. The young unwilling to assist the sick	15.5	7.8	26.2	37.1	13.4	2.66
10 The personal fragility of the young	12.2	19.3	39.1	24.9	4.5	2.17
11. Too much work for the young	14.9	7.6	25.2	35.4	16.9	2.72
12. Weak charism of the Founder	15.0	9.9	25.1	25.7	24.3	2.76
13. Individualism of the Brothers	11.2	27.2	35.7	21.0	4.9	2.04*

The *‘no reply’* (NR) column of the answers presents us with a percentage of some relief that goes between 10% to 15%, and sometimes also reaching up to 43% from the elderly Brothers. That especially reflects accordingly in the zones of the Southern Europe and the USA that present the greatest number of elderly Brothers.

Adding the judgments of the consensus (very + enough), we see expressed by the globosity of the Brothers interviewed, that the principal difficulty that the young Brothers meet with, and that often are the cause of abandonment of the Order, is in the opinion of two out of three Brothers, connected to the same psychological structure of today's young people, and that is the realistic *difficulty they find in assuming long-term commitments (66.7%)*. in contrast to this is the dissent of 22.1% of the Brothers.

In a certain sense the problem of young Brothers leaving the Order can be traced back to a lack of support and unacceptance in the community to which they have been assigned. Seeing the force of this difficulty and what it leads to, calls for a necessarily urgent remedy.

Digesting the data of each variable we observe the following. The Brothers in the last two age groups from 56 to 96 years, those from Southern Europe (M:1.77) and the USA (M:1.94), the General and Provincial governments (75.8%), Priors and directors of the centres (in 74.7% of the cases), and so it seems, 63.6% of the younger Brothers aged between 18 and 35 years and have yet to reach 5 years of religious profession; then there are the Brothers in Asia and Africa who are among these 33.4% that instead are not completely convinced (M:2.21).

5.1.2. Analysing each item deeper

After having analysed the principal difficulty that absolutely converged the judgment of the greater part of the Brothers, for great clarity we would like to organize the data and the

reflections on these items in a table according to the priority based upon the average points. In this way each difficulty indicated by the Brothers will appear clearer in order of importance. The answers are introduced in the percentage of the average points.

	<i>NR.</i>	Much	Enough	Little	None	<i>Av. Pt</i>
4. Difficulties the young have long-term	<i>11.3</i>	26.7	40.0	18.4	3.7	1.99*
13. Individualism of the Brothers	<i>11.2</i>	27.2	35.7	21.0	4.9	2.04*
8. Religious motivation unclear	<i>13.2</i>	18.5	40.5	22.6	5.1	2.17
10. Personal fragility of the young	<i>12.2</i>	19.3	39.1	24.9	4.5	2.17
2. :Lack of Accompaniment	<i>11.9</i>	18.7	36.9	28.1	4.5	2.21
3. Lack of vision of charism and mission	<i>14.3</i>	17.7	32.4	29.0	6.6	2.29
5. Lack of formation by formators	<i>13.5</i>	19.3	30.8	28.0	8.4	2.29
1. Insertion too quick	<i>10.1</i>	18.6	30.9	29.9	10.5	2.36
6. Negative witness of the Brothers	<i>13.5</i>	16.0	29.2	32.6	8.6	2.39
7. Negative witness of the community	<i>14.1</i>	14.0	30.4	33.0	8.4	2.42
9 Uneasiness of the young assisting the ill	<i>15.5</i>	7.8	26.2	37.1	13.4	2.66
11 Overburdening the young with duties	<i>14.9</i>	7.6	25.2	35.4	16.9	2.72
12. Lack of charism of the Founder	<i>15.0</i>	9.9	25.1	25.7	24.3	2.76

With the same force released by the first judgment on the instability of youth, is the condemnation the *individualism of the Brothers (62.9%)*. It also is an item in the question proposed in the list. Nevertheless it was chosen as the second motivation of abandoning a vocation. Less than two out of three Brothers pointed this out. The most remarkable aspect is that more than a quarter of the Brothers found a lot of accord in both the items. Probably it is a public confession, a positive sense of self-accusation and recognition, in which everyone agrees that they lack an awareness that can constitute a position of strength. They should use this knowledge to be more attentive to the good of others, especially in attention to the younger Brothers.

In fact they the Brothers who note this especially are those who are 56 years and over and have more than 25 years of profession; especially those in Asia and the USA, followed from the two European groups and lastly Latin America. But the General and Provincial governments are not quite as negative as the Priors who live in more direct contact with the daily life of the Brothers.

Then comes a couple of reasons with the same level of judgment (M:2.17) and with the same percentage of consensus, around 60%, that refers to the *little clarity of religious motivations (59%) and the personal fragility of today's young people (58.4%)*. This gives reason for an urgent program of education and formation, both to make the motivations much more transparent, and to strengthen the education of the young Brothers in their formation, especially in building up character and personality.

Regarding the scarce clarity of motivation, there are the two older age groups, the formators but not the vocation promoters, the graduates (M:2.03), the local Priors and superior and also the regional zones of Africa (M:1.99) and the USA (M:2.08).

And on the personal fragility of the younger generation, there are only the Brothers of Southern Europe (M:2.06), and the older in age and religious profession (M:1.99), all the Priors and those with various positions of responsibility; but the younger ones do not agree nor do the vocation promoters.

The different groups come up with an average point (M:2.21) that says the ***lack of Accompaniment is evidence (55.6%)*** that it is one of the reasons for abandonment. Then they add that another difficulty is their ***inability to integrate themselves into the Order***. This was especially expressed by the Brothers in the USA (M:1.98), Asia (M:2.03), the age group between 36 and 55 years (M:2.15), the graduates, the formators and vocation promoters (M:2.04). However there is a good percentage that touches about one in three Brothers, that equal is to 32.6%, who are little or not at all convinced, especially the elderly ones (M:2.32), and those in Central Europe (M:2.33).

Then another couple of motivations follow (M:2.29), that arise and cause perplexity among about half the Brothers regarding abandonment or difficulty in integrating. They speak of ***the scarce charismatic vision of the mission (50.1%) and to the lack of proper training of the formators (50.1%)***. In these two matters they take up extreme positions (very much - not at all), not many said “enough” or “few” and they gave a clear sign of their uncertainty in their judgements. There are in fact about half the Brothers 60% who were uncertain about reasons for their perseverance when they lack a charismatic vision of the mission and have received a poor formation.

Then again, in considering the problems, the Brothers are divided into two almost equal groups regarding their agreement or not, with Africa (M:2.36), Latin America (M:2.41), the first two age groups, the General and Provincial governments (M:2.37), but the vocation promoters seem to underestimate these aspects (M:2.19).

In regards to the lack of training for the formators, this is stated by the Brothers in Asia (M:1.99), the elderly Brothers (M:2.16), the graduates, and the vocation formators themselves (M:2.14). Those who disagree are the two European groups, the young Brothers (M:2.35), and the General and Provincial governments.

With some point of difference from these examples there are 59.5% of the Brothers who attribute the difficulty of integration into the community or the abandonment of vocation to the too hasty insertion of the young Brothers (equal to 59.5%, in comparison to 40.4% that dissents partly or entirely). This is affirmed above all Asia and Latin America, the elderly Brothers, the formators and vocation promoters and the local Priors (M:2.28), but not the General and Provincial governments (M:2.54), but 77% express a less extreme judgment. Really, such an insertion is handled by the Priors themselves and therefore the tendency can be for certain justification of the local superior making a judgement with other considerations.

An influence that is not irrelevant is attributed in percentages equal to ***the negative testimony of individual Brothers (45.2%, much + enough, in comparison to 41.2% of those who dissent) and/or of the same religious community (44.4% in comparison to 41.4% of those who dissent)***.

The emphasis on the influence of the counteractions of the individual Brothers comes especially from Asia, Africa and the USA and the vocational formators (M:2.21). Disagreeing are the General and Provincial governments, and the Priors (M:2.48). The emphasis on the

essential influence of the community comes from the USA, Asia, Africa, the formators, but not from Latin America, nor the young Brothers, nor the General and Provincial governments.

Three types of situations are considered influential and need to be gone deeper into in order to see the particular meaning attributed to each. In regards to the young Brothers having ***reluctance about assistance to the sick and the poor appears not to create a problem***. Only 34% agree that this is a risky factor for the consideration of a vocation. This is so, above all in the USA, Southern Europe, Asia and the older Brothers. But more than half the Brothers dissent (50.5%) and among them are those of Central Europe, Africa, the younger Brothers and those under 50 years of age, the graduates, and 65% of the General and Provincial governments, as also 61.5% of the formators and 52.2% of the vocation promoters.

Rather we have already seen how this situation is not at all a risk of crisis for today's young people when they decide upon a vocational choice.

Nor does a ***overload of assignments given to the young Brothers*** seem to be enough reason to be considered for the abandonment of a vocation. That is the opinion of 52.3% of the Brothers, and in fact few or hardly any at all agree with this hypothesis. And the first ones to agree are the young Brothers themselves in 49% of the cases, and the Brothers in Africa (63.1% in comparison to 48.4% in the USA), 60.4% of the local Priors, and up to 64.3% of the General and Provincial governments.

A final factor considered as facilitating abandonment of one's vocation results from ***the weakening of the charism of the Founder*** (M:2.76, equal to ***35% in comparison to the 50%*** of those who dissented). These percentages nevertheless make interpretation difficult. In fact it seems to us that those who abandon the Order do so because the charism of the Founder has been very weak. However it is only about a third of the Brothers around (35%) that consider this to be a decisive factor, while half the dissenters (50%) say so decidedly: above all Africa and Latin America, the Brothers between the ages of 36 and 55 years and all the three levels of superiors (M:2.85; 2.97) and around 60% and the formators. In other words all the Brothers do not agree (or at least only a few or none at all) that the weakening of the charism is the basis of abandoning a vocation.

It seems to us that the truth of the position is somewhat original. At least there does not seem to be full agreement that in the Order there is any weakening of the charism of the Founder. Is this ambiguous or perplexity?

In conclusion, among the risk factors of insertion and integration of the young Brothers that could contribute to the abandonment of vocation is that the Order has not yet understood the fragile structure of personality in today's young people; and has not considered their incapacity to assume long-term commitments and to clearly focus upon their religious motivations. This also happens when their Accompaniment leaves much to be desired, and here the responsibility falls squarely upon the shoulders of the older Brothers themselves, and first among them the formators. The emphasis upon individualism is found to be to spread a great deal among the Brothers and is emphasised more on individual Brothers than communities. The emergence of individualism falls into second place in this classification, as has been pointed out in the answers to the preceding question #18, where the Brothers were expressly asked the prevailing reasons for why a Brother leaves the Order. Also, here in the second place we find the report of a certain difficulty in interpersonal relationships in community life (37%), a great deal of which is often dominated and jeopardized by dynamics of pronounced individualism.

They also appear as symptoms of a certain weakening of the charismatic vision of vocation and perhaps, also of initially absorbing the spirit of the Founder himself. Other factors, that could humanly speaking, be a reason for abandonment, might be the reluctance of young people to be involved in the assistance of the sick and poor, or being overburdened with duties, but these matters are rather marginal and even the young Brothers considered them as last on the list.

One element in this series of answers is somewhat surprising given the divergent evaluations of the General and Provincial governments that in general are more constant and less critical than that of the local Priors and directors of the centres. This occurred in all 13 items of the question, except in the one about overburdening the young with work (the local Priors are not at all agreed that the workload is overburdening). This is a matter that the Brothers of the Order should carefully look into.

A further question interests us: *“What, according to the judgement of the young Brothers are the reasons for abandoning the Order?”* In none of these situations do they agree that it is an overload of work.

5.2. Factors facilitating the young Brothers’ insertion into the mission (question 27).

This question is aimed at looking into the positive factors that can facilitate insertion of the young Brothers into the mission. It is set forth with a positive and constructive purpose to resource the possible reasons proposed by each Brother and community.

5.2.1. Global analysis

Question #27 is in the followings terms: *“We introduce to you a series of factors that can facilitate the insertion of the young Brothers into the mission. You are asked to indicate in what measure you agree on the degree of positive influence that that can help them in their perseverance”* (question #27).

The panel below gives a global vision with the average and analytical percentages that are very clearly indicative.

Positive Factors	<i>N.R.</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Few</i>	<i>None</i>	PM
1. Friendly and fraternal welcome into community	4.2	63.3	26.4	5.5	.5	1.41*
2. Accompaniment by someone who helps him	7.2	47.5	34.1	9.9	1.3	1.62
3. Value the charism highly	9.7	49.5	31.7	8.6	.5	1.56*
4. Constant reinforcement of vocation mortification	9.5	43.7	36.8	9.3	.8	1.64
5. Prayer times fixed and well prepared	8.1	42.5	37.1	11.1	1.3	1.69
6. Enthusiasm for a happy fraternal community life	7.9	53.7	27.9	8.9	1.7	1.55*
7. Efficacious community program	10.3	37.2	36.8	13.6	2.2	1.79
8. Richly significant and interesting work	10.1	33.3	39.2	15.0	2.4	1.85
9. Community with much external rapport	10.3	17.4	30.8	32.9	8.6	2.36
10. Good input in teamwork with co-workers	9.7	29.4	38.0	19.0	3.9	1.97
11. Friendship/confidence with a confrere	9.0	28.5	39.6	18.7	4.2	1.99
12. Good communication with young and old	8.1	44.6	35.5	10.0	1.9	1.66
13. Spirit of belonging with charismatic identity	8.5	55.3	27.8	6.7	1.7	1.51*

From a first reading of the chart a very interesting picture emerges in comparison to the preceding question (#26). And that is, that in the preceding question almost the whole average is indicative of agreement.

More than two indicated a consensus not fully (*much*) but only enough (*enough*), therefore leaving space for other opinions, so here instead all the average points except one alone that is well above two only on the average of one, indicating a rather major decisive and elevated decisive convergence of the situation by the greater part of the Brothers.

Besides the number of the ***“no reply”*** to the question, it is constantly much less and has very low percentages, and even derisive in the column ***“none”*** at all. They never reach 9%, while the percentages of the column are always very elevated reaching an average of 42% which is quite remarkable. This is a very clear sign of the wish of the Brothers to emphasise potential resources that need an opportunity to be exploited and calls for the greater part of the Brothers to agree to this. In fact only in three cases does the sum of the percentages of the two negative columns of disagreement reach as much as 20%.

All this constitutes a very precious picture of objectives that must be strengthened, sharpened and developed with specific and concrete strategies to create within the communities a satisfactory and happy life of relationship that helps to sustain, accompany and encourage the insertion into the mission of the young Brothers. Almost all the factors mostly emphasised report that community life needs to be strengthened by a climate of support and reinforcement, and above all, how to combat opinions of individualism. It strongly emerged that this is considered as one of the factors, if not the main one, why young Brothers suffer disaffection and so abandon their vocation. Much must be immediately done about this.

You might tell us that each Brother has to stand upon his own two feet without being propped up by the community however it is certain that the investigation has put enormous value on the effectiveness and positiveness of community life.

Most of the Brothers, 90% in fact, strongly confirmed the conviction (63.3% of “much”) that ***a cordial and fraternal reception into the community*** of the young Brothers constitutes of the best way for them to persevere in their vocation rather than being cared for in their old age. With the reduced perplexity that originated from the “enough” of the second column, it actually comes to 26.4%, which is the lowest percentage of all the question’s other 12 items.

With a slight difference, around 80% considered that there was a very positive factor in the formation of a strong spirit of belonging and a charismatic identity (83.1%). They said that there was a cheerful spirit of enthusiasm in the Brothers belonging to the community (81.6%); and they valued the charism of the mission and maintained it on a high-level (81.2%), consequently they had a fervent and zealous religious life in which they whole heartedly gave themselves to the mission.

In the following group of factors and vocational resources the values are specific in a very explicit way when assembling these factors: ***such as in the Accompaniment of a young Brother when he is inserted into the Order’s mission (81.6%); in the constant reinforcement of the motivations for his vocation (80.5%); in a good communication between the younger and elderly Brothers (80.1%);*** and finally, ***in well prepared and fixed times of prayer (79.6%).***

With growth the average strength of the percentages decreased, but nevertheless they remain constantly high. Among all the Brothers interviewed, at least two thirds put great value and importance upon a regular religious and apostolic life to facilitate the fulfilment of one's mission. This embraces *an effective planning of a community that is well ordered and organized (74%)*. *The work has to be kept interesting and richly meaningful (62.5%)*. *The Brothers have to present well in teamwork with their co-workers (67.4%)*. They also agreed that they should *cultivate a friendship with another Brother to whom they can confide (68.1%)*. In the resource already mentioned in the preceding chapters, we have observed the great importance of perseverance in one's vocation among the turbulence of the rapid changes of today as being the support and critical comparison in one's choices.

Not very familiar with the perspectives of the Brothers is the least factor relative to the *wide-ranging quality of the relationships that a community has with those outside it (48.2%)*. This aspect seems the least considered in helping perseverance in a vocation and to strengthen one's motivations for the mission. While there is a high percentage of those who agree, there is nevertheless as many with strong contrary opinions (41.5%) and that divides the St. John of God Brothers into two equal groups. The table below distributes the average points.

Distribution of the positive principals based upon the priority of the average points

Positive factors	<i>N.R.</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Few</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>PM</i>
1. Cordial and fraternal welcome into community	4.2	63.3	26.4	5.5	.5	1.41*
13 Strong spirit of belonging, charismtic identity	8.5	55.3	27.8	6.7	1.7	1.51*
6. Enthusiasm for happy fraternal community life	7.9	53.7	27.9	8.9	1.7	1.55*
3. Value of the charism on a high level	9.7	49.5	31.7	8.6	.5	1.56*
2. Accompaniment by a Brother of his choice	7.2	47.5	34.1	9.9	1.3	1.62
4. Constant reinforcement of motivation of vocation	9.5	43.7	36.8	9.3	.8	1.64
12 Good communication between young and old Brothers	8.1	44.6	35.5	10.0	1.9	1.66
5. Well prepared and fixed prayer times	8.1	42.5	37.1	11.1	1.3	1.69
7. Efficacious community program	10.3	37.2	36.8	13.6	2.2	1.79
8. Interesting and satisfying work	10.1	33.3	39.2	15.0	2.4	1.85
10. Good participation in teamwork with co-workers.	9.7	29.4	38.0	19.0	3.9	1.97
11. Friendship/confidence with a confrere	9.0	28.5	39.6	18.7	4.2	1.99
9. Community with many good external rapport	10.3	17.4	30.8	32.9	8.6	2.36

5.2.2. Analytical deepening of each item

Quickly pointing to the factors that contribute to the perseverance of a vocation and to the insertion of the young Brother into mission in a positive way, we now come to *a more analytical deepening of the value and importance* which is important to the whole Order and especially so to the Brothers interviewed. We found that there is an absolute priority is the recognition (M:1.41) the Brothers place upon a cordial and fraternal reception into the community (89.7%).

Without a doubt such an attitude of reception opens the heart of the Brother beginning his mission and encourages his enthusiasm and initiative. It also helps him to overcome any sense of uncertainty and trepidation when taking on new assignments and to overcome initial difficulties when faced with a variety of new relationships.

Indeed such an attitude regarding his reception into the community, not only encourages the young Brother and fills him with enthusiasm and initiative, but also helps him overcome any deep sense of uncertainty and trepidation for the novelty of his assignment, and the initial difficulties he will encounter in establishing a range of new interpersonal relationships.

The percentages of such an attitude of welcoming another into the community is very high. This same conviction is seen in all the geographical zones, but it is more evident in Africa (M:1.29), Central Europe (M:1.30) the USA (M:1.36), from the younger Brothers in age (M:1.36) and profession (M:1.38), the holders of diplomas and degrees, the General and Provincial governments (M:1.30), as well as the formators, but somewhat less from the Priors (M:1.38). Only 6% of the Brothers showed a certain reserve in respect to this deeply held value of the religious life in this vocational perspective. Above all, this is the characteristic that detaches from all the others in a more decisive way. In fact the second factor is set apart by 10% of a point, putting it ahead of the other two aspects by the narrow margin of 5%.

First of all we are treating of the importance (M:1.51) that assumes *the formation of a strong spirit of affiliation and charismatic identity (83.1%)*. The reception into the community creates an affiliation and this affiliation strengthens the charismatic identity of the mission. The Brothers who especially maintain this are those in the USA (M:1.38), then follow those in Latin America (M:1.42), Africa (M:1.43), the younger Brothers especially in religious profession (M:1.44), the graduates (M:1.41), the formators (M:1.40) and the General and Provincial governments (M:1.37).

The same consensus attributed an importance (M:1.55) to *the enthusiasm of the cheerful life of the Community, and each Brother as well (81.6%)*. Then there was some concern shown by the Priors and some individual Brothers who say this factor has always to be in the community as an essential element for the serenity of the mission that it has been called to realize. However the average points are not so clear, specific and clear-cut as in the preceding analyses. Noticing the high consideration of this are the Brothers in Africa (M:1.46), the Brothers who have between 6 and 25 years of profession (M:1.49), the graduates (M:1.49) and the formators (M:1.48), the medium point of some other categories are generally higher to the average, that perhaps derives from a certain perplexity regarding the perception of the difficulties of always maintaining this climate of elevated enthusiasm.

In fact the following factor of the average is less than one per cent (M:1.56). It really reports of the value of the charisma of the mission maintained to high levels (81.2%). This is maintained as important by the Brothers in the USA without any disagreement (M:1.22), those in Africa (M:1.43), Central Europe (M:1.51), the graduates (M:1.46) and in 90.7% of the other three levels, except the Priors (M:1.49).

A simple reflection on these three aspects brings us to emphasise that the young Brothers do receive strong support from almost all the Brothers. It deals with factors that underline a predominantly emotional dimension, but one that is very important for the positive and constructive climate that produces a beneficial peaceful course of the religious and professional life of high quality if it is well constructed, maintained and strengthened. However this last operation asks for a special effort from everybody in the community and that is not always easy

to realise due to the imponderable emotional and psychological makeup of some. The sense of the affiliation, the value of the charisma and joy of the Fraternal life never stops from being most important in the Order

A third group of factors that are close and very similar in percentage is because their average points are inclusive in the range of about 7%. They are of *a more concrete nature* and they speak of Accompaniment as a reinforcement of vocational motivation. This is to have an intergenerational dialogue among the young and elderly Brothers, as well as reluctance for regular prayer life to strengthen the contemplative dimension of the Brothers.

The need to have a personal vocational Accompaniment (81.6%) for the young Brother setting out in the apostolic mission is without any doubt (M:1.62) a help to his perseverance and a supporting factor at the beginning of his religious life. This is a proposal that should be suggested to all the levels of the Church and the various congregations and religious Orders. The answers received from the Brothers interviewed come to a generalised accord (81.6%). They are especially manifested by the Brothers in the USA (M:1.44), Central Europe (M:1.52), the formators and vocation promoters (M:1.53), the graduates (M:1.53) and the General and Provincial governments (M:1.42) in 93.1% cases.

The constant reinforcement of motivation in his vocation (80.5%) is a predominantly individual appointment, however it has need to be constantly stimulated (M:1.64). And besides it has to be improved with the support of the community both through meetings and lectures, but also through a real lifestyle that imperceptibly, but effectively, acts on the existential and relationship level. This level especially emerges in the Order with the Brothers in the USA (M:1.45), Central Europe (M:1.54), Africa (M:1.54), Brothers between the ages of 36 and 55 years (M:1.59), the formators (M:1.58), the graduates (M:1.45), and the General and Provincial governments (M:1.55).

Seen in the reality of daily life, a factor of remarkable importance (*M:1.66*) is constituted by the *good intergenerational communication between the young and the elderly Brothers (80.1%)*.

In a time in which the discrepancy among the generations is assuming a more and more heavy dimension among the very rapid social changes that are so marked in relationships between the various age groups. Even in religious life there are repercussions of this with the danger that the social pressures can even filter through to community life. However, there still seems enough solid ground here because of charity and religious fraternity, at least on the level of convictions and judgment. It is clearly noted that there is a high percentage of a general consensus, and on a more specific level from the groups as diversified as the zones of Africa (M:1.53), the USA (M:1.56), Central Europe (M:1.57) and the General and Provincial governments (M:1.62).

Around three quarters of the Brothers find two very positive factors, one (M:1.79) refers to the effective planning of a well ordered and organized Community (74%) and the other (M:1.85) related to an interesting and meaningful workload. (72.5%).

This second one has the full accord of all the Brothers, however there are certain reserves that are especially manifested from Southern Europe (M:1.95), and (strange to say!) also of the General and Provincial governments (M:1.87) who only 51.7% of them said “enough” comparison to 31% who said “much”.

Also this second factor, relative to an interesting and meaningful workload (M:1.85), is highly valued by the younger Brothers who gave 81.6% of their consent. That goes to tell us that these days the young generation places great importance on personal satisfaction. This is seen in the zones of the USA (M:1.57), Central Europe (M:1.76) and Latin America (M:1.78), in comparison to Africa (M:2.08), Asia (M:1.92) and Southern Europe (M:1.89) all of whom seem to be less decisive.

A final couple of factors from the percentages are very relevant and were picked up by three quarters of the Brothers. This deals with the importance of good *teamwork between the Brothers and co-workers (67.4%)*. This must be impressed upon young Brothers entering the mission (M:1.97). There is no place for a “one man show”, he has to realise that teamwork will increase and develop his generous and competent participation in his daily work. Such is agreed with by the younger Brothers (M:1.89), and the Brothers in the USA (M:1.65), Central Europe (M:1.72), the older Brothers (M:1.90). the superiors on all the levels are convinced of it (limitedly M:2.01), the Brothers between the ages of 36 and 55 years (M:2.03) who have been working for years, and the formators (M:2.03).

The second factor confirms a precedent as a result of the questionnaire, when question #13 speculated to whom should one go to for advice in difficulties. 30.8% of the Brothers said they found help in the confidence of a Brother. Among the positive factors of insertion in the mission we again see the question being repeated and the answer comes back as the friendship and confidence with another Brother (68.1%). This was especially so with the Brothers in the USA (M:1.50), Africa (M:1.82), Asia (M:1.86), the General and Provincial governments (M:1.90), and the graduates (M:1.90). However, it was not so valued by the elderly Brothers (M:2.12), Southern Europe (M:2.04), Central Europe (M:2.16) and the formators (M:2.04).

A last factor (M:2.36), that unlike the precedents, relatively received less consensus when it was a matter of *the community having many important relationships with those outside it (48.2%)*. All the Brothers in the USA agree (M:1.72), as also in Asia (M:2.23), and Central Europe (M:2.22), also both ends of the age scale, the young (M:2.28) and the elderly ones (M:2.23). Not so enthusiastic instead are the formators (M:2.43), the local Priors (M:2.48), the graduates (M:2.51) and the Brothers in Latin America (M:2.61) and of Southern Europe (M:2.48).

Concluded in the perspective of the insertion of the young Brothers in the mission the Brothers interviewed mentioned important comparisons and values regarding this matter. The prominent one speaks of especially instilling the charismatic values in interior formation, and a fraternal reception into the communities, a sense of affiliation, serenity and cheerfulness in work, constant reinforcement of religious motivations and of prayer life. There was also a strong agreement on the importance of Accompaniment and elements of organising the communities, such as planning, programming and fluidity in intergenerational dialogue.

We would now like to say a few words about the all important aspect of initial formation that is *spiritual Accompaniment*, of which more over 55.6% of the Brothers recognise as lacking in the Order (question #26). Here it is recognised that its importance as the fundamental presupposition to reach out to vocational discernment, because with it comes that unusual relationship in faith and charity between two people, one of whom has lived quite some time in the maturity of the faith while the other sets out upon that journey that leads to a maturity of the faith.

For successful Accompaniment, the Brother who performs this important duty must express in his actions genuine faithfulness and charity. While for the one who is being accompanied, this is a position of trust, sharing, discernment and a progressive clarification of one's inmost motives. It is a position of fraternal correction, and it is a personal enrichment of his progress in values and experiences. It is an opportunity for friendly dialogue, self-examination and a personal deepening of faith and the dimension of community and Church where he will understand his vocation and arrive at the excellence of his spiritual journey.

5.3. Ongoing formation: its importance and the difficulties that arise (question 28).

In the sphere of formation for the mission, we have analysed the judgments of the Brothers on the subject of initial formation and the possible and real difficulties for facilitating vocations. The following paragraph goes further into the other aspects of ongoing formation that the Church and other institutions persistently recommend to the Brothers. In reality this has not been quite put into effect yet. Even though it is solicited at all levels, it still comes up against notable difficulties both of organisational and unconvincing persuasion.

On the other hand, this process has to be of quite some concern in having it quickly introduced into the Order. In fact it constitutes the subject of two articles in the Constitutions. Articles 72-73f are quite clear on this when they state two characteristic statements about ongoing formation. They emphasize that the Brothers must "have a constant response to the regenerating action of the Holy Spirit (#72) that deepens the initial formation and calls for a constant and updated competence that is required by apostolic mission. Besides it not only helps the individual and the whole community but, above all, it treats not only of a personal appointment, but allows all to contribute to the growth of the community; ***"We all contribute according to our individual ability, to helping our community reach this aim."*** (#73) In this context they acquire an illuminating frame of reference and we will illustrate the results.

5.3.1. Global analysis

To study this dimension we wanted to stimulate the reaction of the Brothers with the specification question #28 which is expressed in the followings terms: ***"What are the principal difficulties the Brothers have in not perceiving the importance of ongoing formation?"***

The following panel gives us a global percentage of the Brothers' answers.

	%
1. Lack of interest by the Brothers	55.3
2. Advanced age of the Brothers	39.8
3. Lack of a ongoing formation program	35.0
4. Absence of a specific program according to the age of the Brothers	28.4
5. Satisfaction with the security reached in religious life	24.0
6. Predominance of professional activities	20.0
7. Little attention of the local Prior	16.7
8. Erroneous concept of power	16.7
9. Cultural poverty of the place where the community resides	8.3
10. Insertion into a new ambience of life	5.1

More than half the Brothers (55.3%) clearly declared that the greatest difficulties for ongoing formation touch upon the responsiveness of the Brothers and the formation passed on to them, making them less concerned about the problem. ***This influence came to 15 points in the percentages as did the age groups (39.8%)***. However a more incisive influence is given by the lack of a natural planning of ongoing formation (35%), whose realisation could make a vast improvement. More than 16.7% of the Brothers (equal to 1 in 7) attribute the lack of attention and the weakness of the superior for this situation. The care and the attention to this third factor should not pass unnoticed, rather it needs to be systematically institutionalised so it could become that fulcrum to recover the space, time and interest in the matter and overcome the actual climate of indifference and perhaps also of resistance.

However in another item, 28.4% of the Brothers, with a very acute observation, complain about ***the absence of any specific program according to the age groups***. This would stimulate a great adhesion because the Brothers would answer better to their needs in the different phases of their lives, both religious and professional. This means ***overcoming that inactivity derived from satisfaction for the safety reached in the religious life (24%)***. It calls for a positive change of mentality that must be aimed at overcoming the mistaken conception of power of which 16.7% of the Brothers complain. Cultural poverty of the place in which the community lives (8.3%), predominance of the professional activity that steals time and energies (20%) and insertion into a new environment of life (5.1%). These are all factors that act as an inhibiting brake that goes to stress the ordinary routine of daily life.

These are reasons on a positive plane that appeal for a search for means to block these things out and to resist the inertia of age in routine and indifference. We can distinguish these factors in two classes, reciprocal and influential:

- factors of mentality that can understand the scarce interest and the advanced age of the Brothers, the satisfaction derived in reaching security in religious life, the wrong conception of power, the difficulties for the insertion into a new environment of life. These are drawn together as characteristic of a certain lifestyle that does not permit placing any value on ongoing formation;
- factors of organization, predominantly external and of a concrete nature that they can understand the lack of organic planning, diversified in age groups, the scarce attention by the local superior, the organisation of work that is excessively unbalanced between efficiency and the necessity to meet the immediate demands of the institution. These are gaps that, once perceived, could also become some objective to establish the Brothers to overcome the lack of interest and to begin to develop a favourable mentality regarding ongoing formation as an ordinary part of the life of the Order.

5.3.2. Analytical deepening of each item

Passing to a ***more analytical deepening***, the first difficulty related to the ***lack of interest from the Brothers***, is judged to be about 55.3% of the Brothers interviewed, that reaches 62.1% in the Southern Europe (as second place of its list of difficulties following that of the rather high age range); and 55.6% in Central Europe (number one of the various difficulties).

Also it is partially found in Latin America (52.9%), while it is somewhat reduced in Africa (46.4%), Asia (47.2%) and in the USA (48.3%). The complaint of indifference touches a higher note, around 60%, in the two age groups of Brothers active in the apostolate, the

formators and vocation promoters, the graduates, and also among the General and Provincial governments (66.7%) and local Priors (62.6%). Among the younger Brothers the percentage is rather lower, since they do not have this problem. Their main concern is having an interest and a firm devotion to cultivating their own initial formation both religious and professional.

Tab. 3.8 – Principal difficulties relevant to ongoing formation. Distributed in geographic zones (in V.A. and %)

	Zones of origin								
	Total	Sth. Europe	Ctr. Europe	Africa	Lat. Amer.	Asia	USA	Canada	Australia
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60		
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9		
No Reply	23	7	6	1	3	2	4		
	2.3	1.8	3.2	1.2	1.7	1.6	6.7		
Lack of program	354	85	55	59	63	67	25		
	35.0	22.4	29.1	70.2	36.6	52.8	41.7		
Brothers' disinterest	560	236	105	39	91	60	29		
	55.3	62.1	55.6	46.4	52.9	47.2	48.3		
Superior not interested	169	51	28	16	29	38	7		
	16.7	13.4	14.8	19.0	16.9	29.9	11.7		
Cultural poverty	84	32	11	13	16	11	1		
	8.3	8.4	5.8	15.5	9.3	8.7	1.7		
Too old	403	264	42	3	59	11			
	39.8	69.5	22.2	3.6	34.3	8.7	40.0		
Inadequate program	287	105	40	24	54	51	13		
	28.4	27.6	21.2	28.6	31.4	40.2	21.7		
Security in religious life	243	83	55	7	41	43	14		
	24.0	21.8	29.1	8.3	23.8	33.9	23.3		
Insertion into new ambience	52	17	13	2	7	8	5		
	5.1	4.5	6.9	2.4	4.1	6.3	8.3		
False conception of power	169	42	36	20	36	29	6		
	16.7	11.1	19.0	23.8	20.9	22.8	10.0		
Predominance of work	202	51	50	37	30	23	11		
	20.0	13.4	26.5	44.0	17.4	18.1	18.3		
Other	32	7	11	2	6	1	5		
	3.2	1.8	5.8	2.4	3.5	.8	8.3		

As is logical, the problem is often tied in with *the advanced age of the Brothers (39.8%)*. For them the problem is set, since they have not taken on this new perspective and they find it too hard to handle. In fact, among the most elderly the percentages almost double (66.7%), while among the first two age and religious profession groups they are halved, as is shown in table §.3.8.

Confirmation of this is the 69.5% of Southern Europe since they have a very high rate of senior Brothers, while in Africa and Asia, areas with many younger Brothers, such a problem is reported as only as 3.6% and 8.7% respectively. Also for the superiors, especially of the General and Provincial governments, this is the most serious cause for this sort of disaffection. It seems that not of this opinion are the formators (17.1%), who think it is the security offered by the religious life that creates a levelling out and (35.7%) and is considered as the third most relevant cause.

Although it may quantitatively (35%) only fall into third place, *the lack of a real ongoing formation program* seems to us to be one of the prevailing and stronger reasons for this

indifference, showing a lack of suitable stimulation and appealing proposals within the Order itself. This lack is reported from Africa as its first problem and that doubles the percentages (70.2%), in comparison to the small importance given to it by Southern Europe with the lowest percentage (22.4%) and from Central Europe 29.1%, where it seems that at present there are at least partial programs of ongoing formation. The formators report (38.6%), and the younger Brothers (45.6%), but the elderly Brother and the last two age groups were not at all enthusiastic and registered only 29.3% and 26.5% respectively, and the General and Provincial governments (33.3%).

Even if less than 7 percentage points in comparison to the already recognised lack of planning, is the other gap is the absence of any specific program according to the ages of the Brothers (28.4%). It appears that there is scarce planning here and something needs to be done about starting up suitable planning to suit the different age groups. Already something is now being done about it by the Brothers in Asia (40.2%), the younger Brothers and the formators (30%). However, in the other geographical zones and the other groups of reference the data is relatively restricted. A little less than a quarter of the Brothers observed that *the religious life offered security* (24%). It would seem unlikely that they would be prepared to go out into the world and live a lifestyle like the laity. This is seen above all in Asia (33.9%) and Central Europe (29.1%), by the first age groups, especially the younger Brothers in profession, The General and Provincial governments (31%), and the graduates, formators and vocation promoters (35.7%). The Brothers in Africa (8.3%) and the elderly Brothers (16.7%) barely mention it.

The excessive dominance of professional activity (20%), is often seen to greatly absorb the incumbent urgencies of daily life, and to make it difficult to find the time for ongoing formation. This is stated especially by the younger Brothers (24.3%) and those who are fully employed (36-55 years old), the African Brothers (44%, equal to the average) and the Brothers in Central Europe (26.5%) and the vocational formators (27.1%).

Tab. 3.9 – Principal difficulties relevant to ongoing formation. Distributed in age groups and religious profession (in V.A. and %)

	AGE GROUPS				YEARS OF PROFESSION					
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	UP TO	6-25	26-50	Over	50
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148	
*Percentage	23.6		30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6	
No reply	23	8	0	10	4	6	1	11	2	
	2.3	3.3	.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	.4	3.2	1.4	
Lack of program	354	109	114	95	35	89	127	90	43	
	35.0	45.6	37.1	29.3	26.5	42.8	45.4	25.8	29.1	
Disinterest by Brothers	560	106	184	195	69	97	157	213	81	
	55.3	44.4	59.9	60.2	52.3	46.6	56.1	61.0	54.7	
Superior inattentive	169	48	49	48	24	40	49	49	29	
	16.7	20.1	16.0	14.8	18.2	19.2	17.5	14.0	19.6	
Cultural poverty	84	14	29	30	10	18	26	25	13	
	8.3	5.9	9.4	9.3	7.6	8.7	9.3	7.2	8.8	
Elderly Brothers	403	51	86	169	88	39	74	183	93	
	39.8	21.3	28.0	52.2	66.7	18.8	26.4	52.4	62.8	
Programs specific to age	87	68	90	93	34	68	68	106	40	
	28.4	28.5	29.3	28.7	25.8	32.7	24.3	30.4	27.0	
Security of religious life	243	68	82	68	22	62	73	77	24	
	24.0	28.5	26.7	21.0	16.7	29.8	26.1	22.1	16.2	
Insertion into ambience	52	12	9	21	9	8	11	19	9	
	5.1	5.0	2.9	6.5	6.8	3.8	3.9	5.4	6.1	
False idea of power	169	57	56	38	17	49	54	45	16	
	16.7	23.8	18.2	11.7	12.9	23.6	19.3	12.9	10.8	
Predominance of work	202	58	74	58	12	43	79	61	17	
	20.0	24.3	24.1	17.9	9.1	20.7	28.2	17.5	11.5	
Other	32	4	11	13	3	6	9	13	3	
	3.2	1.7	3.6	4.0	2.3	2.9	3.2	3.7	2.0	

The 16.7% of the Brothers interviewed also pointed out another gap, one of some weight, and that is the *scant attention given by the local Prior (16.7%)*, especially in Asia (29.9% almost double the average) and in Africa (19%), just over the young Brothers (20.1%), the vocational formators (24.3%) and the qualified technicians (19.2%). Easily it was the pressure of daily urgencies that above the other consideration correlated highly with this further difficulty that prevents them from looking towards a much greater horizon.

There are more contingent circumstances, even if quantitatively reduced, that some Brothers introduced to clarify the cultural poverty of the place where the community resides (8.3%) and the difficulty of insertion into a new environment of living (5.1%), above all for the most elderly. The first case is especially reported by the Brothers in Africa (15.5%), while the second comes from the USA, Central Europe and the elderly Brothers.

Various Brothers said ongoing formation does not seem to be organised in any proper way. Varied resistances are stopping it, both of a qualitative nature as in the lack of interest. The prevailing mentality, the advanced age of some Brothers, the security of life, are already permeating the daily routine to stifle new stimulations; both of an organisational sort as well as the lack of organised planning, the various age groups, the scarce attention from the local superior, the organisation of the excessively unbalanced work based upon efficiency and the necessity to fulfil the immediate demands of the Order.

Tab. 3.10 – Principal difficulties relevant to ongoing formation. Distributed by the position held (in V.A. and %)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	Gen	& Prov	Govt.	Formation None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage:	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	23	0	2	0	21
	2.3	.0	.9	.0	3.3
Lack of program	354	29	79	27	219
	35.0	33.3	35.6	38.6	34.6
Brothers' disinterest	560	58	139	38	325
	55.3	66.7	62.6	54.3	51.3
Prior not interested	169	14	24	17	114
	16.7	16.1	10.8	24.3	18.0
Cultural poverty	84	4	19	5	56
	8.3	4.6	8.6	7.1	8.8
Brothers too old	403	39	97	12	255
	39.8	44.8	43.7	17.1	40.3
Program specific to age group	287	26	50	21	190
	28.4	29.9	22.5	30.0	30.0
Security in religious life	243	27	50	25	141
	24.0	31.0	22.5	35.7	22.3
Insertion into new ambient	52	4	11	2	35
	5.1	4.6	5.0	2.9	5.5
False idea of power	169	9	30	14	116
	16.7	10.3	13.5	20.0	18.3
Predominance of work	202	16	50	19	117
	20.0	18.4	22.5	27.1	18.5
Other	32	2	10	3	17
	3.2	2.3	4.5	4.3	2.7

6. CONCLUSION

In studying the results of the investigation into the identity of consecration, this chapter looks into the most specific ambience of the Brothers' mission in the Church, first of all by articulating this in five relative sectors to incorporate the new role of the Brothers in their mission (questions 19-20). Then the balance between activism and the interior life (questions 21-22), and goes on into the area of pastoral care in health services (questions 23-25), relationships with co-workers (question 29) and finally to the Brothers' formation for the mission, both initial and ongoing (questions 26-28).

The proposal of *a new role to be developed within the Church* is articulated in the Order's Constitutions in five constitutive subjects; the priority of appointing and integrating co-workers, being open to new needs, being a moral guide, critical conscience and a prophetic presence, that is now being worked upon but is far from completion.

There are difficulties both as a community and as an individual, that have been aired, especially that of the lack of a suitable personal formation, especially for the younger Brothers;

while in the older and aged there is a certain insecurity that emerges when faced with changes and a strong attachment to traditional practices that perhaps needs to be overcome, and the warning signs indicate this.

For some Brothers all this is translated as a precarious sense of inferiority that makes it difficult for them to have relationships with the co-workers.

Another reflection is developed around the theme of the balance between activism and the interior life. About 80% of the Brothers answered this on different levels and intensity, in a positive and significant way. However around 20% of the younger Brothers have yet to experience this.

The difficulties introduced here are quite significant. They all remain in a range of percentages that spreads across about ten percentage points difference (from 29 to 21%) in the perception of the Brothers. In fact, regarding a careless approach to personal prayer, is added in the same measure the lack of a sense of the spiritual life and not much stimuli from the community, the absence of a suitable project of life, excessive activism, and too many work commitments. All these are very problematic factors that put them in the forefront of daily religious life, not to mention vocational perseverance.

In looking into the subject of *pastoral care in health services*, there does not seem to be any positive general vision, although there are some exceptions and various evaluations in some particular sectors. The judgment of the Brothers is somewhat ambivalent regarding *territorial* integration, about half saying (*enough*) while one Brother in eight says it is happening already. The Brothers want to know what else remains to be done on the ecclesial level and, even more so, on the level of the local civil society. This was noticed by the criticism made by 45% of the Brothers.

Around the frequent and active participation by the Brothers in health services pastoral care there was not much criticism or many reserves with about 30% Brothers. More problematic instead, is their judgment about the participation of the co-workers (around 44%), but even more so with the volunteers and outsiders.

Among the recipients of pastoral care who receive greater attention are those who are assisted in the Order's institutions and 68.9% of the Brothers agreed with this. In second place came the co-workers (49.4%), the relatives of those assisted and lastly the external poor. It is important to notice the implications for vocation emerging from this phenomenon. Our investigation seems to show a more substantial emphasis and the careful reference of the younger Brothers and those entrusted with vocation promotion to extending pastoral care to more people. This special attention is not isolated or purely occasional. If we go back again to the motivations that have impelled young men to enter the Order, we notice that this experience of care and meeting with the poor and needy sick has been one of the strongest motives urging youth to follow the vocation of special consecration in the Order.

The Brothers' relationship with the co-workers introduces a series of difficulties that originate with the co-workers and the Brothers themselves. The Brothers hold a dissonance of values and principles apart and that often makes collaboration difficult. It also increases between them a climate of competitiveness and mutual mistrust. They have a distorted perception of the managerial function of the Brothers whom they consider to be masters, and added to this there is also a lack of preparation of the co-workers themselves to work with the Brothers.

The Brothers on their part act with honesty and frankness recognising their limitations and the need to be prepared for teamwork with the co-workers and to accept them in managerial positions, and to consider their role and their vocation of laity as is particularly recognised by the Church.

To point out some aspects that stand out in this type of relationship we report these characteristics:

- a convergence of Africa, Latin America and the USA in recognising the presence of analogous problems;
- these are underlined better by those who have direct contact with the sick;
- those who are less involved appear to hold a flexible attitude toward the co-workers;
- significantly different from the above is the attitude of the General and Provincial governments who have appreciation for the principles and the values of the secular personnel: their judgment on such dissonance easily appears more flexible and articulated.

In the treatment of initial formation there is a very delicate aspect in the study of the causes that bring the younger Brothers to a vocational crisis up to the point of abandoning the Order.

Among these risk factors the most serious is considered the fragile structure of personality in today's young people, considered incapable of assuming long-term assignments and to succeed in clearly focusing their own religious motivations. This lack of clarity of religious and vocational motivations is also considered in effect to be rather lacking of Accompaniment where the responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the senior Brothers themselves and the formators above all.

Besides, other factors converge to increase the already precarious situation. They are indicated in the accentuated individualism of the Brothers, that today are very diffused and have already been featured in the questionnaire; as well as a too hasty insertion into the community and the power of poor example by both individuals and communities.

Symptoms of a certain weakening of the charismatic vision of vocation are also present. And also perhaps is the assimilation and interiorising of the spirit of the Founder himself. Other factors that could be attributed to abandonment of vocation are the reluctance of the young to be involved with certain aspects of the assistance of the sick and the poor, and an overload of work. These are rather marginal matters that concern the young and they have been classified in the last place.

It is surprising to us that within these reflections on vocation a certain divergence of opinions emerges, not so strong however in the General and Provincial governments, but it is of more concern to the Priors and directors of the centres. This is a subject that needs to be gone into seriously by the Brothers of the Order.

We can point out a series of very positive factors facing the Brothers in the study of the resources that the Order can use for the best formation of its Brothers and can contribute to the strengthening of vocation as expressed in the replies of the Brothers that can facilitate the insertion of the young Brothers into the mission.

The 90% voted by the Brothers greatly confirm the conviction (**63.3% for much**) that cordial and fraternal reception into the community constitutes the best resource for the perseverance in the vocation of the young Brother, more than that of a serene old age for the elderly ones. With a slight difference, around 80% considered very **positive factors of formation and a strong spirit of affiliation and charismatic identity (83.1%), the enthusiasm for a happy life as a community and as an individual (81.6%;) and the value of the charism of the mission maintained at a high-level (81.2%)**. A happy community, sense of affiliation, charismatic identity, high-levels of identity and a passion for the mission, constitute therefore the essential impetus for a fervent religious life and a generous and selfless zeal for the mission.

Other values also make for an orderly and systematic development of the spiritual Accompaniment of a young Brother following his insertion into the Order's mission (81.6%); then comes a good communication between the young Brothers and the elderly Brothers (80.1%); next the constant reinforcement of the motivations for one's own vocation (80.5%), and finally the well prepared and fixed times of the prayer (79.6%).

Attracting a large vote, at least two thirds of the Brothers, was the formidable importance of a regular religious and apostolic life with effective well ordered and organised planning by the community (74%); help for a good presentation in teamwork with co-workers (67.4%); the friendship and the confidence of another Brother (68.1%); work that is interesting and rewarding (62.5%). A rather ambivalent value is attributed to the vastness and the quality of the community's relationships with outsiders (48.2%).

In conclusion, the Brothers interviewed have brought together many indications to compare the importance and value of the various factors in this perspective. They give prominence in a special way to the charismatic factors and of interior formation, of fraternal reception into the communities, a sense of affiliation, serenity and cheerful working conditions, of constant reinforcement of the religious motivations and a life of prayer. In second place they strongly agree on the importance of Accompaniment and the organisational elements of the community, of its planning and a fluid and integrated dialogue.

In our study on the identity of the mission, we cannot neglect the important dimension of **ongoing formation**. This is highly recommended by the different institutions both ecclesial and civil, yet there is a certain difficulty in bringing it about. The reasons are quite different, as shown in the results of our investigation with the Brothers interviewed. They seem to show that the reason points to the Brothers' lack of interest, then again the age factor influences it, and there is also a rigid mentality, the habit of reaching a security in religious life and therefore a consolidated lifestyle and resistance to the different arguments of the superiors. These however, don't seem very effective, unless they are able to be brought about by attending to the different age groups.

Cultural poverty of the place in which the community lives, predominance of professional activity that steals time and energies, insertion into a new environment of life, weakness of organisational stimuli, pressures of daily life: these are all factors that go to increase the habitual and routine of daily life that act as an inhibiting brake.

On a more positive the level however, all these factors can and must become a wakeup call and a provocation to plan with creative imagination to utilise all the institutional and individual strategies that are able oppose with a positive program any resistance and inertia caused by age, routine and indifference.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIFESTYLE OF THE COMMUNITY

Religious consecration and the apostolic mission find their natural growth and development in the community. It is really the community that constitutes the central knot of the whole third chapter of the Constitutions (arts. 26-43) that, are articulated in the three sections of the community, faith and prayer (arts.27-35), in a community of fraternal love (arts.36-40) and in a community of apostolic service (arts.41-43). These are the three aspects that the Brothers articulated in the questionnaire and their answers are presented here.

1. COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND PRAYER

Prayer is a ministry and a personal responsibility, not transferable to others, a privilege and an inalienable duty, an apostolate priority that makes all the other forms of apostolate productive. Is it really present in the various communities and in what measure? We cannot certainly enter into the intimacy of individual Brothers, however we can ask them to examine the prayerlife of the community in its various visible expressions of regularity and sharing since the Constitutions says it is "the source of the contemplative attitude of the dail life" (27).

The various articulations of the question had the purpose to set forth an analytical panorama to develop the sharing of practices of piety on a daily, weekly or monthly scale in the different geographical zones of the Order, comparing the different age groups, levels of profession and positions of responsibility.

1.1. GENERAL VIEW OF PRAYERLIFE (question 30).

Seven symbolic situations have been chosen and these allowed us to articulate the different sequence of the prayer life in every community. This embraces personal prayer, community prayer including the liturgy of the Hours, to the participation of the sacraments of penitence and Eucharist, and the annual retreat (spiritual exercises). This does not constitute a qualitative thermometer of the fervour and the life of faith and prayer of every individual Brother. It doesn't even help to measure the life of faith of a community, since this a dimension that escapes the statistic quantifications, however through the judgment that the Brothers felt to give of their community in comparison to the objective practices, such as Brothers living outside the community, we are able to individualise the climate of timetables and the fidelity of these communities to times of prayer which also nourishes the regularity and the spiritual life of the Brothers besides constituting elements necessary for every religious community.

The personal judgment of each Brother helps to individualise orientations of great excellence as well as those that are somewhat dubiousness. These emerge to the view of all as a reflection of the synthesis that allows the emergence of objectives of great dubiousness that call for the attentions of each Brother and each community.

The following table gives a reading of the synthesis of each Brother's judgment on the life of faith and prayer of his community.

Tab. 4.1 – Judgment on the life of faith and prayer perceived in the community (in % and average points)

	<i>No Reply.</i>	<i>Much</i>	<i>Enough</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Average Pt.</i>
1. Frequent participation in community prayer (liturgy of the Hours)	3.4	53.6	36.2	5.8	1.1	1.53*
2. Frequent participation in the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.	4.2	45.0	42.9	7.5	.4	1.62
3. Spiritual exercises according to the Const.	6.0	36.1	39.8	15.0	3.1	1.84
4. Retreat according to the Constitutions.	4.2	31.7	38.2	21.0	4.7	1.99
5. Community time for personal prayer	3.5	26.1	45.3	22.5	2.7	2.02
6. Well prepared liturgies	5.6	18.9	49.9	22.3	3.3	2.11
7. A lively personal prayer	10.3	11.3	40.3	25.9	12.3	2.44

An important observation is the last item related to the individual dimension of one's life of faith and prayer. There is ambiguity in the accentuation on the personal level that is very positive, but there is also a community component to this. However, a relatively high number of Brothers gave no answer (10.3%) to this question. This prompts us to doubt that the formulation in comparison to the other items has perhaps been rather ambiguous since the main idea seems tied up to just that matter. A good 38.2% answered (*little or none*). Actually they have emphasised (in a positive sense and opportunely) that their life of faith and prayer is not simply on a personal level, but also on that of the community.

Another interpretation of judgment with a critical attitude showing little life of faith and prayer is generally seen in the elderly age group, perhaps this is more inclined to this *laudatio temporis acti* and is a noticeably high percentage of those who did not reply: more than one in five Brothers did not reply, which leaves that matter open. We therefore will not spend any more time in respect to the criterion of reading any more into this matter.

In every case the sequence of other situations that were set in the various practices of piety, underlines that the life of faith and prayer in the community primarily is in the assiduous sharing of the community liturgical prayer of the Hours (89.8%) and the celebration of the sacraments (87.9%). With a separation of around 10 points the sharing of the annual spiritual exercises (retreat) (75.9%), and a little bit less to the monthly day of recollection (69.9%). The suitable preparation of the liturgy (68.8%) is well noted. The time for private meditation is noted by 61.4% underling the fact that the Community reserves the time for personal prayer, set apart from that of the community.

However, observing the column of excellence (very), the percentages are not very high. In other words, it seems that the three levels on sharing show high enough, but not excessive (one would expect more on the daily level), at least when the celebration of the hours and the sacraments are concerned. A second level of frequency, that concerns the monthly day of recollections and the annual retreat are given a positive response by two thirds of the Brothers, while another 25% are less enthusiastic. A third and lower level finally complain about a scarce sharing in the preparation of the liturgy (25.6%).

1.2. Going deeper into the report

The community prayer of the liturgy of the Hours constitutes in an absolute sense, the central point of the greatest spiritual sharing of the whole community. In fact more than half the answers and some judgments are very positive (53.6%), above all from the 64% of the Brothers in Central Europe and Africa, a little less from those in Southern Europe (48.4%) and still less from USA (23.3%), where it seems to constitute a real problem. There is however 36.2% of the Brothers whose judgment is not absolutely positive, but they nevertheless express some reserve, especially in Southern Europe (43.2%) and the USA where it reaches 41.7%.

A clear difference emerges on the level of the age groups, above all among the younger Brothers who showed more extreme views. The results of their judgment is very positive (93%), while among the elderly Brothers the percentage is more reduced (79.6%), due no doubt to the greater number who did not answer (11.4%), in comparison to the former (2.1%). The judgment of the Priors and formators is slightly more positive than that of the major superiors.

The frequent community participation of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation constitutes a reduced fact (87.9%), especially in the Eastern Europe (92.1%), Africa (96.4%) and Asia (92.2%) in comparison to the USA (70%) and Southern Europe (84.5%). Among the younger Brothers the percentages are always higher than the average, also in comparison to the two intermediary age groups. There is a slightly higher percentage among the elderly Brothers.

A third and more positive group finds spiritual strength in the community participation of the Spiritual Exercises (75.9%), but they do not all agree on their frequency. At least a quarter of the Brothers who show notable bewilderment on the matter (around 30%), especially come from Africa and the USA, in comparison to Latin America (80.2%), Central Europe (78.3%) and Southern Europe (79.2%), while there is a positive attitude shown by the Priors and the formators. Some reserve emerges however among the two younger age groups, and still more among the Brothers in the 6 to 25 years of profession who have reservations amounting to 25% of the answers.

In respect to the monthly day of recollection (69.9%), only less than a third of the Brothers express a very positive judgment, while one Brother in four (25.7%) is not too sure, complaining that few of these recollection days are actually held in their zones. The African Brothers (39.2%), and (oddly!) in the regions of the ES (33.4%) and USA (33.3%), those of the two older age groups, the Priors and major superiors and the diploma holders and graduates. It seems that this practice has been somewhat neglected and it is a pity. It seems that there is a precariousness and perhaps also absenteeism in this area. However we notice a fairly positive judgment from the formators and vocation promoters and the younger Brothers (79.1%) and from the Brothers in Asia (89.7%), Eastern Europe (76.1%) and Latin America (77.4%).

Of particular interest the liturgy and the corresponding preparation for its celebration came to our attention when we saw that 68.8% of the Brothers seem to be satisfied enough with the care and attention given to it. This is especially so by the Brothers in Asia (82.6%), Central Europe (79.9%) and Africa (72.6%). Less satisfied were those in Southern Europe, Latin America and the USA, the older groups in age and profession, the General and Provincial governments, the formators and those with diplomas and the graduates.

It is recognised with a certain reserve, that **the community grants a space of time for personal prayer** (71.4%). More than a fifth of the Brothers dissent, affirming that this is seen to

be only a few (22.5%) or not at all, and this is 34.6% of the Brothers in Africa, 35.5% in Latin America and 28.9% of those professed between 6 and 25 years.

Those who instead retain that the community is given the time for personal prayer is 79.4% of the Brothers of Central Europe, 81.7% in the USA, the young ones in profession (76.5%), the technicians and the diploma recipients (75.5%) and 77% of the local Priors and vocation directors. Not so the General and Provincial governments instead, and at least 29.8% of the formators (31.4%).

Finally, beyond any possible ambiguity in this question, more than half the Brothers (51.6%) live a prayer life on a personal level; especially in the USA (80%), in Asia (66.2%), while all the other zones express a difference in Africa (58.4%) and in Latin America (41.2%). That the life of faith and prayer is realised only on a personal level, is affirmed by the Brothers in the first two age and profession groups, that is to say Brothers up to the age of 55 years.

In conclusion, it is noticed from all the answers that there is a strong, and good, frequency in the practices of daily community prayer. The percentage of excellence attributed to the other proposed situations doesn't seem to be particularly high, even when they are not expressed as an important equilibrium in the religious life between contemplation and action, as desired by the Church and the founders of every Congregation.

2. A COMMUNITY OF FRATERNAL AFFABILITY IN ITS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (QUESTION 31)

The Order's Constitutions devote 5 articles (36-40) to the development and the deepening of this loving dimension of community life; to be able to create unity in the spirit of the hospitality and in the perspective of building up balanced interpersonal relationships that are pleasing and well integrated both on a personal and community basis.

2.1. A general view of fraternal life

Question 31 of the questionnaire introduces us to the study of a series of 9 dimensions that serve to create a positive climate of interpersonal rapport that is expressed in a serene style of general community life

Five of these dimensions are positive and constructive (understanding, cordiality, friendship, fraternity, thoughtful attention); however four are negative and disjunctive (indifference, individualism, quarrelsome, intrusiveness). We have asked the Brothers to comment on the style of their community life and this is shown in two sections in the table below.

Tab. 4.2 – Distribution of the characteristics present in interpersonal relationships prevalent in the community (in % averages)

<i>Present</i>	+/-	No reply	Much	Enough	Few	None	Average
1. Fraternity	+	5.8	20.0	53.1	19.2	2.0	2.03*
2. Cordiality	+	6.8	14.8	56.7	20.5	1.2	2.09
3. Understanding	+	6.2	15.3	53.4	23.0	2.1	2.13
4. Eager attention	+	8.9	15.8	44.2	27.7	3.5	2.21
5. Friendship	+	7.2	13.6	44.0	31.0	4.2	2.28
6. Interference	-	9.7	7.5	17.8	41.5	23.5	2.90*
7. Conflict	-	7.8	5.8	22.3	51.3	12.7	2.77
8. Indifference	-	8.5	10.9	27.3	38.2	15.1	2.63
9. Individualism	-	7.6	19.1	34.4	33.7	5.2	2.27

To better study its dimensions and to introduce this with a certain systematic and correct methodology, we have divided the chart into two separate circles, characterized in one section by the positive and constructive lines, and in the other section those that are negative and disjunctive. Obviously the averages will require a more accurate reading and since they are contrasted characteristics the logic in their reading must alter.

A judgment on the fraternal life of the community is always difficult, especially for one that doesn't participate in it with a certain enthusiasm. In our case, the percentages of those who did not answer are physiological and compare with the following question that is similar to it. However within these low averages (around 7%, cfr the second column), the percentages of absence of data rises much more in comparison to the elderly Brothers over 75 years of age: and added to this is the 25% of no replies.

This shows the analysis with positive characteristics and underlines the percentages of excellence that are not very high (the much column). None of them were more than 20%, and none less than 13%. But it is also true of the remaining characteristics roundabout 15%. The remaining percentages bring together only the Brothers with a positive judgment, especially in regards to fraternity in the Order (M:2.03), the cordiality (M:2.09), and understanding (M:2.13), thoughtful or kind attention (M:2.21) and friendship (M:2.28). Almost absent are the percentages of a total criticism (none). However we want to quantify the reserve of a small group of Brothers that has been constant about 20% to 30% that it is little satisfied, and complain about the scarce presence of charity within the community.

This seems to be telling us that the Brothers on the whole are not showing very much enthusiasm about the quality of their fraternal life. While saying that they are satisfied they do not seem too enthusiastic about it.

Above all, in regards to the negative characteristics in community life, the Brothers point out the scourge of individualism (M:2.27). Only 5.2% of the Brothers maintain that this is not present at all. Others said the most negative things were indifference (M:2.63em), argumentativeness (M:2.77) and intrusiveness (M:2.90). The extent of the positive characteristics range about 20% (2.09 to 2.28), and this points to a notable convergence of the Brothers who are

in agreement with this judgment, while in regards to the negative characteristics there is a great dissemination extending to more than 60% (2.27 to 2.90).

The analytical presentation of each matter lets us point out the Brothers diversified presence by zones, age, and the other variables, so that the distribution and the individualisation of the zones of great excellence or relative dubiousness are more concrete, from which these tendencies are more or less pronounced in the different sectors.

2.2. Going deeper into the analysis

2.2.1. Positive characteristics

Generally 73.1% of the Brothers recognize the presence of a climate of fraternity in the community, above all from the 78.5% of the Latin American Brothers and the 76.7% of the Brothers in Central Europe.

Less so are the Brothers in Southern Europe where the percentages drop to 65.5%. In all the other regions the percentages are about 70%. The younger Brothers are 81.6%, but those between 56 and 74 years registered 70.7%, the formators 85.7%, the General and Provincial governments 85% , the Priors 77.5%, and 72% of the qualified technicians in comparison to 78.5% of the graduates. Some reserves are advanced from the 21.2% of the Brothers, especially the 25% of the USA, 24.2% of the Southern Europe Brothers and 24.4% of those who have never held responsible office.

The 71.5% of the Brothers who were pleased, is in comparison to the 21.7% of those who complained, and these especially were the communities in Africa, Southern Europe, Asia and above all, the technicians (22.3%) and Brothers who have never held responsible office (23.9%).

It clearly demonstrate that there are 80% of the Brothers in the USA, 79.6% in Latin America, 75.7% in Central Europe, 76.9% of the younger Brothers, 77.3% of the graduates, 85% of the General and Provincial governments, 79.3% of Priors and 74.3% of the formators.

Also, favourably recognised by more than two thirds of the Brothers (68.7%), is found in Latin America where the percentage climbs to 72.1% and in Central Europe to 69.8%. Among the younger Brothers it reaches 74.9%, the formators as high as 84.3%, in comparison to the 77% of the Priors and the General and Provincial governments with 74.8%. Great reservations are held by the Brothers in Southern Europe (26.8%), Africa (25.2%), the USA (25%) and in the two middle age groups with around 25%.

A more delicate and kinder attitude is considered with thoughtful attention (60%) in the disadvantaged situations. This is especially observed in Central Europe (70.9%), the USA (71.7%), Asia (76.4%), the younger Brother (69.5%) and the General and Provincial governments (73.6%). It is lesser held to be so by 31.2% of the Brothers, especially from the 36.8% in Southern Europe and the 36.9% in Africa, 32.9% of the formators and 29.8% of the Priors.

Friendship is emphasised by an average of 57.6% of the Brothers interviewed, but here the various extremes are composed more positively emerging at (75%) in the USA, Asia (74%), the younger Brothers (68.2%), the General and Provincial governments (72.4%), and those who

were more critical were in Central Europe (38.6%), Southern Europe ES (41.9%) and of the Brothers in the age group between 36 and 55 years (41.7%).

In synthesis, we can conclude that there seems to be a climate of relationships that are more fluid and interpersonal in the communities of the USA, Latin America and Central Europe in comparison to those in Southern Europe, Africa and Asia. A positive recognition also comes from the younger Brothers, the General and Provincial governments and the formators, while a more critical reservation emerges from the Brothers who have never held positions of responsibility.

2.2.2. Negative characteristics

Here we touch upon a sore point, already noticed and confirmed elsewhere about the situation of individualism that the communities complain about. This complaint come from a notable percentage of Brothers, equal to the 53.5% of all who were interviewed, that is more than the half. This is especially seen in the USA (73.4%), Asia (65.4%), about 57% of the Brothers in the two middle age groups, 52.8% of the General and Provincial governments and 54.5% of the Priors. Those who replied '*none*' were 5.2% and those who replied '*little*' came to 33.7% and these two put together acquits their communities from this enormous defect.

In reality the percentages of the Brothers who freely acquit the community from this defect are also much more numerous, as for example, 43.9% in Central Europe, 47.6% in Africa, 52.9% in Latin America, and 49.4% of the younger Brothers, 40.9% of the diploma holders and 54.3% of the formators. This would make us think that fraternity still occupies its place in the community.

However we must not forget that in the same questionnaire, where the reasons why young Brothers who are inserted into a community find it difficult to be integrated into it, and why others decide to abandon the Order, the second principal reason for this disquiet was seen as the presence of a strong individualism displayed by Brothers. This was stated by almost two thirds of the Brothers (62.9%), 27.2% who maintained that this defect was greatly present in the communities, and that is why it occupies the first place in the column of the "*much*" in comparison to all the 13 causes proposed for abandonment.

Added to this generalised situation is the rather diffused individualism in today's society and observed in feelings of social indifference and the lack of concern for those about them. There is the danger that the contagion of this sore is a trap that can be found in religious communities that are obviously in need of being animated by a good spirit of understanding and charity.

We have therefore sought to look into this feeling of the indifference perceived among the Brothers and to what measure it exists. The results of the answers have given a picture of this and if it is not alarming, it nevertheless makes us aware of it.

Only 10.9% the Brothers maintain it quite present in the communities, especially in Asia and the USA, the two younger age groups and among the formators. But if to these opinions are added those that are more mitigated (*enough*) we get 38.2% of Brothers. This constitutes a clear signal to be noticed because it can be prevented and neutralised with fraternity, charity, cordiality and the other positive attitudes mentioned above. Such indifference is a warning for what is particularly reported as being prevalent in the communities of Asia (66.9%), the USA (51.7%) and by the Brothers of the middle-aged groups.

Actually, more than half the Brothers (53.3%) maintained that this situation only exists in a few different communities. This is a comforting sign, both for the religious life and for fraternal life. This comes from the Brothers in Latin America and the USA 54.5%, Central Europe 55.1%, Africa 58.4%, and 57.3% of the younger Brothers, 66.7% of the General and Provincial governments, 59.5% of the Priors and 60% of the formators.

Conflicting positions reach as high as 28.1% before and average of 64% average in comparison to those who declared its presence in very limited terms (*few + none*), and this came from 69.5% in Southern Europe, 73.2% Latin America, 64.4% of the younger Brothers, 73.5% of the Priors and the General and Provincial governments and 75.7% of the formators.

The following reported that it was somehow present (***much + enough***) with very elevated percentages especially from the Asian Brothers (49.6%), the USA (45%), a little less in Central Europe (36.5%) and 33.4% of the younger Brothers.

A final negative matter regarding fraternal charity in the community was said to be an excessive intrusiveness. This, they said, creates a stifling form of indiscretion and lack of respect for persons and it provokes a process of having to be on one's guard all the time. In reality, this doesn't seem to be very diffused, however it is noticeable in certain insinuations by 25.3% of the Brothers, especially in Asia (40.1%), Africa (31%) the USA (33.3%), 31% of the younger Brothers and from 28.5% of those without positions of responsibility.

In conclusion, among most of the negative aspects, two are the particularly emerging, these are individualism and indifference and they need to be faced up to in formation. Their percentages are really limited and are neither negligible, but above all they confirm that tendency that has already emerged that gives a motive for analogous reflections in the preceding chapters. Above all a healthy equilibrium must first of all be sought between indifference and intrusiveness. However, first of all an ability to be considerate must be developed and a readiness to accept others and to be able to overcome blatant individualism that isolates and forces a person into isolation.

In religious life we have often been accustomed in the past to hurt in this matter and have been forced to simply keep quiet. Changes in the cultural conditions of society oblige us to build up the good of the community. We have to learn how to live together with others, to collaborate with them in creativity, constructiveness and in a positive way to offer our support and contribution without putting anyone down regarding their competences. This new ability to grow and mature will also help to resolve those problems that have emerged around the difficulties of collaboration with the laity and the external collaborators of our hospitaller apostolic work.

Likewise, experiencing with greater realism the plurality of opinions and personal views can dispel tensions and conflicts and will be a tremendous help in understanding and building up fraternity. But often this is not sufficient because it is necessary to have a positive stance regarding the value of others and to be attentive to every positive aspect that it is possible to discover in them

3. A COMMUNITY OF FRATERNITY AND ANIMATION (question 32)

Contributing to the peacefulness of the fraternal life of the community is the style with which it is animated by responsible direction. This has to be directed with authority in a variety of styles to fit in with the individual special treatment mentioned by the Brothers in the questionnaire. Article 38 of the Order's Constitutions brings this to the fore when it defines that

the nature of the "*Brother who leads the community is to be a sign of union and bond of charity*". The Constitutions also says "*the spiritual life helps to live the community project; it coordinates and it harmonises the personal plans of the Brothers with those of the community*". This coordination and harmonisation are realised according to a particular style that we define as the manner of animation.

3.1. Manner of animation: a general overview

We can point out in this paragraph *two methods of animation*, one of sharing in collaboration and the other of authoritarian control. In regarding the first there is an attitudes of dialogue, sharing, openness, democracy and communication. The second style is authoritarian, controlling and opposed to free expression. In this scheme we will develop our analyses of question 32 in the questionnaire: "*How do you appraise the style of animation in your community?*"

As in the preceding paragraph we have distinguished the two types of animation, the first as positive and promotional; the second as negative, authoritarian and controlling in contrast to freedom.

In respect to the preceding paragraph the absence of data from those who did not reply is slightly higher, especially in the last three items, where they touch a higher average of 16.5%, and from the older Brothers who were more than 40%.

Tab. 4.3 – Judgements on the style of animation in the community (in percentages and averages)

	<i>No reply</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Open	7.2	19.0	46.7	23.3	3.8	2.13*
2. In common	12.2	15.7	47.3	20.8	4.1	2.15
3. Participation	7.4	15.6	48.7	24.8	3.5	2.17
4. Dialogue	5.8	16.6	47.6	25.7	4.2	2.19
5. Democratic	9.2	16.0	44.8	24.0	6.0	2.22
6. Accommodating	16.5	8.0	29.5	31.9	14.0	2.62
7. Controlled	13.4	7.0	20.8	37.8	20.8	2.84
8. Authoritarian	9.3	11.1	17.9	35.7	26.1	2.85

By now it has been established that the most important thing necessary for a superior is that he is capable of organising the proper climate in the community and to develop its effectiveness and efficiency. The religious community is not simply a group coming together to do a job, it is above all a community of life with the Brothers taking part in its activities, responsibilities and diversified assignments with a common project that unifies its efforts dictated by the criteria of the religious life, its consecration and mission. The religious community therefore has its criteria, tools, perspectives, projects and above all the religious Brothers from various situations and from the most diversified backgrounds. The important thing is to remember that the Brothers are more important than the work they do. The appointment and the responsibility of the local superiors are therefore extremely important and not easy to manage.

The exercise of the authority requires an uncommon quality to be able to coordinate the different personal situations with a view to maintaining the peacefulness and equilibrium of the community. It is not our duty here to spell out the attributes a superior needs to harmonise the different objectives of his duty, nor to keep in mind that his job is not simply to organise a work team to successfully function in the work, but of a religious community that has structures and special objectives, dictated by the faith, consecration and mission of the specific vocation to follow in the steps of the Founder.

In this perspective the style of animation of the community constitutes a fundamental assignment that is also a very delicate responsibility of the religious superior, that calls him to build the harmony between the Brothers and bring them together when this grows weak, frayed or breaks down; to sustain and to strengthen the development of the religious life of the community, in a spirit that is dictated by the Constitutions, and also is nourished by the physical-social dynamics that human sciences very effectively supply for this purpose.

Our questionnaire's purpose was to find out the perception and evaluation that the Brothers have regarding the present style of animation of their respective communities. It deals with a survey that has as its principal objective, not so much the accusation and blaming for psychologically problematic situations, but rather to help what can be derived from a fraternal reading of its results in the perspective of improvement and growth of each communities and the Order as a whole.

The general analysis of the table shows a style of positive animation. If it maintains the subdivision along positive and negative lines a style of government could be characterized by a convergence of very meaningful percentages, both in the second column that shows "*enough*" (convergent on an average of the percentages around 57%), and that in the first column of excellence (*much*) with an average percentage around about 16%. This therefore draws a homogeneous result in the qualitative distribution, that is confirmed by the quarters of the fourth column, indicative in small measure to the more problematic elements: in fact in not even a tenth of the average converges the averages in the five positive characteristics (M:2.13 up to 2.22).

In conclusion a positive judgment substantially in the style of animation of the communities emerges. This is characterised by openness, communication, sharing, dialogue and democracy, expressed by around two thirds of the Brothers, in contrast to only a quarter who expressed a critical evaluation, a small percentage of about 4%, of those who were totally negative and found some elements of authoritarianism, control and even permissiveness.

3.2. Further analysis

3.2.1. Positive Characteristics

A positive style of animation has five characteristics and they are dialogue, participation, democracy, openness and communication.

65.7% of the Brothers valued the style of openness in their community. Only less than one in five pronounced it to be very open (19%, the highest percentage of the first positive column). These are above all in the USA (78.3%), Latin America (70.4%) and Central Europe (68.8%), less so in Asia (65.4%), Southern Europe (61.3%) and Africa (60.7%). Also 69.9% of the younger Brothers consider it to be so; a quarter of the Brothers said it was very open. Add

this to the 79.1% of the Priors, 77% of the General and Provincial governments and 72.9% of the formators and one gets an idea of the general climate. The most critical aspects (27.1%) came from the zones of Africa and Asia, the elderly Brothers, and also 28.4% of the younger ones and 29.1% of the holders of diplomas.

Openness confirms the style of communion recognised by 63% of the Brothers; above all those in Latin America (69.8%), Asia (70.1%), the USA (68.3%), of the younger ones (71.9%), the Priors (69.9%), the General and Provincial governments (78.1%), 76% of the vocation promoters in respect to Southern Europe (54.5%) and Africa (67.1%). The style of communication received the lowest percentage (24.9%) of critical dissents, deriving generally from the middle-aged Brothers.

The manner of sharing (64.3%) favours the personal involvement of the Brothers and their spirit of responsibility. It calls for the sharing of resources and actively stimulating the realisation of common projects in a more direct way.

However it was found that 28.3% of Brothers were aware of a lack of this. There were those who have not been involved in the community and perhaps feel marginalised, maybe they are self-marginalised. In fact this is the lowest percentage (15.6% very) in the column of excellence, even though it is increased somewhat in the “***enough***” column (48.7%). The greatest reserve originates from the Brothers in Southern Europe (32.9%), Asia (31.5%), the middle-aged Brothers and diploma holders (31.1%) and above all from those who have never held positions of responsibility (32.7%).

28.3% of the Brothers report that there is a scarcity and even an absence. These are Brothers who have never been involved in the community and consequently they may feel marginalised and I imagine this maybe self-marginalisation. This brings us to the lowest percentage (15.6% very) in the column of the excellence, even though it increases somewhat (48.7%) in the “***enough***” list.

The greatest reserve comes from the Brothers in Southern Europe (32.9%), Asia (31.5%), the middle-aged Brothers, the diploma holders (31.1%) and above all from those who have never held any position of responsibility (32.7%).

The Brothers in Latin America ascertain above all a certain presence (73.8%), the USA (73.3%), Africa (67.8%), the younger Brothers (72.3%), the graduates (70.4%), the Priors (74.3%), the General and Provincial governments (75.8%), the formators and the vocation promoters (70.5%). Less so are the Brothers who never held positions of responsibility (58.5%), that makes a notable criticism in a percentage that is the highest of all the variables connected among those that have been considered, and that is 32.7% of the cases.

The style of dialogue (64.2%) in this context is introduced as one of the concomitant factors in the method of animation, both because it favours sharing by the Brothers and is also the result of it. Along with this also emerging from the convergence of the judgments of the Brothers, is the evidence of almost the same percentages of the two characteristics. Sharing produces dialogue, exchange of ideas, co-responsibility, but at the same time dialogue also favours the circulation of the ideas, comparisons, projects and a convergent orientation toward unity in the mission.

The style of dialogue appears to be greatly developed in the USA (73.3%), while in the other geographical zones the percentages are meaningfully lower: in Asia (69.3%), Africa (66.6%), Latin America (65.1%), Central Europe (65%) and finally in Southern Europe (59.8%). The style of communication is recognised and also appreciated by the younger Brothers (72.3%) and 68.7% of the Brothers between the ages of 36 and 55 years, and especially so by the General and Provincial governments (78.1%), the Priors (74.8%) and the formators (72.9%).

The greatest part on the negative side (29.9%) comes from those who have never held positions of responsibility, who seem to perceive community animation as distant from their position. In fact 35% of these Brothers are set in a more critical attitude.

The democratic style (60.8%) is perceived with a good 4 points less in comparison with the precedent. It also is that perhaps the idea that democracy can be rather ambiguous. As in all the preceding cases, the Brothers in the USA manifest great availability (73.4%) to this style of animation in comparison to those of Southern Europe (57.4%) and Africa (52.4%), as well as of the most elderly Brothers (46.2%) who manifest great criticism. Perhaps for this ambivalence, this age group mostly makes a very accented divergence evident: the younger Brothers are more favourable (64.8%) as also of the dissenters (34.3%), while in the age group between 36 and the 55 years 68.1% of the Brothers perceive this democratic style as the natural way to live. Confirming its great value more is the high percentages of the General and Provincial governments (74.7%) as well as the Priors (71.7%) and the graduates (69.2%).

All these elements seem to be the sign that this characteristic is mostly lived and perceived by those who have a higher level both of responsibility and community maturity. In fact it is not easy to democratically manage a community. The criticisms and reservations of a good percentage of Brothers (30%) is noticeable; Africa (42.9%), the formators (34.3%), Brothers who don't have positions of responsibility (34%) and among the Brothers in Latin America (30.2%).

In conclusion, the greater part of the Brothers substantially express in the “*enough*” column a favourable judgment of the community style of animation, that is expressed in dialogue, spirit of communication, a climate of favourable democracy and sharing with the decisions affecting the community. Some regional differences and generalisations emerge in respect to the proposed organisational styles, of which it will be opportune to keep in mind the various decisions made and to explain the reasons for them to appraise their respective effects.

3.2.2. Negative characteristics

The style of animation in the community that can result in a certain negative or problematic sense for the good of the Brothers has been pinpointed to three attitudes of community management. In opposition to the positive categories is that of an authoritarian style, and one that is controlling or permissive.

These styles of government of the religious community can assure a certain order and constrictive regularity as in the first two cases and a great liberty of action in the last case. But they are capable of producing problematic effects both on the individual Brothers and the community itself. The first two can have the effect of suggesting a hypothesis of escape from control, or with false attitudes of self-defence in every case of taking personal responsibility and absenteeism of the Brothers. The second case has a climate of *laissez-faire* that allows the

behaviour of individualism, indifference, inadequate involvement in the initiatives of the community, intolerance, retaliation, animosity and dissatisfaction.

The Brothers' answers to this part of question #32 shows a relative correspondence and complements the positive characteristics mentioned above with parallel results. In other words, 61.8% of the Brothers manifested a sense of satisfaction declaring that the style of animation of the community is *little* or *none* in regards to authoritarian. On the other hand, 17.9% said it was somewhat authoritarian and 11.1% maintained it was very authoritarian.

Going deeper into the subject, the most aware and satisfied for the *little* or non existent authoritarian, were the Brothers in the USA (68.3%), Latin America (66.8%), Southern Europe (65.8%), the elderly Brother between the ages of 56 and 74 years (64.8%), the graduates (73.8%), the General and Provincial governments (81.6%), and the Priors (77.9%).

Those who said the style *enough* or very *much* authoritarian were the Brothers in Asia (52.3%), Africa (33.3%), Central Europe (30.2%), and 37.2% of the younger Brothers, 30.6% from the 36 to 55 age group, 31.9% of the professional technicians, and (somewhat surprising!) more than 40% of the formators, in comparison to only 29% of the general average.

Rather similar to the contents to the preceding item, is *the style of control that 58.6%* of the Brothers maintain is *little* or *none* present in the community. This absence or weakness of control is most noticeable by the Brothers in Southern Europe (62.6%), the USA (60%), Central Europe (59.8%), all age groups of age, except the younger Brothers, 68.1% of the graduates, 72.4% of the General and Provincial governments, 70.2% of the local Priors in comparison to the average of 58.6% of the formators.

Only 20.8% of the Brothers said there was *enough* control in the various communities. If added to this there is 7% who find it is very strong, we arrive at over a quarter of Brothers interviewed. There are primarily constituted by the Brothers in Asia (44.9%), Africa (42.9%), the younger Brothers in 40.1% of the cases while the elderly ones see it in great measure.

Looking at the permissive style of animation we see the highest absence to the answers in the *no reply* column equal to 16.5%, that is 167 Brothers, where the percentage of the more elderly ones reaches 41.7%, that added to the 19.4% of the Brothers between the ages of 56 and 74 years reaches 61.1%. However it seems the nature of this concept could lead to an ambivalent consideration.

37.5% of the Brothers maintained that the style of community animation is a lot more, or sufficiently permissive, in comparison to the 45.9% who said it was partially or not at all. However, this last judgment doesn't authorise us to say that the authoritarian style takes over and automatically controls, therefore it is set in contrast with the reflections above. The style of animation judged to be little or not at all permissive can be also expression of a positive judgment, for the fact that those who express this maintain that in community there is still an orderly style of management and authority so that the course of the community is not left abandoned but is conducted with openness, dialogue and sharing.

The presence of this permissive style is especially noticed in a great measure by an average of 51.2% of the Brothers in Asia (who had reported above a style of control instead), and from 50% in the USA, Southern Europe 42.9%, Africa 36.9%, the General and Provincial government 46%, and 42.4% of the Priors and formators.

The younger Brothers were 56.1% and said that a permissive style was very small or not at all. The General and Provincial governments 52.9%, the age group of 36-55 years 50.8%, the vocation promoters 50% and 49.5% of the qualified technicians.

In synthesis, the judgments on the two styles of animation “control and permissive” becomes apparent in a more evident way in the different generations of younger and elderly Brothers. It is also seen in the geographical zones and among those who do not have any position of responsibility. It seems that the formators and vocation promoters are detached from the considerations of those who maintain that the style of animation is too controlling and authoritarian but this is not the opinion of the General and Provincial governments.

4. A FRIENDLY AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY (question 33)

The spirit of welcoming has always been one of the specific characteristics of the Hospitaller Order, above all toward the poor and needy. The questionnaire therefore considers this dimension of the Order that is very open to an ample range of recipients, including the elderly and sick Brothers, the young Brothers in a phase of discernment, the co-workers, the relatives of the Brothers and their guests.

The answers to question 33 (*“do you think your community is open and friendly toward...”*) is quantified in the underlying table that shows the percentage averages.

Tab. 4.4 – Quality of the community’s openness and welcoming towards various persons (in percentages and averages)

Community open to welcoming towards.....	<i>No Reply.</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Little</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Sick and aged Brothers	3.7	42.9	4.7	7.7	1.1	1.66*
2. Young Brothers	7.7	31.2	49.2	10.2	1.7	1.81
3. Guests	5.1	29.3	48.7	14.6	2.2	1.89
4. Brothers’ parents	5.8	26.2	49.9	14.3	3.8	1.95
5. Young Brothers in discernment	11.2	22.6	43.1	18.9	4.2	2.05
6. Co-workers	6.5	20.0	51.3	20.0	2.3	2.05

The elderly Brothers and patients are the principal object of the care of the community, as is evident from the answers of 87.6% of the Brothers. Here, as many as 42.9% of the Brothers absolutely expressed this in priority terms. That reaches more than 11 points of the percentages on the openness and reception toward the young Brothers that give 31.2% of the answers of excellence (much), to reach a total of 80.4% of all the answers. The third category is the reception of guests is 78%. The relatives of the Brothers follow (76.1%) with about 11 points of difference with the young people in discernment (65.7%), the co-workers follow (61.3%). This clarifies the preferences of the Brothers. This is more indicative and is confirmed by the percentages of the third column (little). Following the first two categories related to the Brothers comes the third line in down and these are rather other consistent categories of persons.

Above all it is a vocational perspective when it comes to the welcoming and reception of the young Brothers in discernment, and that is why it was placed in the questionnaire. It allows a little bit of time to think. In fact this category was left unanswered by many Brothers (11.2%). Anyway, the general perception of one Brother in five (22.6%) was to be welcoming. Finally 23.3% of Brothers maintained that little or nothing was done in this regard. In the classification

of preferences this community welcoming comes as the penultimate. This fact should be reflected upon in the light of a more accurate problematical vocational consideration.

Passing on to a more analytical deepening of these overall results, we individually can do much to improve this position and to be more open and welcoming towards the younger Brothers.

The welcome and the care of the elderly and ill Brothers (87.6%) is something that is very accented, and is almost a characteristic that is little thought of in religious life, confirming that climate of fraternal charity and love that apparently exists in the community. It readily embraces the attention to the needs of the weakest Brothers. This is especially emphasised in Africa and Latin America where the percentages is as high as 90%; somewhat less is in the USA (75%), where critical elements are higher.

There are no particular differences between the age groups of the younger and elderly Brothers, neither in years of profession or academic titles and positions held. This means that the attention given to them is high and diffused everywhere. This rather appears to be a very careful and particular care that is recognized by more than 90% of the Brothers: this is at all the levels of responsibility both of the General and Provincial governments (97.7%) and the Priors (91.5%), vocation promoters (91.8%). This shows that they especially are concerned for the ill and aged Brothers.

Following immediately after the elderly Brothers and the patients is the concern for the welcoming care of the younger Brothers (80.4%). In reality, attention to the problem of the reception and the insertion of the young Brothers is most necessary and urgent for the healthy growth of the Order. The difference here is that the care given to the elderly Brothers calls for their treatment in health matters, but with the young Brothers the care must come in the form of friendliness, attention, offering help, support, orientation, guidance, and prudent suggestions. This immediately comes home to us since the percentages of excellence decreases 11 points (*much* 31.2%) and does not even cover a third of the Brothers who replied.

Nevertheless as many as 10.2% of the critical voices of the Brothers say there is little welcoming in this matter of reception. This especially came from Southern Europe (12.4%), the elderly Brothers, the graduates and those Brothers who have not held positions of responsibility (13.4%).

In every case there is an awareness of very thoughtful attention in the zones of Asia (89%), Africa (84.5%) and the USA (73.3%), the younger Brothers (85%), the General and Provincial governments (87.4%), the Priors (84.6%) and the formators (90%).

A welcoming reception is particularly reserved for guests from outside of the Order (78%). This came last in the order of the proposals in the questionnaire. It received a very high percentage in the perception of the Brothers, even before the young Brothers in discernment. All of this appears from the answers received; especially very numerous was the Brothers in the (85%), Central Europe (84.6%), the young Brothers (80%) as well as from the General and Provincial governments (87.4%), Priors (83.3%), formators (77.2%), and 80% the young Brothers who however were rather critical in 19.3% of the cases.

Less welcoming of guests is noticed in a special way, while somewhat limited, 16.8% from Asia, (26%), Latin America (19.2%), Africa (17.9%) and from Southern Europe (15.8%). A welcoming reception is given to the relatives of the Brothers (76.1%), especially in the USA

(85%), Southern Europe (79%), Central Europe (75.9%), the younger Brothers (76.5%), as well as Brothers in the other age groups, the General and Provincial governments (81,6%), Priors (78.8%) and the formators (82.9%). A somewhat higher critical evaluation (18.1%) comes from Africa (29.8%), Asia (24.4%), the 36-55 age group (19.9%), and the graduates (20.3%).

Welcoming the co-workers (71.3%) with attention and decorum is especially seen in Central Europe (79.9%) with 8 percentage points higher than the average. The greatest reservations originate from the Brothers of Southern Europe (25.2%), the younger ones (25.1%) and the 36-55 age group (23.5%), the graduates (25%) and from the Priors (24%).

And finally comes the welcoming and attention given to the young Brothers in discernment (65.6%), because, as we saw above, they were put last on the welcoming list. The Brothers in Latin America appear to be treating this as a very urgent and worrying problem, as they are the future of the Order and this is the time to initiate them on the path of the Order's hospitaller mission.

Leading in the welcoming and reception are the Brothers in Africa (76.2%), Asia (75.5%) and Latin America (72.7%), the formators (75.7%) and the major superiors and Priors. Relatively more neglected in this regard is the USA (63.4%), Central Europe (68.3%) and Southern Europe (66%), the graduates (25.6%), those who have never held positions of responsibility (25.2%) and 23.3% of the Brothers, 27.2% of the younger ones and 23.1% in the 36-55 age group.

5. A COMMUNITY OF APOSTOLIC SERVICE (Qns. 34-36)

The Hospitaller Order's apostolic action is in the spirit of the mission of the Church. It is developed from the initiative of St. John of God and is recognised in the fruitfulness of its work for the sick and needy.

To strengthen and to clarify such a mission of the community we turn to the Constitutions where article 41 lays out a very accurate examination of each role and the specific approach of charity that the Order proposes to undertake in the Church. In particular this confirms the importance of a verification of the community's apostolic work that is entrusted to it, and above all to the different roles and assignments attributed to it by the indications given at preceding General Chapters, particularly the role of being a prophetic voice, a critical conscience, a moral guide and an apostolic innovator. All this is united to a certain effectiveness in its mission, manifested by the appreciation that it receives from the place where it is situated and from the recipients of its charitable mission.

In this paragraph we will look at two aspects that have been problematic coming from questions 34 and 35 (where this latter is not a verification of the preceding question already examined in number 19 of chapter 3 §1).

5.1. Prevalence of the Community in apostolic work (question 34)

56% of the Brothers maintain that community has a real role to play in the apostolic work entrusted to it, and this we find to be remarkable. A few less than a fifth (19.1%) say it is beyond question, but only 15% said that it is meaningless. Overall, three quarters of the Brothers stress

its importance, while also accepting the critical reservation of a small group who proposed that it needed to be generally animated with the desire to see it become much more meaningful in its mission to the poor and needy. These say that the analysis is arid and needs going into much further. That is exactly what we are about to do, using the variable comparisons to which, by now, we have become accustomed.

The study of the table introduces us to a great deal in an interesting picture of the perceptions of the Brothers in the different regions where the Order carries out its apostolate.

We see therefore that first of all such an influence is considered remarkable, especially in the zones of Asia (*Much* :2.22, equal to 87.4% of the Brothers), and therefore in succession come the regions of Latin America (*Much*:2.18, equal to 80.2%), of Africa (*Much*: 2.10, equal to 79.7%), of Central Europe (*Much*: 2.06 equal to 77.2%), Southern Europe (*Much*: 1.94, equal to 70.3%) and lesser from the USA (*Much*: 1.76 equal to 51.7%). In fact these last two pieces of data in fact confirm that in these two zones the judgement is rather severe. In fact its presence is expressly considered meaningless in a greater measure in the USA where it reached 30%.

Tab. 4.5 – The community’s involvement in apostolic works according to geographic zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	GEOGRAPHIC ZONE						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C,Euro N.AM/AUST	Africa	Lat Am.	Asia	
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	100	42	17	7	15	8	11
	9.9	11.1	9.0	8.3	8.7	6.3	18.3
It is insignificant	152	71	26	10	19	8	18
	15.0	18.7	13.8	11.9	11.0	6.3	30.0
It is relevant	567	215	110	49	91	77	25
	56.0	56.6	58.2	58.3	52.9	60.6	41.7
It is being determined	193	52	36	18	47	34	6
	19.1	13.7	19.0	21.4	27.3	26.8	10.0
Average	2.04	1.94	2.06	2.10	2.18	2.22	1.76
Average discarded	.61	.60	.60	.60	.63	.55	.66

Reflecting on the various age groups we can observe a certain pessimism in the most elderly group over 75 years of age that, in percentages, is relatively a great deal higher since they maintain it to be meaningless and is 24.2%, in comparison to the younger Brothers who say it is so in only 10% of the cases. These results underline the importance given to the 63.2% of the cases and even a conclusive weight for 20.4%. A more balanced judgment was expressed by the 36-55 age group that considered it to be 63.2%.

Tab. 4.6 – Involvement of the community in apostolic work according to age and profession (in V.A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	100	16	20	42	19	12	24	36	23
	9.9	6.7	6.5	13.0	14.4	5.8	8.6	10.3	15.5
It is insignificant	152	24	40	56	32	19	40	62	30
	15.0	10.0	13.0	17.3	24.2	9.1	14.3	17.8	20.3
It is relevant	567	151	172	180	60	129	153	198	72
	56.0	63.2	56.0	55.6	45.5	62.0	54.6	56.7	48.6
It is being determined	193	48	75	46	21	48	63	53	23
	19.1	20.1	24.4	14.2	15.9	23.1	22.5	15.2	15.5
Average	2.04	2.11	2.12	1.96	1.90	2.15	2.09	1.97	1.94
Average discarded	.61	.56	.62	.60	.68	.57	.63	.61	.65

These are judgments that are also confirmed by the cross-section with the referable variables in years of religious profession, and they give a positive judgment by 85.1% by the Brothers with less than 5 years of religious profession, in comparison to 64.1% by those who have already completed 50 years of profession.

Tab. 4.7 – Involvement of the community in apostolic work according to active role in the field of formation and vocation promotion and academic titles (in V.A. and percentage)

	5.2 FORMATION			5.3 VOC.PRO.		TITLE of STUDY		
	TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Techn.	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No reply	100	36	64	24	76	49	20	8
	9.9	8.6	10.8	8.4	10.5	10.0	9.1	4.7
It is insignificant	152	66	86	44	108	76	37	21
	15.0	15.8	14.5	15.3	14.9	15.5	16.8	12.2
It is relevant	567	236	331	164	403	274	112	109
	56.0	56.5	55.7	57.1	55.6	56.0	50.9	63.4
It is being determined	193	80	113	55	138	90	51	34
	19.1	19.1	19.0	19.2	19.0	18.4	23.2	19.8
Average	2.04	2.04	2.05	2.04	2.05	2.03	2.07	2.08
Average discarded	.61	.62	.61	.61	.61	.61	.66	.58

The two variable roles between the formators and vocation promoters do not introduce any meaningful differences that appear to consider academic titles. In fact the level of higher studies permits a reading with great optimism for the effectiveness of the influence of the community in the apostolic work. In fact in regards to the graduates it is remarkable that in 63.4% of the cases they compare with 50.9% of the university baccalaureates, while and insignificant 12.2% of the former compares with 15.5% of the professional technicians and 16.8% of the latter.

The most pessimistic judgment of the community's insignificance in apostolic work is mainly expressed by those Brothers who have never held positions of responsibility (16.6% in

comparison to 11.4% and 12.6% of the responsibility). This inclines us to say that there is a constant attitude of pessimism abiding in them and giving them a feeling of marginalization and personal insignificance. There are a few of these Brothers who suffer from being deprived of responsibility. Some responsibility for them would perhaps be good for them and also for their mental health.

Tab. 4.8 – Involvement of the community in the apostolic work according to office held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P Gvt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	100	10	19	5	66
	9.9	11.5	8.6	7.1	10.4
It is insignificant	152	11	28	8	105
	15.0	12.6	12.6	11.4	16.6
It is relevant	567	51	132	40	344
	56.0	58.6	59.5	57.1	54.3
it is being determined	193	15	43	17	118
	19.1	17.2	19.4	24.3	18.6
Average	2.04	2.05	2.07	2.14	2.02
Average discarded	.61	.58	.59	.61	.63

The superiors (59%) stress the importance of the community’s conclusive influence on the apostolic work (as high as 19%), and the formators also consider the community to be conclusive and decisive in the apostolic work (24.3%), while the other categories are only 18%.

5.2. The community and apostolic work: the quality of its involvement (question 35)

As we have seen above, there is a certain sense that is quantitatively measured in the involvement of the community in apostolic work. Following question 35, we now want to study the quality of its influence. In other words, in what terms is the community set towards the apostolic work in accordance with the steps assigned to it by the latest General Chapter. Already question 19 has been partially considered, however here we observe both the confirmation and disconfirmation and the community’s most specific and explicit relationship with the apostolic work.

Table 4.9 gives a very clear global image of this situation and it introduce the evaluation placed by the Brothers upon the role that the community develops in the apostolic work for which it is responsible at this time (question 35).

There are 68.5% of the Brothers who maintain that today their community is appreciated in the apostolic work. Their perception of the respect that it receives is also confirmed by the limited 22.5% of Brothers who express some reserve, which however covers everything in the complex of the 5 items, they are the lowest (4.1%) of all on subject.

Tab. 4.9 - Judgments on the roles developed by the Community in the apostolic work (in percentage of average)

	<i>No reply.</i>	Much	<i>Enough</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Appreciated	9.1	25.0	43.5	18.4	4.1	2.02*
2. Moral guide	9.7	15.9	43.6	26.8	4.1	2.21
3. Prophetic voice	9.1	14.7	39.8	30.7	5.6	2.30
4. Critical conscience	10.4	11.4	43.6	33.7	4.5	2.35
5. Innovating	12.0	10.4	34.9	35.4	7.4	2.45

We see that the Brothers mostly recognized their role in apostolic work emerges as a moral guide (59.5%), then a prophetic voice (54.5%) and a critical conscience (51.4%). Finally their role of innovation (45.3%) doesn't seem to be particularly explicit and evident to the eyes of the majority of the Brothers, not even half of them.

The percentages of the negative judgments only come to 42.8%, therefore they don't equalise the percentage of the positive judgments. The Brothers appear to be divided into two groups or almost equal weight. If the 12% of Brothers who found a difficulty in recognising the role of their community is added to this, then the perplexity increases even more. In this characteristic, as on that of the *critical conscience* (38.2%), we see the greatest reservations that the Brothers have in respect to the five items indicated.

5.2.1. Characteristics put forward

Two thirds of the Brothers maintain that their community is appreciated (68.5%) in the apostolic work it does. This is especially seen Africa with 75% and in Latin America 69.8%, followed by Southern Europe (68.7%). Less enthusiastic about this appreciation are the Brothers in the USA (60%) and Central Europe (66.7%), where a great deal of criticism is found (26.6%). Regarding the age groups, only the 56 years of age and over said they were appreciated (69.7%). The judgments were not so keen among the younger Brothers (26.5%) and the 36-55 years age group (22.4%).

A more positive judgment came from the General and Provincial governments (79.3%), the Priors (78.4%), the formators (78.6%) and the graduates (72.1%). The Brothers who had never held responsible positions expressed a more critical judgment as shown by 26.3%, which is four points higher than the average that is 22.5%.

This diffused and articulated appreciation of the Brothers towards the apostolic work of the community is solidly valued and appreciated in a more specific and particular way in *its principal function of moral guide*. 59.5% of the Brothers maintain that their own community succeeds in carrying out apostolic work in an excellent role of moral guide.

This is especially so in Asia (67.8%, with 8 points higher than the average of 59.5%); in Latin America (68.6%), and a little less in Central Europe (61.9%) and Africa (60.8%). The judgments of the Brothers in the USA and Southern Europe are a great deal more divergent and critical: in the 40% of the cases of the former and 33.7% of the latter. Regarding the 30.9% of the average the Brothers scored poorly or not at all.

Criticisms are seen in the intermediary age groups with about 32.6%, while the younger (66.9%) and elderly Brothers (50.8%) express some positive judgments, together with the Priors (67.2%) and a little less (62.1%) with the General and Provincial government, the graduates (61%) and the Brothers generally (56.6%).

A Prophetic voice is what the community would like to be to the apostolic work. The Brothers recognise this greatly with 54.5%, in comparison to 36.3% of those who unfortunately complain that it anchors them down somewhat. Among these latter mentioned we find 41.3% in Southern Europe and 38.1% in Central Europe.

The other regions expressed a somewhat positive judgment, equal to 10 points higher than the average: Asia (64.6%), Latin America (64.5%) and Africa (64.3%). Also the younger Brothers (60.7%) together with the elderly ones, a little less were the two intermediary age groups with around 55%. Expressing more critical dissents was the 36-55 age group 40% (four points higher than the average) and 38.2% among the 56-74 year old group.

Also, the General and Provincial governments were higher than the graduates but these were not very satisfied about this matter. In fact they gave only 48.2% as a positive judgment, while the 43.7% of those who expressed reservations and criticisms joined with 46% of the graduates. The Priors were quite satisfied (60.8%), even if there was a 33.8% apparent reservation.

5.2.2. Increasing the characteristics

The questionnaire shows that the role of *critical conscience* received 51.4% of the positive answers on appreciation, while only 38.2% of the Brothers showed reservations and criticism.

Positive judgments were expressed above all by the Brothers in Asia (61.4%, 10 points in more than the average), Africa (60.7%) and Latin America (58.7%), the younger Brothers (61.7%), the General and Provincial governments 56.3%, 55.4% of the Priors, and 54.3% of the formators.

Critical observations come from Southern Europe (43.7%), the USA (40%), the age groups between 36 and the 74 years 41.7%, the graduates (44.8%), the General and Provincial governments (36.7%), and the Priors (37%). Two thirds of the Brothers are positive and one third negative.

Finally, approximately 120 Brothers, equal to 12%, abstained from answering. The other Brothers consisted of two groups; one was 45.3% expressing recognition entirely or partially, while there was almost an equal group of 42.8% who expressed some criticism.

Looking deeper into the differences, we can pick out the most favourable judgments which were expressed by the Brothers in Africa (57.2% a good 12 points higher than the average), Asia (54.3%), Central Europe (53.9%), the younger Brothers (56.5%), the Priors (50%), but not from the General and Provincial governments, nor the formators.

In fact, the most explicit criticisms originated from Southern Europe (51.3%, 9 points in respect to the average), Latin America (40.1%), the USA (40%), 56-74 age group (47.2%), the graduates 52.9%, General and Provincial governments (49.4%), and the formators (45.7%).

In conclusion, Southern Europe and the USA, sometimes accompanied by Central Europe, are the regions in which the community’s connection with the apostolic work seems to constitute a problematic element. Also, at times they are critical of the different characteristics related to appreciation, respect and the ability to bring about the role of a prophetic voice, a critical conscience and a moral guide.

In this matter the Priors are more positive than the General and Provincial governments, the formators and vocation promoters. They sometimes also express reservations and negative evaluations in regards to the role of prophetic voice and innovation. Positive in their judgments are the younger Brothers but not so the older ones and the graduates, whose observations are more problematic.

Question 19 almost shows the same results, and it is interesting to see in this (#.19) that the percentages in all the sectors were slightly higher by three or four points. The results of these reflections regarding question 35 would do nothing but to confirm the preceding percentages as they differ little.

This tells us that firstly the Brothers have substantially expressed a constant judgment regarding the various parts of the questionnaire, and this shows they have maintained an attitude of interest and responsibility that comes to light here and there. Secondly the data and the judgments are reciprocally confirmed and correspond to our own findings.

5.3. Should communities that are close to each other be unified? (question 36)

At the end of this section a matter great importance has been inserted regarding to recommendations of the General Chapter.

Tab. 4.10 Evaluations regarding a possible unification of communities that are geographically close to each other. Distribution according to geographical zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	109	43	21	9	19	5	12
	10.8	11.3	11.1	10.7	11.0	3.9	20.0
Yes it’s appropriate	573	221	99	46	98	81	28
	56.6	58.2	52.4	54.8	57.0	63.8	46.7
It is not appropriate	330	116	69	29	55	41	20
	32.6	30.5	36.5	34.5	32.0	32.3	33.3

The question whether communities that are geographically close to each other would benefit by being united was asked of all the Brothers. This might be an analogous problem regarding ecclesiastic status, for example bordering parishes with the proposal to constitute one pastoral “entity” etc. The answer that came in was clearly *in favour with 56.6% of the consents, the 32.6% agreeing and only 10.8% expressing a qualified judgment.*

However such a very explicit and conclusive result needs to be further stated with more precision. It will be very useful in the decisional phase, because the study of the Brothers' answers in the various categories calls for a more serious choice and one to be mostly shared.

The Brothers who did not answer numbered 109 and they mostly came from the elderly (23.5%), and the Brothers in the USA (20%), Southern Europe (11.3%), Latin America (11%) and of all the other zones with identical percentages, except Asia (3.9%).

Tab. 4.11 Evaluations regarding a possible unification of communities geographically close to each other. Distribution according to the age groups and professions in the geographical zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	109	14	21	42	31	11	19	45	30
	10.8	5.9	6.8	13.0	23.5	5.3	6.8	12.9	20.3
Yes it is appropriate	573	144	186	183	55	132	159	193	72
	56.6	60.3	60.6	56.5	41.7	63.5	56.8	55.3	48.6
It is not appropriate	330	81	100	99	46	65	102	111	46
	32.6	33.9	32.6	30.6	34.8	31.3	36.4	31.8	31.1

The Brothers who gave an affirmative answer (56.6%) came particularly from Asia (63.8%, equal to 7 points higher in percentages to the average); next came Southern Europe (58.2%), Latin America (57%), Africa (54.8%), Central Europe (52.4%) and from the USA (46.7%, equal to 10 points in lower than the average). Also were the first two age groups of the younger Brothers and the 36-55 years age group also expressed their view in the positive with 60% in front of the 56-74 age group 56.5% and 41.7% of the most elderly.

Also in favour were the General and Provincial governments (64.4%), the formators and vocation promoters (61.4%), the Priors (59.9%, with a percentage higher than the average), and finally the graduates (59.9%).

The Brothers who gave a negative reply (32.6%), were one in three from Central Europe (36.5%), Africa (34.5%), and the USA (33.3%). Small problems also seem emerge to emerge from the other regions as to the level of the age groups but these were not very significant.

Tab. 4.12 Evaluations regarding a possible unification of communities that are geographically close to each other. Distribution according to positions held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Prio	Forma	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	109	10	20	7	72
	10.8	11.5	9.0	10.0	11.4
Yes it is appropriate	573	56	133	43	341
	56.6	64.4	59.9	61.4	53.9
It is not appropriate	330	21	69	20	220
	32.6	24.1	31.1	28.6	34.8

The greatest resistance was expressed by the graduates and technical professionals (35.2%, equal to 3 points higher than the average), in comparison to the graduates (27.9% with 4 points less than the average); and Priors (31.1%) in comparison to 24.1% from the General and Provincial governments.

6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have analysed the life of the community and its styles of animation, relationship and its possible influence on the apostolic work that it performs. We have deepened the analysis on the basis of the three directions related to their development already proposed in the third chapter of the Constitutions as a community of faith, prayer and fraternal love (studied in two paragraphs related to interpersonal relationships the style of animation) and community of apostolic service.

The community’s life of faith and prayer is judged by the Brothers to be very positive and strong. They have expressed this in terms of excellence (much) and with very high percentages constantly underlining its personalised aspects and a real sense of community. Besides the personal prayer of the Brothers, the three levels of shared prayer emerge as the prayer life of the community related to its daily practices (very high), to the monthly and annual practices (frequently enough) and third level of an attentive preparation of the liturgy that allows a little to be desired.

Elements of great doubt are found in the zones of Southern Europe and the USA, and this is also repeated in other contexts and other variables; as for example, with regard to the monthly days of prayer or recollection. The search for balance between a life of prayer and the active life is an objective that the communities have to strive for, but certain difficulties are found in the zones of Africa, and among the Brothers in the 36-55years age group, upon whom weighs the greatest part of the daily activity and apostolic mission.

Interpersonal relationships lived in fraternal charity seem to be animated by positive feelings of cordiality, understanding, friendship, fraternity and consideration of others, however much seems yet to be done in this regard. The replies given that said “*enough*” are expressive of a high percent in the two central columns as “*enough*” and “*little*”. This does not come out as an

excessive satisfaction with fraternal life and is certainly not enthusiastic. A positive judgment comes from the Brothers in Latin America, Central Europe, the USA and the younger Brothers.

The principal fault appears to be centred upon an individualism that is accompanied by indifference. This emerges especially in the communities of the USA, Asia and the middle-aged Brothers. About half of the Brothers do not see this happening very much.

The percentages of the style of animation of the communities seem to follow the course of the preceding question on fraternal and interpersonal relationships, where the character of excellence (*much*) was rather limited, around 15-20%, while a great deal higher were those in the two central columns of “*enough*” and “*little*”.

We have called the positive characteristics that emerged the pentagon of the positive promotional style. And indeed this appears to be characterised by openness, sharing, communication, dialogue and democracy, as shown by the greatest part of the Brothers, especially in the USA, Latin America, the younger Brothers, the graduates and the superiors at all the levels, but not so among those Brothers who had never held positions of responsibility (58.5%).

This group of Brothers however, manifest plenty of criticisms in the percentages; they are the highest among all in the cross-sections considered, and that is 32.7%. At 32.7%, they say that such a negative attitude is repeated in the other characteristics of the style of community animation.

As for the negative characteristics, they serve as a counterweight to this, and are seen as an authoritarian style of control and permissiveness. These seem to constitute a discriminating variable among the generalised groups. This is mostly perceived and expressed by the younger Brothers, the Brothers in Africa, Asia, Central Europe, and (a surprise!) from the formators and vocation promoters who instead maintain that the style of animation is too controlled and authoritarian. The General and Provincial governments do not agree to this.

Expression of fraternal love in community overflows towards people of all kinds, and those specific activities share in the apostolic mission: in first place toward the elderly Brothers and the sick. This was seen in all the Brothers, and it follows that great attention has to be shown to the young Brothers who need care and sympathetic accompaniment during their initial formation. This occurs in a particular way in the zones of Asia, Africa the USA, the younger Brothers, the superiors at all levels and the formators. The percentages are more reduced with respect to guests, the relatives of the Brothers, co-workers and the young Brothers in discernment.

Up to this point, we seem to notice a perplexity that emerges from the same data of the investigation, and that is that *the young Brothers in discernment* place themselves in the last place of reception. It seems to us that the vocations problem would especially ask today for the showing of greater care in this double initial phase of the younger Brothers being introduced into the hospitaller mission of the Order and, necessarily, in the evaluation of their qualities and availability for the admission to the Order.

This carefulness and welcoming reception is in the zones of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the formators and all levels of superiors. It is relatively neglected in the USA, Central Europe,

Southern Europe and with critical reservations is a third of the Brothers in Southern Europe, the graduates and the young Brothers themselves.

Finally, it is important to look into the judgments on the apostolic service of the community, of its involvement in apostolic work, and the quality of its role and mission as perceived by the Brothers. Indeed, almost all the Brothers maintained that its role is outstanding and a fifth said it was even beyond question. This was the opinion of the Brothers in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Central Europe. A more severe judgment and some rather insignificant criticisms came from 15% of the Brothers in the USA and most of the elderly Brothers.

Two thirds of the Brothers say that *the community greatly appreciates its apostolic mission*; especially in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Southern Europe, however they said that greatest difficulty is really in expressing its particular and specific role. Many Brothers promoted its role as a *moral guide and prophetic voice*, (especially in Asia and Latin America, and enthusiastically so by the young and elderly Brothers). Others asked to have the subject of *critical conscience and innovation* studied much further.

The General and Provincial government pushed for a greater deepening and development of all these roles, but not so the Priors who seemed satisfied enough. In fact these latter appear to be more positive than the former and the formators and vocation promoters who expressed some reservations and even negative evaluations; as for example, in comparison to the role of prophetic voice and innovating function. The younger Brothers expressed a positive view, but not so the more mature ones and the graduates, whose observations were more articulated and problematic.

Finally, this subject is very important in pointing the way to the institutional and structural goals of unity that the community aspires to. The Brothers who gave a favourable answer were 56.6%, while 32.6% were contrary ones and 10.8% had no opinion at all on the subject.

Giving an affirmative answer were the Brothers in Asia, Southern Europe, the young Brothers and the 36-55 age group, the General and Provincial governments and finally the graduates. A negative response came from Central Europe, Africa, the USA, the diploma holders, professional technicians and the graduates; the Priors differed from the General and Provincial governments but no real difference was found in the various age groups. 32.7%.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRAINING OF FORMATORS

In the context of today's post-modern society that is "*fluid and ever-changing*", multicultural, complex and directed more and more toward the understanding of cultures with strong diverse values, sometimes contradicting and conflicting with each other, the need to suitably train formators is of paramount importance. This means that the employment of socialisation and education agencies are an absolute necessity to meet this vital duty. And it is more and more impelling and urgent that qualified formators have the knowledge and experience to pass on the values of the tradition and inspiring charism of the Order and its mission to the new generation of Brothers.

With this in mind it is necessary to be very concerned to inform the family, and the school, as well as other educational organisations of the traditions of the Order. Since society has become multicultural a unified education has been lost, because in the past a simpler society placed its main objective on the formation of "a mature person."

Educational goals are not always shared, and the plurality of methods has become quite a time wasting exercise. The multiplicity and differences in the educational models and personal ideals cause a loss of the sense of the hierarchy of values and specific objectives. The levelling of the educational goals often unleashes a necessary ethical perspective of responsibility that leads to confusion, both of the means and the goals themselves. This complicates the means of education and causes great difficulty, often causing one to give up and let matters be as they are. The older generations are perhaps unprepared to face the new challenges of today's society. Sometimes misunderstandings on the same function of the education lurk under an ambiguous pretext of liberty. And sometimes they are unable to succeed in proposing clear orientations and meaningful points of reference that can fit in with the ideal of life held by the new generations.

The effect of this diverse social conditioning and fragmentation of social structures calls for a proper preparation of the formators so that they may be prepared to take on the challenges called for to face up to the difficult assignment of forming the new generation to the understanding and mission of the Order in the society.

This means educating the new generation in the spirit of the Christian life and specifically in the religious life, to be imbued with the values and charism proper to every religious congregation and order. That is why it is of utmost importance to give a good and proper training to the formators so that they will be able to transmit the spirit and lifestyle of the Order.

This requires an educational action that will give the formator a global responsibility and co-involvement with the whole community on the Provincial scale. They must feel responsible for the future life of the Order. This means not only communicating and attracting, but also instilling the values of the Order.

This calls for the community to take prudent care of the environment that it facilitates, at least in the beginning of the first years in the formation of attitudes and behaviour of the religious, and especially so for the St. John of God Brother, since he must structure his own religious and charismatic identity on that specifically belonging to the Order.

People and a formative environment are the two pillars of every human education, Christian and religious. Should, for any reason, one of these two pillars be missing a precarious situation takes over immediately and uncertainty and doubt cloud of the formation that is so necessary for the religious life.

If one speaks of vocational brittleness in young people, one must also speak of brittleness and the formative weakness of the educators, their insufficient preparation for institutional responsibilities, of smudging the goals of religious life and the unforgivable levity when faced with the grave challenges of the moment. And these are difficult moments, but to live them it is necessary to face up to the challenges without hiding from them and without the fear to accept the necessary competence that can be achieved with the help and the light of the Holy Spirit Saint.

Today the courage of these choices and these priorities cannot be submitted to a comparison with times gone by. The duty of facing up to this truth is a precise sign of that brave turn that the Hospitaller Order has set out to achieve with the General Chapter.

Thus we have come to that important section of the questionnaire, addressed to the study of the formative and vocational dimension of the Brothers, especially the formators. Furthermore this is already required by the Order's Constitutions in the fourth chapter, (especially articles 57-71) and in the Formation Program outlined in chapter four, paragraph 10 (#138 to #141).

The awareness of the extraordinary importance of the formator is clearly expressed by art. 57, where it recommends: ***“arranging and updating of those in charge of formation, since the religious vitality and development of the Order depend to large extent on their competence and activity.”*** For this reason ***“the Brothers chosen for this office will have to give priority to this assignment above all other activities and services they perform”*** (#.138).

The development of our reflections will now follow the thematic principal that is proposed in the questionnaire, and we will follow the followings three paragraphs with methodological clarity:

1. A presence and specific training of the formators (questions.37-38; 41)
2. The support and co-responsibility of the Order (questions 39-40; 42)
3. Future prospects for a more suitable formation (questions 43-44).

1. A PRESENCE AND SPECIFIC TRAINING OF FORMATORS (questions 37-38; 41)

Question #.37, asks ***“has your Province chosen some Brothers to prepare for developing the service of formators”?*** This has a double purpose. The first one is to see in reality if each Province has selected and prepared Brothers for the assignment of formators; then, accordingly to see if the Brothers have any involvement with this delicate problem of the Order, at least on the level of being consulted about it.

1.1. The choice of formators and the responsiveness of the Brothers

Here we find the answers to the questionnaire on this matter to be rather disappointing. We found it unusual in how so few Brothers candidly answered since only 29.8% of them declare that they did not to know and were unable to answer to this question. That would seem to be rather simple and perhaps obvious. However this is indicative of something else. In reality

almost a third of the Brothers said they were in the dark regarding any program for training formators saying that this was a rather extraneous matter to their knowledge.

If to this percentage is added the 5.4% of the Brothers who gave no answer at all, we reach 35.2% of Brothers who say they are left in the dark on this matter: this is especially so by the Brothers in the USA (46.7%), Central Europe (45.5%) and Southern Europe (33.4%). Those who are responsible for this situation will have to remedy it at once. More informed instead the Brothers of Latin America, Africa and a little less so in Asia.

Tab. 5.1 – “Has your Province chosen some Brothers to prepare for developing the service of formators”? (in V. A. and percentage)

		V. A.	%
No reply	55	5.4	
YES	504		49.8
NO	151	14.9	
Don't know	302	29.8	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>1012</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

These percentages are confirmed by the answers telling how much they not only positively affirm and know of it, but also they are aware of the fact that their Province is working for the preparation of its formators (49.8%). This is evidenced by the very high percentages of table #5.2, showing 82% of the Brothers in Latin America, 78.6% in Africa, 54.3% in Asia, 42.1% in Southern Europe, 31.2% in Central Europe and only 15% in the USA.

This data furnishes us with the degree of the awareness of the Brothers (we don't know about the non replies). It also shows us where the real distribution of such formative personnel is taking place. In other words, the Provinces that have mostly chosen some Brothers to prepare themselves to accept the assignment of formators seem to be those of Latin America, Africa and Asia.

About one in seven Brothers declared that their Province has not chosen anyone to prepare himself for taking on the duty of formation. This particularly applies to the USA (30%) and the two European groups (18.4%). It appears to reflect demographic course of the Order.

Tab. 5.2 – “Has your Province chosen some Brothers to prepare for developing the service of formators”? Distributed in geographic zones (in V. A. and percentage)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S. Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage:	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	55	23	9	1	13	4	5
	5.4	6.1	4.8	1.2	7.6	3.1	8.3
Yes	504	160	59	66	141	69	9
	49.8	42.1	31.2	78.6	82.0	54.3	15.0
No	151	70	35	4	9	15	18
	14.9	18.4	18.5	4.8	5.2	11.8	30.0
Don't know	302	127	86	13	9	39	28
	29.8	33.4	45.5	15.5	5.2	30.7	46.7

If we consider the age groups, the ones that don't know come to more than half of the elderly, a third of the middle-aged, and quarter of the young Brothers. It is surprising to find that among the uncertain or poorly informed Brothers come to 23.4% of the Brothers who are aware of the formation situation and another 23.3% know about the vocation promoters; the rest appear to be left in the dark

Tab. 5.3 – “Has your Province chosen some Brothers to prepare for developing the service of formators”? Distributed in age groups and years of profession (in V. A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED				
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50+	
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148	
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6	
No reply	55	12	4	25	14	9	5	24	14	
	5.4	5.0	1.3	7.7	10.6	4.3	1.8	6.9	9.5	
Yes	504	150	171	131	47	114	173	149	56	
	49.8	62.8	55.7	40.4	35.6	54.8	61.8	42.7	37.8	
No	151	15	46	75	14	15	38	73	21	
	14.9	6.3	15.0	23.1	10.6	7.2	13.6	20.9	14.2	
Don't know	302	62	86	93	57	70	64	103	57	
	29.8	25.9	28.0	28.7	43.2	33.7	22.9	29.5	38.5	

Actually the General and Provincial governments miss out here, (12.6% equal to only 11 Brothers), and so too do 19.8% of the Priors. Probably they have never attended meetings about this matter where could be easily informed about the new life of the Order and the latest as well as the old methods used by the Brothers.

On the other hand, the younger Brothers *positively know* how important is the role of the formators (62.8%) and they top all the other age groups, the 36-55 years old 55.7%, the 56-74 years group 40.4% and 35.6% of the elderly Brothers. To these we can add 60.9% of the General and Provincial governments, 54.5% of the Priors, and 70% of the formators.

Tab. 5.4 – “Has your Province chosen some Brothers to prepare for developing the service of formators”? Distributed in formator and academic groups (in V. A. and percentage)

	5.2 Formation			5.3 Voc,Pro		Titile of study		
	TOTAL	Yes	No	Yes	No	techn.	Diploma	Dr.
T O T A L	1012	418	594	287	725	489	220	172
Percentage	100.0	41.3	58.7	28.4	71.6	48.3	21.7	17.0
No reply	55	18	37	7	48	28	4	7
	5.4	4.3	6.2	2.4	6.6	5.7	1.8	4.1
Yes	504	219	285	158	346	249	105	89
	49.8	52.4	48.0	55.1	47.7	50.9	47.7	51.7
No	151	83	68	55	96	64	43	36
	14.9	19.9	11.4	19.2	13.2	13.1	19.5	20.9
Don't know	302	98	204	67	235	148	68	40
	29.8	23.4	34.3	23.3	32.4	30.3	30.9	23.3

Those who openly declare that their Province does nothing about selecting Brothers (14.9%) to train as formators are 19% of the formators themselves, 20.9% of the graduates, 26.4% of the General and Provincial governments and 22.5% of the Priors.

Tab. 5.5 – “Has your Province chosen some Brothers to prepare for developing the service of formators”? Distributed in positions held (in V. A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.Gvt	Preior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	55	3	7	1	44
	5.4	3.4	3.2	1.4	7.0
Yes	504	53	121	49	281
	49.8	60.9	54.5	70.0	44.4
No	151	23	50	12	66
	14.9	26.4	22.5	17.1	10.4
Don't know	302	8	44	8	242
	29.8	9.2	19.8	11.4	38.2

The data at our disposition dose not allow us to individualise the geographic zones where the superiors live, however an indication of this can easily be discerned from the preceding table 5.2.

1.2 Judgements on the preparation of formators

At this point all the Brothers have been called upon to express in general a proper judgment on the adequacy and quality of the preparation of the formators for their role, not the judgment of any single formator. This treats of a subject that is vital to the existence of the religious life. Table 5.6 questions whether the formators are considered to be adequately prepared and if they are competent for the position. These days today it is urgent to face up the challenges of the times as recommended by the Order’s Constitutions and by its Formation Program.

Tab. 5.6 – Valuation of the preparation of the formators and their competence (in V. A. and percentage)

	<i>No reply</i>	Much	Enough	<i>little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Spiritual theology	9.0	14.1	42.0	30.9	4.0	2.27
2. Spirituality of the Order	9.5	20.0	47.1	21.9	1.5	2.05*
3. Psychological competence	11.4	10.0	37.7	34.8	6.1	2.42

This table shows us that a general satisfaction exists specifically in some particular judgments. In other words, the Brothers interviewed declare that there is enough suitable preparation in regards to spirituality of the Order (M:2.05). Less so in theological-spiritual (M:2.27) and still less in the field of the sciences and human competences (M:2.42). This is perhaps understandable since the St. John of God Brothers do not undertake the theology courses mandatory for the priesthood. On the other hand there is a strong formation in the spirituality of the Order.

Hardly any of the Brothers say that they didn't have any preparation in these three sectors. In fact the "**none**" column has a very low percentage, almost pointless. There is however, a discreet percentage of Brothers who did not answer, and this is about 10%; perhaps they felt they were uninformed so they could not make any judgment about this matter.

We would like to point out that there are not many Brothers who have a very positive judgment regarding the excellence (the **much** column) of the competences of the formators: they make up 20%, but only in the sector of the spirituality of the Order. Already in the preceding chapters, especially in the first one (question 6), we noticed a certain difficulty in the sector of the various professional competences, indicated in the academic titles.

67.1% of the Brothers maintain that the preparation of the formators on the spirituality of the Order is sufficient and suitable; less numerous (56.1%), with 10 percent saying the spiritual theological is suitable. Less so (47.7%) are those who judge them as suitable in the psychology of human competences. Finally, 40.9% of the Brothers expressly give a negative and critical judgment.

These evaluations, ring alarm bells to call the Order to start to develop a ***series of politics in at least two directions.***

The first proposal is directed toward the appointment of a more intense formation in the field of science and human competences as well as theology. This responds to a very impelling demand in modern society for competences and updating, especially in the field of the management of human resources and interpersonal relationships.

The second is aimed at making information available to the Brothers, and stimulating the formators and those who are responsible to bring the Brothers into the discussion of this problem, so that they may take interest in it. This would have the effect of translating them from inactivity and bringing them into co-responsibility, so that the formators would not feel isolated or marginalized, but perceived to follow the interest and attention of all the Brothers who should accept this explicitly and enthusiastically.

We now move on to analyse some different subjects that will allow us to better articulate the differences and therefore become more deeply involved.

In the sector on the spirituality of the Order (67.1%) there is a prevalence of *no answers*, mostly from the elderly Brothers (22.7%), the USA (21.7%) and Southern Europe (14.7%). The other answers that are more positive come from Asia (79.5%), the younger Brothers (74.9%), the diploma holders (66%), the General and Provincial governments (77%), the formators and vocation promoters (77.1%). Those more critical (23.4%) come from Latin America (27.3%), Africa (28.6%), the Priors (27.5%), the graduates (26.7%) and the 36-55 years age group (24.8%).

In the sector on spiritual-theological (56.1%), the positive percentages are slightly lower and the *“no reply”* section came from elderly Brothers (22%), and also from the USA (23.3%) and Southern Europe (12.9%).

Positive answers come from more than half the Brothers (56.1%), but above all, with more than 10 points higher than the average, are those from Asia (65.3%), the younger Brothers (60.7%), the diploma holders (55.9%), the General and Provincial governments (63.2%) and the formators (57.1%).

More critical (34.9%) are the Brothers in Latin America (45.9%), Africa (41.7%), the USA (33.3%), the 36-55 years age group (39.4%), the younger Brothers (36%), the graduates (39.5%) and the Priors (42.3%).

In the sector psychological competence and human competences (47.7%), the situation becomes more problematic. Apart from the fact that a great number of Brothers did not reply (11.4%), and again these were the elderly Brothers (28.8%), but a more positive answer comes from the Brothers in Asia (59.8%), Central Europe (54%), the younger Brothers (54%), the General and Provincial governments (56.3%), and the formators (55.7%).

The greatest part of the criticisms (40.9%) comes from Africa (57.2%), Latin America (46%), the 36-55 years age group (44.6%), as well as the younger Brothers (41.4%), the graduates (46%) and the Priors (46.4%).

In conclusion, we live in a time of great changes, with more and more demanding roles more and more loads of a multiplicity of functions that affect the formators, as we will see in the subsequent questions. There is a need to be careful and utilise the new means to make the Order more fruitful, even if this is a costly process. And on the other hand, this is not simply a question of survival, but also of the quality and development of the Order. Without putting aside the judgments of a religious character, as in all families, the problem of the formation of the new generation constitutes an urgent fact of life and impels us to act accordingly with the necessary training of the formators.

The first ones to acknowledge the greater or lesser validity of the training of formators seem to be the ***Priors***, who in all the three the sectors are shown to be the most critical. Since they live directly in contact with the young Brothers they also personally see the limitations and what is lacking, so they easily attribute the responsibility of this to the formators.

In these sections ***some*** say there is adequate training of formators:

- Expressing positive judgments are: the Brothers in Asia and Central Europe, the young Brothers, the General and Provincial governments, the formators and vocation promoters;
- Expressing a more critical judgment are: the Priors, the 36-55 year age group,, the graduates, the Brothers in the USA, Latin America, Southern Europe and Africa.

1.3 occasions for meetings and comparison among the formators at various levels

One of the fundamental elements in the training of the formators and the quality of their formation consist in the possibility and in the ability to bring them together on occasions to compare and verify their programs. This allows them to evaluate, update, and to objectively appraise resources, objectives, methodologies, strategies of formation and results.

These days each formator must operate within a network of formative agencies, and other educators. This involves diversified contexts, specific perspectives, the ability and the possibility to essentially draw upon the initiatives and good results achieved by the others and to take advantage of this. This can be achieved on the occasion of meetings, conferences, work, study and pastoral considerations and making comparisons with what other congregations are doing.

Communication of the experiences shared among the various formators is actually a precious resource to improve their own formation. This way their formation is enriched, made fruitful, creative and of great value to the formators. This is very necessary for their experience, education and personal formation.

Number 141a of the *“Formation Program”* recommends formators *“to take part in courses and formation meetings”* organised by the Church and the Order, *“to take part on an inter-congregational level with other institutes to a sharing in studies and an exchange of experiences”* (141c). The data of tab 5-7 gives a panoramic view of this.

Tab. 5.7 Do you think the formators of the Order compare well with other formators?

	<i>No reply</i>	YES	No	Don't know
1. Of the Province	7.4	54.9	9.1	28.6
2. Of the Order	8.7	48.7	10.2	32.4
3. Of other religious congregations	9.5	37.5	9.4	43.7

The results from the questionnaire direct us toward a positive *“enough”* reading of the answers. This came from almost all the Brothers. The absence of data from the *“no reply”* group was very low, with an average of only 8%.

In all sections the affirmative answers progressively decrease, ending with the Brothers who said they are in the dark and *“don't know”*, reaching a few less than half the Brothers.

More than half the Brothers maintain that these meetings with other formators certainly do happen in their Provinces (54.9%). A lesser number say this happens on the scale of the Order (48.7%), and still less, few more than a third, say they see the formators of other religious congregations (37.5%). Only a few (about 9-10%) expressly answer in a negative way to say that is that there is nothing done regarding this matter.

Instead the percentages of those who say they *are not informed* about these meetings is increasing the possibility of discussing the matter further. They have gone from 28.6% in respect to the possibility that they can take place in the Province, to 32.4% who say within the Order as

well, reach few less than the half the Brothers (43.7%) who know that these meetings actually do occur on the inter-congregational level, but even here the information of all the Brothers is rather limited.

A more analytical reading gives as a better understanding of the subject.

First of all, more than half of the Brothers in Provinces, 54.9%, know that these meetings do take place; especially in Latin America and notably in Central Europe (57.7%). Less aware of the fact are the Brothers in Asia (49.6%), Africa (42.9%) and the USA (23.3%), where the lack of communication is great (43.3%).

Tab. 5.8 - Evaluation of the possibilities of meetings among the formators of the Province. Distributed in geographical zones (in V.A and %)

ZONE OF ORIGIN							
	TOTAL	Europe	Europa	Africa	Latin	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	75	39	10	2	7	7	10
	7.4	10.3	5.3	2.4	4.1	5.5	16.7
Ye	556	208	109	36	126	63	14
	54.9	54.7	57.7	42.9	73.3	49.6	23.3
No	92	20	17	20	13	12	10
	9.1	5.3	9.0	23.8	7.6	9.4	16.7
Don't know	289	113	53	26	26	45	26
	28.6	29.7	28.0	31.0	15.1	35.4	43.3

This lack of communication (28.6%) is observed to increase with the age groups, especially in the over 56 years group (30.2%) and the 75 years group (37.9%), who appear to be less informed. The most informed are the Brothers in the 36 to 55 years group, and the formators.

Tab. 5.9 - Evaluation of the possibilities of meetings among the formators of the Province. Distributed in position held (in V.A and %)

POSITION HELD					
	TOTAL	G & P.Gvt.	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	75	5	12	5	53
	7.4	5.7	5.4	7.1	8.4
Yes	556	62	128	46	320
	54.9	71.3	57.7	65.7	50.6
No	92	12	29	8	43
	9.1	13.8	13.1	11.4	6.8
Don't know	289	8	53	11	217
	28.6	9.2	23.9	15.7	34.3

The information we received shows that this goes with the responsibilities of office. The General and Provincial governments (71.3%) and Priors (57.7%), formators (65.7%), even if among these latter (strange to hear of it!) there is a 15.7% who are completely in the dark. Those who hold academic titles are in favour of such exchanges (around 62% among the graduates), the diploma holders 34.3% say there is not much in the way of communication, and the Brothers who do not hold positions of responsibility are 33.3%.

The Brothers in Latin America say that within the Order there is not much information regarding such meetings (48.7%) in comparison to their Province. Those who say that no such meetings among the formators exist come to 42.6%. Among those in Latin America who are informed (53.5%), in Central Europe (52.9%), Southern Europe (50.8%); and the 36-55 years age group (53.1%), the graduates (56.4%) and the General and Provincial governments (64.4%).

Tab. 5.10 - Evaluation of the possibilities of meetings among the formators of the Province. Distributed in geographical zones (in V.A and %)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	75	39	10	2	7	7	10
	7.4	10.3	5.3	2.4	4.1	5.5	16.7
Yes	556	208	109	36	126	63	14
	54.9	54.7	57.7	42.9	73.3	49.6	23.3
No	92	20	17	20	13	12	10
	9.1	5.3	9.0	23.8	7.6	9.4	16.7
Don't know	289	113	53	26	26	45	26
	28.6	29.7	28.0	31.0	15.1	35.4	43.3

The Brothers in the USA (41.7%) and Asia (40.9%) are proportionally the greatest who say there is a lack of communication, and so too do the younger (35.6%) and the elderly Brothers (37.1%) and also the diploma holders (35.8%). But 27.5% of the Priors and 27.1% of the formators say they are uninformed of these possibilities. Here it also seems to be a matter of communication and general involvement.

Tab. 5.11 - Evaluation of the possibilities of meetings among the formators of the Province. Distributed by positions held (in V.A and %)

	POSITION HELD				
	TOTAL	G & P.	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	88	5	13	2	68
	8.7	5.7	5.9	2.9	10.7
Yes	493	56	119	37	281
	48.7	64.4	53.6	52.9	44.4
No	103	14	29	12	48
	10.2	16.1	13.1	17.1	7.6
Don't know	328	12	61	19	236
	32.4	13.8	27.5	27.1	37.3

It must be said that 16.1% of the General and Provincial governments say they do not attend the formators meetings in the Order (strange!), and even 13.8% of them know nothing about this at all. Although the percentages are relatively irrelevant, the respective positions of responsibility should have presumably given quite a different answer.

c) Meetings of the Order's formators with formators of other congregations are rather rare but not altogether absent, as is shown in Tab. 52.

Tab. 5.12 – Evaluation of formators of the Order holding meetings with the formators of other congregations. Distributed in geographic zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	Europe	Europa	Africa	Latin A.	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	96	53	11	3	12	8	9
	9.5	13.9	5.8	3.6	7.0	6.3	15.0
Yes	379	128	74	45	68	41	23
	37.5	33.7	39.2	53.6	39.5	32.3	38.3
No	95	33	12	8	27	10	5
	9.4	8.7	6.3	9.5	15.7	7.9	8.3
Don't know	442	166	92	28	65	68	23
	43.7	43.7	48.7	33.3	37.8	53.5	38.3

Only 37.5% of Brothers say these occur, but as much as 53.1% say they are not informed (lack of communication), and some say they do not happen at all. Information about meetings with the other congregations proportionally seem greater in Africa (53.6%), among the 36-55 years age group (47.2%), 64.4% of the General and Provincial governments and 51.4% of the formators and vocation promoters.

About 30%, that is 26 of the Priors, say they are in the dark about what goes on in the Order let alone with other Congregations. More than a third of the Priors (37.4%) cannot give a precise answer, as also half the number of Brothers who do not hold positions of responsibility.

In conclusion, we can affirm that such meetings do occur from time to time in the Province, the Order and inter-congregational. This proportionally occurs with a certain frequency and among specific categories of Brothers. In other words, not everyone is left in the dark. However it strikes us that there are Provincials and Priors not availing of this opportunity. It would be of advantage to inform all the Brothers in the various geographical zones. This can only be done with good communication and a greater diffusion of information to involve each and every Brother. This is most important and such data must be communicated to all the Brothers. We have taken care to underlined the various articulations,

2. SUPPORT IS THE CO-RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ORDER (questions 39-40; 42)

The challenge facing religious Orders and congregations is that they put at risk the generosity of their mission and weaken their vocational enthusiasms. The continuous murmuring of complaints on the *vocations situation* doesn't do the Brothers any good as it dries up and extinguishes their hopes and creates mistrust in the future. Such a situation clips their wings and turns them in upon themselves in a sort of melancholy narcissism and engenders a sort of *“just let things be as they are”* and a drift into despondency.

If this should happen to the formators and vocation promoters, then the situation really risks failure, since the Order's Constitutions define the formators by saying that *“the religious vitality and the development of the Order depends to a large extent on them”*. (Art.57).

That is why they must never let their precious assignment slip into apathy. The problem of vocations and formation cannot be entrusted to only to a small group of the younger Brothers. What is needed are mature and enthusiastic communicators of the charism of the Founder; Brothers rich in apostolic zeal and missionary ardour. The whole Order, and that means each Brother in his specific role, should feel himself mobilized to stimulate vocations and to transmit the charism of the mission as a precious inheritance for the good of the Order and its beneficent presence in the service of the poor and sick.

Questions 39, 40 and 42 sought to study the accompaniment of vocations and the desire that the Brothers have to sustain the task of the formators, because they feel deeply involved and jointly responsible, therefore they accordingly take interest in what they do and help them to operate effectively. This will be possible only with good communication and information circulating within the Order on this matter. The formation of the young Brothers is such an investment that each Brother must accept co-responsibility for it even when this means he must make sacrifices and “give priority over other activities and services in which they are involved.” (Formation Program, #138).

2.1 Knowledge of the Formation Program (d.39)

The first step of such co-responsibility begins with the knowledge of the nature of the role and mission of the formator. This is very clearly delineated in the *“Formation Program of the Hospitaller Order”* and was what inspired the question in our questionnaire.

Do you know the contents of the Order’s “Formation Program”?

Yes = 65.5 (:663) NO = 20.2 (:204) Don’t Know 14.3% (:145)

Two Brothers in three answered in the affirmative (65.5%), and 20.2% in the negative, to which is added 14.3% of those who did not answer the question and the ‘don’t know’ section making it 34.5% of Brothers

Tab. 5.13 Knowledge of the “Formation Program”. Distributed in geographic regions (in V.A. and percentage)

	Zone of Origin						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	145	63	24	8	29	8	13
	14.3	16.6	12.7	9.5	16.9	6.3	21.7
Yes	663	225	125	63	131	88	31
	65.5	59.2	66.1	75.0	76.2	69.3	51.7
No	204	92	40	13	12	31	16
	20.2	24.2	21.2	15.5	7.0	24.4	26.7

Going further into the details, we discover with satisfaction that the affirmative answers are those of the Brothers in Latin America (76.2%), Africa (75%), Asia (69.3%), those below the 55 years age group (75%), the graduates (73.8%), the General and Provincial governments (86.2%), the Priors (68.5%) and formators themselves (75.7%).

Less attentive and involved were the Brothers of Southern Europe (24,2%), Asia (24.4%), the USA (26.7%), the elderly Brothers over 56 years of age, the diploma holders and technicians (21.3%), and those who had never held a position of responsibility (23.1%).

Tab. 5.14 Knowledge of the “Formation Program”. Distributed in positions held (in V.A. and percentage)

	POSITION HELD				
	TOTAL	G & P.	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No Reply	145	5	31	5	104
	14.3	5.7	14.0	7.1	16.4
Yes	663	75	152	53	383
	65.5	86.2	68.5	75.7	60.5
No	204	7	39	12	146
	20.2	8.0	17.6	17.1	23.1

2.2 Deepening and utilising the practice of the “Formation Program (2nd question 39).

Moving on from just having a knowledge of the “Formation Program”, it is important to put it into action, because it doesn't concern only the young Brothers in formation, but every single Brother in the Order. In fact this is explicit in the first chapter of “*The Identity of the Hospitaller Brothers*” for it speaks of his charism and spirituality. It is the practical application of the Constitutions articulated in the various situations of his life.

<i>Are you familiar with the “Formation Program” of the Order?</i>
<i>YES = 65.5% (:663) NO = 20.2% (:204) No Reply. 14.3% (:145)</i>

Tab. 5.15 Knowledge of the “Formation Program” of the Order and its progressive levels of application (in V.A. and percentage) (Total subjects: 100%, equal to 663)

Contents and Levels 663	No Reply	Much	Enough	Little	none	Average
1. Have you studied it?	1.2	13.0	48.4	35.6	1.8	2.27*
2. Did you understand it?	2.7	9.5	45.2	40.0	2.6	2.37
3. Have you applied it ?	5.4	8.6	42.2	38.9	4.8	2.42

These are the essential lines of the charism of the Order and John of God spirituality (##14-19); the Founder's path (##20-24), the qualities and attitudes of the Hospitaller Order (##25-26); the fundamental values that guarantee its fidelity to Jesus Christ and his charisma (#33). In a word, it is the practical rule of life that drives and impels the whole personality of the Brothers and presides over their orientation and leads them to a mature formation.

This is verified and articulated on three levels: those of the deepening indwelling, of the daily practice and assuming as a sample of this. 65.5% of the Brothers answered that they know the contents of the “Formation Program “. Methodologically that 65.5% (663) now constitutes the new 100% of the following percentages of these answers as reported in Tab 5.15.

The first two columns affirm answers (*much and enough*) so we observe a certain constancy of positive percentages, both in the column of the excellence (*much* around 10%) and that of sufficient (*enough*), around an average of 45%. Globally considered, we see that over half the Brothers are deepening and taking in the proposals of the "Formation Program".

About a third (almost 40% of the 250 up to 290 of the Brothers) replied negatively, showing resistance, carelessness and negligence (*little + none*).

Going into a more detailed analysis, the Brothers who declared a high deepening of the contents (61.4%) came from Asia (85.2%), the USA (74.2%), Central Europe (72%), the younger Brothers (70%), the 36-55 age group (62.2%), the graduates (67.7%), the General and Provincial governments (68%), the formators and vocation promoters (75.5%), in comparison to the Brothers in Southern Europe (44.5%), Africa (57.2%), and the elderly (54.4%).

The number of those who understand and accept the "Formation Program" (54.7%) are somewhat flexible, nevertheless there are enough of them who do at various acceptable levels; especially among the Brothers in the USA (77.4%), Central Europe (65.6%) and Asia (68.2%), in comparison to 40.9% in Southern Europe, 57.2% in Africa, 52.7% in Latin America, the younger Brothers are also positive (66.1%) and the 36-55 age group (53.6%), the formators (73.6%), the General and Provincial governments (62.7%) and the graduates (63%).

Finally the process of the practical application of the "Formation Program" (50.8%) shows much difficulty and some resistance. Nevertheless, it must be said that the Brothers in the (77.4%), Asia (65.9%), Central Europe (61.6%), the younger Brothers (63.9%), the General and Provincial governments (57.3%), the formators (69.8%) and the graduates (52.7%) show better results.

Lesser attention to this matter seems to come from Southern Europe (34.7%), Africa (47.6%), 36-55 age group (47.7%) and among the Priors (44.1%).

In conclusion, from the answers to the questionnaire, which were very sincere and frank, it seems that there is a lot still to be done about personally taking the application of the "Formation Program" on board in practice by at least about half the Brothers. This seems to be the case with the Brothers in the USA, Asia and Central Europe, the younger age group, the graduates and the formators.

2.3. Is the training of formators an exclusive appointment? (#.40)

The superiors of the Order and the Church recognise that formation is vital, therefore it is important that the measure of care imparted to the young Brothers be recognised as what the Order wants. That is why the appointment of a permanent formation program should go ahead. One of the most reasonable indicators is that time must be given to the training of the formators and this must be a full-time activity. Question 40 asked the Brothers to give their opinions in this matter. The answered received reflect this in the following table.

Should the formators undergo a full-time training course?			
		%	V. A.
YES	=	21.2	215
NO	=	49.6	502
Don't know		20.8	211
No reply		8.3	84
Total		100.0	1012

About half the number of Brothers (49.6%) clearly said that the formators don't exclusively devote their time fully to formation, while 21.2% contradicted that. Another 20.8% said they were not sufficiently informed about the situation, and 8.3% did not reply at all, so that brought the number to 29.1% of the Brothers who are uninformed about this situation.

Obviously those who said that they were less informed are about 34% and consist of the most elderly Brothers and those who have no position of responsibility (28%).

Those who say the formators are exclusively engaged in formation belong to the Provinces of Asia (33.1%), Central Europe (28.6%), the younger Brothers 21.8% and those in the 36-55 age group 24.4% and 24.3% of the formators equal to 17 Brothers.

The greater number of Brothers (49.6%) do believe that the formators are also occupied in other duties. This is especially in Africa (70.2%), Latin America (67.4%), a little less in Asia (33.1%) and in the USA (38.3%). Also, the General and Provincial governments, the Priors, the graduates and the formators themselves and these all confirm 2/3 in the same orientation.

2.4 Awareness of organising formation (question 42)

Here we consider the contents of the Formation Program regarding the Brothers in formation and the formation centres.

These three elements permit us to have some idea of the interest, care and attention that is generally aroused among the Brothers of the Order, and their knowledge of the most elementary information and interest extended to Brothers regarding the formative and vocational sector.

The underlying panel give a global view of this.

HAVE YOU KNOWLEDGE	<i>No reply.</i>	YES	NO
1. Of the formation centres of the Province?	<i>6.4</i>	80.1	13.4
2. Of the Brothers in formation?	<i>8.5</i>	72.9	18.6
2. At least something of the Formation Program ?	<i>18.1</i>	49.4	38.5*

This confirms our preceding reflections, above all in regards to the "Formation Program". Also it emerges from this data that the knowledge of its contents is known to about half the Brothers as we said in the study on question 39. The percentages are almost equal. Regarding question 39, 20% answered negatively and to these we add the 14.3% of the "no reply" to make it something like 34.3% close to the actual 38.5%.

The Brothers' knowledge about the centres of formation (80.1%) in their own Province appears very high, touching on 811 Brothers; especially in the zones of Latin America (89.5), Central Europe (87.8%), Africa (84.5%), and the younger Brothers (89.1%) and the 36-55 age group (88.9%), the General and Provincial governments (87.4%), the formators (88.6%), the graduates (87.8%) and the Priors (84.7%).

Less knowledgeable of the fact are the Brothers in the USA (46.7%) and Asia (75.6%), as also among the most elderly in age and by religious profession.

The Brothers in formation (72.9%) have a good knowledge of the fact, even if inferior to that of the respective Centres of formation. Certainly it is very difficult to know all the Brothers in formation, especially the younger ones, nevertheless the percentage is still high and adequate. Obviously the younger Brothers (85.8%) have a higher percentage, also with 13 higher points, presumably treating of themselves and contemporaries or of the same generation. Equally high (and perhaps discountable) are the percentages of the General and Provincial governments (86.2%) and of the formators (87.1%); in comparison to the Priors who were less so (74.3%). The zones showing greater knowledge of a strong vocational impact of the Brothers in formation are in the newer regions of Africa (84.5%) and Asia (79.5%), while it appears to be very low in the USA (45%) and Southern Europe (69.5%).

Tab. 5.16 Knowledge of the “Formation Program” in regards to the formation of the Brothers. Distributed in geographic regions (in V.A. and percentage)

	Zone of Origin						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	122	53	19	10	12	10	18
	12.1	13.9	10.1	11.9	7.0	7.9	30.0
Yes	500	175	99	40	102	71	13
	49.4	46.1	52.4	47.6	59.3	55.9	21.7
No	390	152	71	34	58	46	29
	38.5	40.0	37.6	40.5	33.7	36.2	48.3

Finally, a relatively limited knowledge of the “Formation Program” is acknowledged by little less than only half of the Brothers interviewed (49.4%). Higher however, are the Brothers in Latin America (59.3%), Asia (55.9%), Central Europe (52.4%) and much less in the USA (21.4%). Obviously a greater knowledge exists among the General and Provincial governments (82.8%), but this is down when it comes to the Priors (54.1%), while it is better among the vocational formators where it reaches 64.3% of the total; and the younger Brothers and the 36-55 age group are 57.7% respectively of former and 61.2% among the latter, both being higher than the average.

Tab.5.17 Knowledge of the “Formation Program” regarding the Brothers in formation. Distributed by age and religious profession (in V.A. and percentage)

Age Years professed
 |TOTAL| 18-35| 36-55| 56-74| 75-96|Fino a| 6-25 | 26-50| over 50

T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
*Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No Reply	122	19	14	54	34	18	11	53	39
	12.1	7.9	4.6	16.7	25.8	8.7	3.9	15.2	26.4
Yes	500	138	188	134	34	123	157	161	41
	49.4	57.7	61.2	41.4	25.8	59.1	56.1	46.1	27.7
No	390	82	105	136	64	67	112	135	68
	38.5	34.3	34.2	42.0	48.5	32.2	40.0	38.7	45.9

In conclusion, we maintain that there is some carelessness confirmed in the knowledge and realization of the “Formation Program” at almost all levels; especially in the USA and among those not involved with formation or to positions of responsibility. A good idea of the problems of formation is found among the younger Brothers and the 36-55 age groups, and of course among the same formators themselves.

3. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE (questions 43-44)

Here we will explore to what degree the Brothers perceive the state, competence and quality of formation in the Order.

We have looked into the way formators are chosen, the evaluation on their capabilities and their preparation in the different aspects of theology, spirituality of the Order and the human sciences. Also the way the Order’s formators interact with the formators of other congregations, question 43 sought to question the quality of formation they impart. This covers the range of alternatives proposals to the question to better understand the most specific and problematic obstacles the different communities face on the global level.

Table 5.18 shows us the complete global picture with a schematic, quantitative and qualitative synthesis (given in average percentages) of the global result received in the answers the Brothers gave. It answers the question: *“Do you think the formators are suitably trained to fulfil their task?”*

The results received tell us that the Brothers indicate a positive evaluation of the excellence (*much* = one average point). That is quite a positive evaluation, and the *“enough”* replies brings this up to an average of two points, relatively more positive (cfr, M:2.05; M:2.13); the others are somewhat more outdistanced, *“little”* (M:2.24, M:2.35, M:2.36) and *“none”* M: 2.50.

On the other hand, we also notice as the percentages of the *“enough”* column are between 37% and 43% higher than those of the column four *“little”* which went from 19% to 29%. Therefore if the judgments of excellence are low, those who were totally negative were even lower.

Tab. 5.18. The Brothers judgments of the adequacy of the formation imparted by the formators in respect to various problems (in percentage and average points)

Adequate formation in....	<i>No reply.</i>	Much	Enough	<i>little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Average</i>
1. Multi-ethnic composition in our community	15.9	11.6	37.5	28.0	7.0	2.36
2. Cultural specifications of formators	19.2	9.0	38.5	29.3	4.0	2.35
3. Mobility required by obedience	19.9	12.3	40.2	24.0	3.7	2.24
4. Adaptability required for the hospitaller mission .	17.9	15.4	43.1	21.0	2.6	2.13
5. Personal responsibility	18.6	19.3	40.5	19.6	2.1	2.05*

3.1. Global analysis

The table above shows a relatively critical note that immediately emerges with the high percentage of Brothers who did not answer the question (from 15.9% to 19.9%). Consequently we don't know anything about their opinions and we should keep this in mind regarding more serious judgments.

It could be that this absence of answers showing such high percentages related to the Brothers over 75 years of age, who abstained from giving an answer according to a percentage that has gone from 37.9% to 50.8% in all five questions itemised. This influence therefore is quite a lot but it should not take away the value of the answers of the Brothers in the last table as this indirectly guarantees that the Brothers who did reply are those who are more directly active and with the positions of greater responsibility.

In every case the percentages related to positive judgments are always attested around 50% of the Brothers interviewed. To make a judgement this percentage can be considered as a satisfactory answer, as the General government and the General Chapter are responsible for the final decisions.

Finally, as a sign of the seriousness and responsibility with which the Brothers have answered, it is certain that the facts have been well considered and the answers were not given at random indifferently for the last item of the question to get the lowest percentages. In fact the judgment of the Brothers is positively polarized with the higher positive percentage in the last item of the table.

In other words, in regards to the way formators are trained almost 60% of the Brothers marked the question on the formation of the young Brothers to a personal responsibility (59.8%). In this sector there is the highest percentage of excellence (19.3%), and also a small percentage of criticisms and reservations (21.7%).

Formation required to be suitable for the hospitaller mission (58.5%) was judged to be “*enough*”. Also coming close to the preceding one, was the column of the excellent (15.4%) passing into second place, while the total percentage (inclusive of *much + enough*) was a higher percentage of the column of the sufficiency (43.1%). The critical reservations climbed to 23.6%.

There is less satisfaction regarding obedience and readiness to accept this responsibility (mobility) (52.3%). Only one in ten Brothers believes the training is adequate. The criticisms are more consistent rising to 27.7%.

There is less agreement regarding the *specific cultural formation of the young Brothers* (47.5%), and the negative reservations reach a third of the Brothers (33.3%) while the percentage of excellent touches the absolute minima (9%).

Like the above, there appears to be *dissatisfaction with the way formation is characterised in the communities due to the multi-ethnicity of the Brothers* (49.1%).

It seems therefore, that the inter-cultural character of the various communities is now emerging as a problem. There is a difficulty to keep in mind that the greater presence of Brothers coming from different parts of the world creates a delicate situation; 35% of the criticisms received clearly underlined this. It deals with a problematic aspect that has already been stated in the “Formation Program” (cfr. Introduction, and art.33,70b).

On the other hand, when one looks then at the following question #44 that asks *is there a realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation*, 51.1% of the Brothers replied that there is not. Even should there be one, a quarter of Brothers hypothesised the possibility of different practicable alternatives (24.2% said yes).

3.2 Further Examination

By studying the results of the details offered us by the cross-sections of the replies, we can now sort out the categories of where the Brothers are most concerned for the various situations causing problems in the Order.

Primarily formation was considered to be suitable and beneficial for *offering personal responsibility* (59.8%, equal to 605 Brothers). To this is added 50.8% of the elderly Brothers and those over 56 years of age (equal to 154); those who did not reply and those who criticised 21.7% were equal to 219 Brothers. Finally, regarding this problem, there was a lower percentage and some rather radical criticisms by the Brothers (2.1% did not reply) while a higher percentage said it was excellent (19.3% *much*).

Especially was a consensus from Asia (80.3%), Africa (66.7%), Latin America (65.1%), Central Europe (61.9%), the USA (51.7%), and from Southern Europe 49.2%. The younger Brothers were positive 75.3% in comparison to the 36-55 age group 60.1%; the graduates 67.4%, the diploma holders 58.9%; the General and Provincial governments 67%, the formators 82.9% and the Priors 54.9%. Criticism came from 28.9% of the Brothers but less from the General and Provincial governments (16.1%).

Other criticisms came from Africa (27.4%), of Central Europe (23,3%), Latin America (23.2%), Southern Europe (21.6%), the USA 16. 6%, Asia 15.8% and Brothers in the two higher age groups.

Formation required by the hospitaller mission (58.5%) is seen a little lower than the above. The two percentages are almost similar with only a little more than a point percentage between them, so it seems that this section is pretty well taken care of, even though the data for “excellent” is 4 points less than the preceding one with the “*enough*” column is 43.1%. More in

favour are the Brothers in Asia (28.3%), the Africa (50%), but the strongest criticisms are from the USA.

Globally considered (*much + enough*) come from Asia (75.5%), Africa (70.2%), Latin America (66.3%), Central Europe (60.3%), Southern Europe (47.6%) and finally from the USA (46.7%). The younger Brothers are also 73.2% and the General and Provincial governments 75.8% and formators 80%. Not as many of the Priors (favourable in only 54.9% cases).

Between them the greatest number of criticisms (29.3%) come to an average of the 23.6%, these include Southern Europe, the USA, the middle aged Brothers (24-25%) and above all from the 36-55 age group and the graduates (24.2%).

A readiness to accept the task of formation as required by obedience (52.5%) was answered by the majority of Brothers. But it also brought in a great number who did not reply (19.9%); not only from among the most elderly (48.5%), but also the 56-74 age group (29.3%). Nevertheless more than half the Brothers seem satisfied with the results, especially in Asia 71.6%, Central Europe 63%, Africa 58.4%, Latin America 55.2%, the USA 45% of USA and Southern Europe 39.4%. The greatest criticism (28.7%) came from Africa (34.5%), and Latin America (31.4%). As it seems the percentages are rather diversified. This means a disparity of evaluations among the geographical zones and perhaps pointing to a deeper ideological difference.

Obviously the younger Brothers in formation are satisfied (65.3%), as also the formators themselves (70%); not so some of the Priors who were positive in the 53.3% of the cases, but critical in 31.1%, together with the graduates (32.6%), and General and Provincial governments (28.7%) who were more critical in comparison to the general average of 27.7%.

Formation suitable for multi-ethnic communities (49.1%) constitutes a challenge that the St. John of God Brothers have to face along with a many other congregations that have accepted religious from foreign countries with different cultures. Those who were negative in this matter were the “*no reply*” group (15.9%) with relatively lower in percentage than the others. Nevertheless we also have a higher critical reservation group (35%) on the global scale (*little + none*) and a negative evaluation totalling (*none*: 7%). In other words, this seems to be one of the problems still to be discovered and given further attention and decisive action.

The greatest part of the positive judgments above come from the Brothers in Asia (70.9%), with very high percentage, in comparison to the others who were also positive but somewhat cautious, such as Africa (58.4%), Latin America (55.8%), Central Europe (54.5%), the USA (40%) and finally Southern Europe (35.5%). More satisfied were the younger Brothers (65.2%) and the formators (71.5%). Also the General and Provincial governments in 54% of the cases were satisfied enough, but a third of the Brothers were more notably critical (33.3%). The Priors showed reservations with a greater percentage (40.1%).

The Brothers who claim formation is inadequate and also those who held reservations, come from Southern Europe (40%), Africa (39.1%), Latin America (35.5%), Central Europe (32.8%), the 36-55 age group (39.1%) and the graduates (39%).

Finally, what appears to be the most urgent thing to confront in formation is to be become much more attuned and sensitive to *the cultural needs of those in formation (47.5%)*, and to always keep in mind the different regions and countries of their origin. Observed in another way, this subject is substantially seen to confirm the urgency to confront this situation attentively and

carefully with special concern regarding problems of inter-cultural communities that are now becoming more and more prevalent. Again we repeat the invariable positive and negative characteristics observed in the Brothers' answers. The Brothers who appear to be quite satisfied come from Asia (64.6%), Central Europe (53.4%), Latin America (51.2%), the USA (46.7%) and Southern Europe (37.9%).

Africa showed the most critical and negative judgments (47.6%) outweighing the positive replies (45.2%). Perhaps the characteristic expression of the Brothers' greatest resistances was probably to indicate the need for a more explicit way to confront a proper integration of cultures into the charism of the Founder in the various countries and cultures throughout the world.

The 36-55 age group which was always negative in the preceding items, seem to be somewhat positive here (57.7%), just a little more than the younger Brothers (56.1%). Added to this are the General and Provincial governments (55.1%) and the formators 70%.

Less in agreement and with rather notable criticism, were the Brothers in Africa, Latin America (37.8%), Southern Europe (31.6%), and Asia (31.5%); not so much however was the USA (23.3%). Reservations were expressed by the 56-74 age group (32.1%), but above all from the younger Brothers (38.9%) and the 36-55 age group (34.9%), the technicians (37.3%), the graduates (34.5%), and the Priors (33.8%) who were usually quite negative with all the other items associated with this question.

Less in agreement and more critical were the Brothers in Latin America (37.8%), Southern Europe (31.6%), Asia (31.5%) while the USA was negligible (23.3%). Other reservations were expressed by the 56-74 age group (32.1%), but above all from 38.9% of the younger Brothers and the 36-55 age group 34.9%, the graduates 37.3% the major superiors 34.5% and the Priors (33.8%) usually rather negative in the other items of this question.

To arrive at a synthesis, that keeps in mind the different emergent replies from the study of the varied categories of Brothers, we can now individualise from among the most critical and less satisfied Brothers in Southern Europe, Africa, the Priors, the graduates and of the most elderly.

Among the most satisfied replies expressing positive judgments were the younger Brothers, the formators and the General and Provincial governments, which nevertheless sometimes raise critical observations that are rather stimulating.

3.4 Inter-provincial centres of formation (question 44)

Following the preceding question the discourse moves to the future of the inter-provincial centres of formation and the restructuring of an existing centre to fulfil this role and problems that may arise.

How to strengthen the existing centres in their places of origin? How to unify them? Incorporate them? What criteria to use? These seem to be the implicit questions that are at the base of this question and the Brothers are faced with some difficult decisions to make.

Over half (51.1%) the Brothers say there is no realistic alternative solution to the question of inter-provincial centres of formation.

However about a quarter say that they should be attempted (24.2%) and 60% (equal to 147 out of 245) said it should be decidedly worth considering. There is nevertheless as many as 24.7% of the Brothers who say they don't know and offer no suggestions as the following table shows.

<i>“Does a realistic alternative exist for inter-provincial centres of formation?”</i>		
	%	V.A.
YES	24.2	245
NO	51.1	517
Don't know	24.7	250

(if YES, what do you propose?)
60% of the 147 Brothers gave suggestions)

Brothers who say that there is no realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation (51.1%) come from the geographical zones of Europe: 45.3% of the Brothers in Southern Europe, equal to 172 Brothers and 63% in Central Europe, equal to 119 Brothers. There are also 78% in Asia, equal to 99 Brothers, and 32% in Latin America, equal to 55 Brothers, as can be seen in Tab. 5.19.

Tab. 5.19 - Brothers' judgments on a realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation. Distributed in geographical zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	Zones of origin						
	TOTAL	S.Europ	C.Europ	Africa	Lat.Ame	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	250	123	24	15	54	9	25
	24.7	32.4	12.7	17.9	31.4	7.1	41.7
Yes	245	85	46	29	63	19	3
	24.2	22.4	24.3	34.5	36.6	15.0	5.0
No	517	172	119	40	55	99	32
	51.1	45.3	63.0	47.6	32.0	78.0	53.3

On the subject of the age groups, we find negative replies to be 2%, especially from the Brothers in the two intermediary age groups. In the years of profession we see in Tab. 5.20, 50.6% of the younger Brothers.

Tab. 5.20 - Brothers' judgments on a realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation. Distributed in geographical zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	Age group					Years of profession			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	1 - 5	6-25	26-50	50 +
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
*Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	250	45	53	92	57	37	43	95	66
	24.7	18.8	17.3	28.4	43.2	17.8	15.4	27.2	44.6
Yes	245	73	79	62	28	63	79	66	30
	24.2	30.5	25.7	19.1	21.2	30.3	28.2	18.9	20.3
No	517	121	175	170	47	108	158	188	52
	51.1	50.6	57.0	52.5	35.6	51.9	56.4	53.9	35.1

More than the half (57.5%) of the General and Provincial governments were negative, but 54.1% of the Priors had a higher percentage than the average (51.1%). Analogous percentages also came from graduates (54.7%), equal to 94 Brothers as seen in the table below.

Tab. 5.21 – The Brothers' judgments on a realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation. Distributed by positions held. (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P Govt.	Forma	None	
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	250	18	43	11	178
	24.7	20.7	19.4	15.7	28.1
Yes	245	19	59	29	138
	24.2	21.8	26.6	41.4	21.8
No	517	50	120	30	317
	51.1	57.5	54.1	42.9	50.1

The formators and vocation promoters seem to be divided into two groups equally distributed among those in favour and those to the contrary (29 Brothers, equal to 41.4%) in favour and to the contrary (30 Brothers, equal to 42.9%). A group of some 245 Brothers affirm that there can be a realistic alternative to the inter-provincial centres of formation (24.2%).

Brothers with a much higher percentage than the average, come from Latin America (36.6%, equal to 63 Brothers), Africa (34.5%, equal to 29 Brothers), Central Europe (24.3%, equal to 46 Brothers) and Southern Europe (22.4% equal to 85 Brothers). Joined with these come 30.5% the younger Brothers and the 36-55 age group 25.7%. The General and Provincial governments are 21.8% (equal to 19 Brothers) the Priors (59 Brothers equal to 26.6%), the formators and vocation promoters (41.4%).

Divided into two groups are the vocation promoters (29 Brothers, equal to 41.4%) and in favour while contrary (30 Brothers. equal to 42.9%). 245 Brothers expressly affirm that there *may be a realistic alternative to the inter-provincial centres of formation (24.2%)*.

With high percentages are the Brothers in Latin America (36.6%, equal to 63 Brothers), Africa (34.5%, equal to 29 Brothers), Central Europe (24.3%, equal to 46 Brothers), and Southern Europe (22.4% equal to 85 Brothers). Then come the younger Brothers at 30.5% and 36-55 age group with 25.7%. Among these who think there might be a possibility are 19 Brothers of the General and Provincial governments, equal to the 21.8%. Then come the Priors (59 Brothers, equal to 26.6%), but those who think this might be possible are the formators and vocation promoters (41.4%). This hypothesis is thought to be feasibility (147 Brothers out of 245) so it would be advisable to debate the subject much further.

As Tab.5.22 shows the greater part of the Brothers expressing this view come from Southern Europe, Latin America, Africa and from Central Europe. Also the 56 age group the younger Brothers and 36-55 age group, the graduates (30 Brothers), 15 Brothers in the General and Provincial governments, 31 Priors and 25 formators. There are also (76 out of 147) Brothers who had never held a position of responsibility.

Tab. 5.22 – The Brothers' judgments on a realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation. Distributed by geographic zones (in V.A. and percentage)

GEOGRAPHIC ZONES							
	TOTAL	S.Europe	C.Europe	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L I	245	85	46	29	63	19	3
*Percentage	100.0	34.7	18.8	11.8	25.7	7.8	1.2
No reply	98	27	23	10	24	13	1
	40.0	31.8	50.0	34.5	38.1	68.4	33.3
Suggestions	147	58	23	19	39	6	2
	60.0	68.2	50.0	65.5	61.9	31.6	66.7

Tab. 5.23 – Suggestions of a hypothesis of feasibility for alternatives to an inter-provincial centre of formation, distributed by age and profession (in V.A. and percentage)

	Age Group					Years professed			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	1 - 5	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	245	73	79	62	28	63	79	66	30
Percentage	100.0	29.8	32.2	25.3	11.4	25.7	32.2	26.9	12.2
No reply	98	24	33	25	15	20	32	26	16
	40.0	32.9	41.8	40.3	53.6	31.7	40.5	39.4	53.3
Suggestions	147	49	46	37	13	43	47	40	14
	60.0	67.1	58.2	59.7	46.4	68.3	59.5	60.6	46.7

Tab. 5.24 – Suggestions of an hypothesis of feasibility for alternatives to an inter-provincial centre of formation, distributed by positions held (in V.A. and percentage).

OFFICE HELD

	TOTAL	G&P.Gv	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	245	19	59	29	138
*Percentage	100.0	7.8	24.1	11.8	56.3
No reply	98	4	28	4	62
	40.0	21.1	47.5	13.8	44.9
Suggestions	147	15	31	25	76
	60.0	78.9	52.5	86.2	55.1

In synthesis, the answer to the question on the difficulty to find an alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation seems to be quite clear enough. Over half the Brothers find no alternatives, although over a quarter sent in suggestions with alternative hypothesis which eventually will be considered. These suggestions are at the disposition of the superiors responsible for the questionnaires.

4. CONCLUSION

The fundamental importance of the training of formators is recognised by the Commission which sees three distinct choices; the presence and a specific preparation for formators; the support and the experience-sharing as the responsibility of all the Brothers; and the hypotheses of future the new orientations in religious and social demands of a formation that are suitable for the present time.

The Brothers' answers regarding the present situation of formators does not seem very encouraging. In fact not all the Provinces seem to have a formation team. Half the Brothers expressly declare the existence and the active presence of one, but as many as 14% say it does not exist in their Province. Fewer less than a third recognise that they have no knowledge of one. This indicates the amount of interest shown towards the problem of vocations. This could infer a sort of indifference, but also a weakness of the awareness to the situation by the Brothers throughout the whole Order. The most attentive and involved seem to be the mission countries. Since they are probably more concerned with explicit programs of formation and perhaps also a greater number of vocations to have formation. Projects of a good formation of young men in these countries are translated in a more careful and prudent choice of formators

The Brothers lament the *inadequate quality of formation, not only theologically and spiritually, but also in humanistic formation* for a sound preparation based upon the specific spirituality of the Order. A constant element of dissatisfaction comes to notice and this arrives from about a third of the Brothers. This suggests that it would be good to propose the development of a double series of actions to be taken: the first to be directed toward the establishment of a more intense formation within the human and theological sciences; the second to become better informed of the vocational problem within the Order. This would involve all the Brothers in a process of co-responsibility that would assure the formators that they are not isolated. Such general support would stimulate their enthusiasm to undertake a more specific preparation for their responsibilities perceiving the difficult role that they must fulfil.

Here we observe a constant and persistent criticism by the local Prior and the 36-55 age group as, obviously, being the first parties to realise the presence of the situation since they work so closely with the formators and those under their charge. The judgments of the General and Provincial governments are more positive regarding the formators and young Brothers.

There are *meetings of the formators within the Order but very little contact or meetings with formators of other Orders and congregations*. This limits the information that they could receive. It seems that there is poor communication to inform the Provincial and local Prior regarding such meetings. This does not help the circulation of information in the sector of the vocations and the training of formators.

Communicating and diffusing this information to the Brothers of the Order is the way to discover that, in regards to the “Formation Program”, there are two out of three Brothers with some generalised knowledge of its contents, especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia, but much still remains to be achieved.

Over half the Brothers interviewed said they were applying the “Formation Program” at some level, but a good third (almost 40%: 250 out of 290 Brothers) confessed to showing some resistance, carelessness and negligence (*little + none*). This shows that the “Formation Program” has *still a long way to go*, at least for about half Brothers. The more positive answers came from the Priors, the USA, Asia and Central Europe, the younger Brothers, the graduates and the formators.

On the other hand only about half the formators are dedicated full-time to formation because they hold other positions as well. This occurs especially in Africa and Latin America. More fortunate however are the 21.2% of the Brothers who are full-time formators and these occur in Asia and Central Europe.

It is in the Order’s best interests that the “Formation Program” be fully implemented in its centres of formation. The Brothers show the most elementary sign of the degree of information and interest towards the formative and vocational sector. From this data comes a confirmation of our preceding reflections, above all as it regards the “Formation Program”, and it should also be known especially to those not involved with it.

While knowledge of the Brothers in formation (72.9%) in the centres of formation (80.1%) within each Province is relatively limited and appears to be show a lack of knowledge in regards to the “Formation Program” (49.4%) which is a number that doesn't even reach half the number of Brothers interviewed. It is certain that there is not much interest in the “Formation Program” in the USA and among the Brothers who do not hold positions of responsibility. The younger Brothers and those in the 36-55 age group, and of course, the formators themselves, have a good idea of the problems facing formation.

The attention of the major superiors is mostly concentrated upon the concrete contents of formation and its adequacy to accept the new challenges are proposed in questions 43 and 44.

The correct recognition of the results received show that personal responsibility in adapting to the hospitaller mission is required and this demands a readiness to go where obedience calls. But there still remains some concern regarding the last two challenges, those of formation in step with the cultural needs of young people and the multi-ethnic communities that are springing up more frequently in various countries and cultures.

This deals with a problematic aspect that was previously anticipated in the “Formation Program” (cfr. Introduction and art. 33°, 70b), however a suitable solution has yet to be found, seeing that more than half the Brothers (51.1%) maintain that there is no realistic alternative to inter-provincial centres of formation.

CHAPER SIX

VOCATION PROMOTION

HOW IT IS PERCEIVED AND FUNCTIONS

An analysis of the actual state of formation in the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God appears to be very articulated and complex. It starts with a general view of the distribution of the Brothers interviewed in their different roles and characteristic structures according to age, residence and academic titles. Then we study the results of the principal characteristics of religious consecration realised in the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and hospitality. We look at the evaluation of the charism and the most specific mission of the Order, and the new role that each St. John of God Brother is endeavouring to live. This starts with his initial and permanent formation, his relationship with the co-workers and in his appointment in pastoral care in the field of health. This itinerary holds a place of great importance that is implicit in the community's rhythm of prayer, fraternal life, and its religious and apostolic vibrancy. The last mentioned covers an itinerary that embraces the training of formators and implementation of the contents of the Order's "*Formation Program*" and formation structures.

In this sixth chapter we make an analysis of vocation promotion and the way it is undertaken. Vocation promotion is the concern of every Province and community and its importance cannot be overstated. Later we will show the contribution of the proposals suggested by all the Brothers for the improvement of vocation promotion and the problem it faces.

This deals with a very important matter, because its specific focuses strongly upon the "Formation Program" (##.98-102), where it specifies the nature (##.98-99), general objective (#.100), specific objectives (#.101) and the means to make known the charism of the Order (#.102). Besides, it is what urges us to make a precise investigation into what we intend to look at with regard to the resources and limitations of vocation promotion in each region and Province of the Order.

We have organised the questions of this section (## 45-53) maintaining it to be more opportune to reserve the following chapter specifically to the various proposals made by the Brothers regarding improvement and expansion of vocation promotion relating to question 54. Here we intend to develop a description of the way vocation promotion is carried out within the Order; its strengths, trials and present structures. We will analyse this by utilising the various contributions made by the Brothers. We will therefore articulate our reflections, according to the followings points that reflect to a great deal upon the distribution of the questions of the questionnaire that are logically organised regarding this subject:

- 1. Sociological study why vocations are lacking in the different regions (q.45):**
- 2. The duty of every Province regarding vocation promotion (qq.46-48)**
- 3. The lacking and the difficulties confronted in vocation promotion (q.49)**
- 4. The animators of vocation promotion: their preparation and appointment (q.50)**
- 5. The religious community: its importance in vocation promotion (q.51)**
- 6. Availability of Brothers for the duty of vocation promotion (q.52)**
- 7. The charismtic values that the Order proposes to young men today (q.53).**

1. ISSUES WHY VOCATIONS ARE LACKING IN VARIOUS REGIONS AND PROVINCES (question. 45)

This question asks what is the reason for the lack of vocations? It was previously asked for in questions 18 and 26, with which we can now make a few comparisons. However here we tackle the problem in the various geographical zones where the Provinces and Delegations are situated and we look into their various problems. Inevitably this is marked by the different cultural characteristics that vary between the various countries. All are more or less touched by the problem of secularisation that is everywhere in the world today. Each Brother was asked to make an effort to reflect upon the problems that effect their own Province/Delegation: we are aware of certain situations that might have passed unnoticed and therefore could have an effect upon each community.

1.1. Global analysis

We have analysed the results in a detailed way, gathering what each Brother in the various geographical zones has observed. In the first place however, it is necessary and useful to be able to introduce a synthesised global vision of the background and context in which to place the opinions of all the Brothers. At 97.5% they have expressed themselves well on this very thorny subject. The remainders were quite meaningless and only a small group of the 2.5% gave no answer. An amazing socio-cultural context emerges from this picture. The Brothers gave their considered opinions for the phenomenal drop-off in vocations in their own regions.

In fact, the precise question on the causes of the lack of vocations was expressed in the followings terms: *“Among the causes of the lack of vocations, which of these listed below seem to you to be the most prevalent in your Province/Delegation?”*

	%
1. Unfavourable social (secularisation, consumerism, etc)	52.9
2. Loss of a sense of religion in life	42.7
3. Difficulty for young people to commit themselves for life	35.4
4. Youth today has many possibilities and alternatives	30.5
5. Lack of witnessing by some members of the Church	27.3
6. Family problems (divorce, absence of values, etc.)	22.4
7. Lack of valid proposals and attractions on our part	20.6
8. Low birth rate	18.6
9. Lack of dedicated vocation promoters	16.7
10. Others	3.8

The principal reason recognised by all is that *too few Brothers are dedicated to vocation promotion, in fact only 16.7% are*. There are various deeply set reasons to be faced up to and they usually related to socio-cultural factors. These are what are concerning us the most because they are the greatest challenges we have to meet with. There are no excuses, especially saying we are unprepared both psychologically and culturally. Rather we have to appoint mature men to assume this position and they must be Brothers with suitable mental, cultural and religious qualifications. This deals with cultural problems and it requires humility and courage to face up to them. Not only is it imperative to appoint a suitable Brother to this important position, he must also be backed up by a capable team of vocation promoters.

Feelings of impotence and mistrust must be overcome and suitable strategies employed. The Order expects its cultural, religious and Formation Program to employ the means at its disposal, especially in the wake of the methodological instructions on pastoral action and its animation indicated by Pope Benedict XVI when he spoke of confronting the cultural challenges of our time. That means facing facts and doing something concrete about them and not simply talking about the problem in abstract terms.

Returning to our frame of reference, more than half the Brothers have clearly pointed out and recognised the main reason for the lack of the vocations, as being the social environment of secularisation and consumerism (52.9%) that turns away from a life of self-sacrifice and generosity.

You might even say the answer is a seeking for comfort, but this is not so. In fact the second factor that was indicated is less than 10 percentage points behind. This gives the reason as leading to a more substantial and intrinsic loss (cfr. question 22.3) of a religious sense in life (42.7%). We are called to restore this situation in our environment and to create that space in which this religious sense can be still be present, palpable, more visible and stimulating. We are called to a transcendent and spiritual life that is an antidote to the aridity of the spirit produced by technology. This was the thrust of the first Christmas Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI (2005).

Eight points of difference are added to these external sociological reasons for the socio-cultural character that are specifically psychological and internal to the fragile structure of personality in today's young people (cfr. qq 26,4 and 10), that are considered to be the main reason for the difficulties to integrate themselves into the Order. Besides that, they also show *difficulties in permanent commitments (35.4%)*.

Young people today have a lot of other possibilities and alternatives (30.5%) that are stimulated by consumerism and from an ample range of career possibilities. Unfortunately there is the bad example given by some members of the Church (27.3%) and the Brothers are not exempt from this. (Questions 26,6 and 7 and the following comments.)

The difficult conditions that arise from *family problems is well known to the Brothers (22.4%)*; these difficulties include marriage separations and divorce situations that are more and more frequent these days, increasing family conflict amplified by hypersensitivity to an exasperated self realised ambition; a sense of educational void and an absence of values that permeate its ambiance; the promulgation of laws and institutions that do not defend integrity and don't even offer support and resources to face up to increasingly manifold and unique responsibilities.

To this is added the diminution of births (18.6%), and there is no sign of recovering from this situation. And as families are more reduced in number, parents make it difficult for their children to make a vocational choice of the religious or priestly life.

Last but not least, a good fifth of the Brothers state they have no idea on how to go about remedying the problem (20.6%), saying that vocation promoters are just chosen “ad hoc” and that there is a lack even of these (16.7%). If in fact the vocation promotion team in a Province/Delegation maintains the urgency and the sense that vocational responsibility is the concern of the whole Province and each Brother it appears that this is not sufficient to stimulate vocations.

In conclusion, it is very revealing and meaningful to notice that the Brothers are very concerned about the lack of vocations and the difficulties that come with it. The Brothers gave many reasons in their answers, especially to the first two items. The percentages in fact go even further than the first two items and they ask the Order to face up to the facts with wisdom and calmness.

1.2 Further analysis: by zone, age, role

How do the Brothers perceive the gravity of the Order’s difficulties? Is there a uniform vision in the different geographical zones and the apostolic work of the Brothers, their different ages and the roles they fulfil? Does it cover their various cultural levels of human maturation and influence in determining a particular vision of society? Let us look at the interesting differentiation in the Brothers’ various geographical zones of origin.

Table 6.1 and those following give a documentation of the various views.

The vertical reading of each column helps us to classify the importance that each region attributes to be the most serious problem in their own zone set out in percentages ranging from the maximum to the minimum.

The influence of the secularised environment and consumerism is seen to be the major problem by the Brothers in Southern Europe (65.5%) and Central Europe (56.1%), Latin America (47.7%) and Asia (41.7%). It is less considered so by the Brothers in Africa (28.6%) who place this in sixth place behind the lack of witness by some members of the Church (50%), a loss of a sense of religion (36.9%), a lack of vocation promoters (34.5%) and the difficulty young people find in making permanent commitments (34.5%).

The lack of witness from some members of the Church also constituted the first difficulty for the Brothers in Asia (45.7%) who set second to the unfavourable social environment (41.7%) together with the manifold alternatives offered to young people today (41.7%), the loss of a sense of religion (33.9%) and decreased births (32.3%).

For the USA the principal cause of the lack of the vocations is the loss of a sense of religion (50%), and the fact that the young people have other alternatives (40%) or they are not willing to make permanent commitments (40%); only in fourth place do they attribute an unfavourable social environment (35%).

Tab. 6.1 – Causes of the lack of vocations in your Province/Delegation. Distributed by zones of origin (in V.A. and percentage)

	Z O N E of origin						
	TOTAL	S.Eur.	C. Eur	Africa	L.Amer	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	25	14	4	1	4	1	1
	2.5	3.7	2.1	1.2	2.3	.8	1.7
Unfavourable social ambience	535	249	106	24	82	53	21
	52.9	65.5	56.1	28.6	47.7	41.7	35.0
Family problems	227	65	55	25	48	20	14
	22.4	17.1	29.1	29.8	27.9	15.7	23.3
Less births	188	103	30	0	8	41	6
	18.6	27.1	15.9	.0	4.7	32.3	10.0
Loss of sense of religion	432	179	69	31	80	43	30
	42.7	47.1	36.5	36.9	46.5	33.9	50.0
Lacking permanent committment	358	148	73	29	59	25	24
	35.4	38.9	38.6	34.5	34.3	19.7	40.0
Lack of vocation promoters	169	32	30	29	40	31	7
	16.7	8.4	15.9	34.5	23.3	24.4	11.7
Lacking valid proposals	208	78	28	22	32	34	14
	20.6	20.5	14.8	26.2	18.6	26.8	23.3
Other alternatives for youth	309	109	60	16	47	53	24
	30.5	28.7	31.7	19.0	27.3	41.7	40.0
No witness of Church people	276	66	43	42	50	58	17
	27.3	17.4	22.8	50.0	29.1	45.7	28.3

For Latin America the second cause for such lack of vocations is attributed to the loss of a sense of religion in life (46.5%); followed by the difficulty young people find in making permanent commitments (34.3%); then comes the witness given by people of Church (29.1%) and family problems (27.9%).

For Central Europe the greatest difficulty consisted in the unfavourable social environment (56.1%), consumerism and secularisation, followed by the difficulty young people find in making permanent commitments (38.6%); the loss of a sense of religion (36.5%), and family problems (29.1%).

Southern Europe said the primary difficulty was the environment of secularisation and consumerism (65.5%), and put at almost 20 points difference, the loss of a sense of religion (47.1%) and the difficulty young people find in making permanent commitments (38.9%); then the alternatives offers (28.7%) and the diminution of births (27.1%).

It is curious to notice that the diminution of births is given for the lack of vocations (considered only in Southern Europe and Asia). Is it perhaps a problem not being faced up to; (“don’t they really care”).

We now move the focus of our examination into the age groups. What is the opinion of the Brothers from the young ones to the aged? We see this in table 6.2 which shows it in relation to *age and years of profession*.

For all the classes with differentiated percentages the first cause of such a lack is given as the unfavourable social environment of consumerism and secularisation; and the younger age

group put in second place the lack of witness from some members of the Church (41%), but the other ages groups place this from 5th to 8th place.

The classification made by the younger Brothers is far more noticeable than that of the other three groups, because besides the consideration of the preceding observations around the first two factors, and in third place the loss of a real sense of religion (38.5%), there comes the lack of Brothers devoted to vocation promotion (31.8%), and the difficulty young people find in making permanent commitments (29.7%) and family problems (22.2%), the lack of valid proposals (20.1%) and last of all the demographic decrease (10.9%) which is particularly noticed by the over 56 age group.

Tab. 6.2 – Causes of the lack of vocations in your Province/Delegation. Distributed by age groups and years of profession (in V.A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	1 to 5	6-25	26-50	51+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
*Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	25	3	5	8	8	3	1	12	7
	2.5	1.3	1.6	2.5	6.1	1.4	.4	3.4	4.7
Unfavourable social ambience	535	94	151	198	84	84	128	208	97
	52.9	39.3	49.2	61.1	63.6	40.4	45.7	59.6	65.5
Family problems	227	53	54	85	34	41	63	81	41
	22.4	22.2	17.6	26.2	25.8	19.7	22.5	23.2	27.7
Diminution of birth	188	26	47	75	36	21	37	86	38
	18.6	10.9	15.3	23.1	27.3	10.1	13.2	24.6	25.7
Loss of sense of religion	432	92	118	153	63	77	109	165	67
	42.7	38.5	38.4	47.2	47.7	37.0	38.9	47.3	45.3
Lacking permanent committment	358	74	117	119	44	65	100	121	62
	35.4	31.0	38.1	36.7	33.3	31.3	35.7	34.7	41.9
Lack of vocation promoters	169	76	52	33	8	62	56	33	12
-----	16.7	31.8	16.9	10.2	6.1	29.8	20.0	9.5	8.1
Lack of valid proposals	208	48	87	61	12	46	81	66	15
	20.6	20.1	28.3	18.8	9.1	22.1	28.9	18.9	10.1
Other alternatives for youth	309	71	98	100	37	63	89	107	41
	30.5	29.7	31.9	30.9	28.0	30.3	31.8	30.7	27.7
No witness from Church people	276	98	96	61	20	81	94	75	19
	27.3	41.0	31.3	18.8	15.2	38.9	33.6	21.5	12.8
Others	38	5	13	17	3	7	12	15	3
	3.8	2.1	4.2	5.2	2.3	3.4	4.3	4.3	2.0

It is interesting to note that all the age and profession groups are almost the same in saying that the causes are: the unfavourable social environment, the loss of a sense of religion in life, the difficulty young people have in making lasting commitments and also the presence of tempting alternatives.

When our attention is focused upon the roles covered by the Brothers, it is interesting to analyse the priorities attributed by the major and local superiors, the formators and the other Brothers. Also we see emerging the classification attributed to the various items.

All the Brothers place the social environment in first place (above all the major superiors). They put in fourth place the multiplicity of the alternatives offers open to young people (above all from the Priors and of the formators). The Brothers put third place the loss of a sense of religion, preceded however by the difficulty to make permanent commitments.

Family problems fall into the last place along with the demographic decrease (social factors), lack of vocation promoters and the lack of valid and attractive proposals from the Order (religious-congregational factors).

Tab. 6.3 – Causes of the lack of vocations in your Province/Delegation. Distributed by positions held (in V.A. and percentage)

	Office held					
	TOTAL	G&P	Govt	Prior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633	
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5	
No reply	25	0	5	1	19	
	2.5	.0	2.3	1.4	3.0	
Unfavourable social ambience	535	58	122	39	316	
	52.9	66.7	55.0	55.7	49.9	
Family problems	227	22	55	15	135	
	22.4	25.3	24.8	21.4	21.3	
Fewer births	188	20	43	4	121	
	18.6	23.0	19.4	5.7	19.1	
Loss of sense of religion	432	37	84	24	287	
	42.7	42.5	37.8	34.3	45.3	
Young not permanent comitment	358	41	96	23	198	
	35.4	47.1	43.2	32.9	31.3	
Lack of vocation promoters	169	7	36	15	111	
	16.7	8.0	16.2	21.4	17.5	
Lack of valid proposals	208	15	45	15	133	
	20.6	17.2	20.3	21.4	21.0	
Other alternatives offered	309	23	70	24	192	
	30.5	26.4	31.5	34.3	30.3	
No witness from church people	276	22	52	26	176	
	27.3	25.3	23.4	37.1	27.8	
Others	38	3	6	5	24	
	3.8	3.4	2.7	7.1	3.8	

The Priors put the lack of witness by some Church people in the fifth place, while the formators put this in the second place (37.1%), even before the loss of a sense of religion (34.3%).

The classification by the vocational formators sees in the first place the unfavourable social environment (55.7%), in second place is the lack of witness by Church people (37.1%), followed by the loss of the sense of religion (34.3%), then alternative vocation choices and in fifth place the difficulty of young people to make permanent commitments (32.9%).

A similar classification is by the General and Provincial governments who instead present the following course: social environment (66.7%), the difficulty of permanent commitment (47.1%), the loss of a sense of religion (42.5%), the many alternative vocation choices (26.4%) and the lack of witness by people in the Church (25.3%).

Young Brothers in the first five years of profession replied that it is the lack of witness by Church people (41%), the unfavourable social environment (39.3%), the loss of the sense of religion (38.5%), the lack of the vocation promoters (31.8%) and the difficulty of permanent commitments (31%).

1.3. Analytical deepening of the many causes

For a better analysis in depth the single causes of the lack of vocations, we think it necessary to articulate our study on three levels of causes, corresponding to the social, individual and religious points already pointed out.

1. Causes of a socio-cultural type.
2. Causes of a psychological individual type.
3. Causes of a religious-congregational type.

1.3.1. Causes of a socio-cultural kind

We have seen that there is the influence of different causes intervening regarding the lack of the religious vocations. First of all we consider those of a socio-cultural character. These are extensive and studied extensively in sociological literature, and besides, they are quite obvious. Added to this we can insert the phenomena shown in items 1, 2 and 3 related to (1) the social environment, (2) to family problems, (3) to the generalised demographic decrease.

The social environment pervaded by secularisation and consumerism (52.9%) constitutes unfavourable circumstances for an increase in religious vocations. It seems that this is well and truly a fact that is confirmed by a great deal of literature that observes the cultural tendencies of our time; even if it also places side by side themes related to the resurfacing of a sense of the sacred and religious. Even accepting this possible assumption, we nevertheless maintain that this does not seem a sufficient basis for the maturation of a religious choice such as a definitive consecration to God. It seems that it only goes to push the spread of consumerism that holds young people back in a climate of placid acquiescence to the comfort that they already experience.

Above this is observed in Southern Europe (65.5%) and Central Europe (56.1%), Latin America (47.7%), Asia (41.7%), the USA and Africa (28.6%) where these problems have yet to become apparent.

Most in disagreement are the Brothers in the 56 year age group (61.1%), the elderly Brothers (63.6%), and those between 35 and 50 years 49.2%; lesser are the young Brothers (39.3%) with 13 points less in comparison to the average. With the increase of age and with the importance of experience, the percentage grows in what influence is attributed to the social environment upon the individual fragility of young people.

Little influence is attributed to family problems (22.4%). This comes more from Africa (29.8%), Central Europe (29.1%) and Latin America (27.9%), all these three zones put it in the fifth place out of the nine on the scale of importance. Then came the elderly Brothers (25.8%). Next in line come younger Brothers (22.2%); the General and Provincial governments (25.3%), in respect to the formators (21.4%) and the graduates and diploma holders.

The consideration of these social causes is completed by the examination of the factor related to a demographic decrease (18.6%). This occupies the last or the penultimate in the classification of importance. It is mostly observed in the geographical zones of Southern Europe

(27.1%) and Asia (32.3%) where both place it in the fifth place on the scale of importance then came the elderly Brothers and major superiors followed by the young Brothers and formators.

Notwithstanding, just look for example at **the situation in Italy**, and even if this is not very pertinent to the Order (the model is predominantly constituted by lay Brothers), and it is nevertheless worthwhile to know some useful indications of this background drawn up by the most recent sociological researches in Italy.

In Italy the average number of seminarians (philosophers and theologians) is about 3000 a year and average from 18 to 40 years of age. The seminaries are always the same: the vocations are born in numerous families, religious and apprentices, among the young people that frequent the parishes and Catholic action. Only 5 priests out of 100 and 7 seminarists out of 100 are from one child families. The families are of average conditions, neither poor nor well-off, but the family ties are very solid: (84% of the priests and 78% of the seminarians have strong family bonds).

The young men in certain movements within the Church (*Focolari, Neo-Catechumens, Communion and Liberation and Opus Dei*) who go into seminaries run by these same movements. The role of the parish stays central: 98% of priests and 94% of seminarians started as altar servers. Their vocation was discovered thanks to a priest or his mother, important figures in his life of faith, and it grew through varied experiences. 85% of the priests and the 67% of the seminarists felt they had a vocation from childhood. But these days those who enter seminaries are older, often after maturity or university. 83% of the priests and the 76% of the seminarists who were only boys at the time said that their formation was good for them, but the seminarians are children of their times and 6 out of 10 go through moments of crisis.

In conclusion, the prevailing attention of the Brothers is focused upon socio-cultural structures. They tell us not to neglect the judgments that place responsibility upon the educators and formators, as these men must be aware of the psychological makeup of individuals. They are mostly involved with the teaching of formation, and their proposals on vocation promotion, personal relationships and type of guidance need to be shared with every Brother.

1.3.2. Causes of an individual psychological kind

Under this title we understand that factors influencing the lifestyles of young people, the condition and ideals orientating them with the values and systems that psychologically constitute the basis of a certain indifference or insensibility regarding the vocation problem. On the other hand, these values can also be susceptible to a certain positive recuperation through the educational action and the formation that is more individualised, more convincing and important in meaning than the values they previously held. Causes of an individual psychological kind can explain the loss of a sense of religion in life (item 4); such as the difficulty young people find in making permanent commitments (item 5); the plurality and the desirability of alternatives lifestyles offered by the post-modern society and consumerism today (item 8). Let us look at each one separately.

The loss of the sense of religion in life (42.7%) mostly constitutes the second influential cause regarding the lack of the vocations. And it is perfectly comprehensible, since the religious vocation is born in a climate of openness to the transcendent and profoundly mature religious dimension. In view of the fact that this was reported by only 2 out of 5 Brothers, it nevertheless was one of the main factors reported by the Brothers in Southern Europe (47.1%), the USA

(50%) and Latin America (46.5%), all of who put it in first or second place in the general classification. Other geographical areas had lesser percentages, such as Africa (36.9%), Central Europe EC (36.5%) and Asia (33.9%).

All the age groups put this factor in second place, especially by the middle age group (38.4%) and the elderly Brothers (47.7%). Putting it in third place were the young Brothers (38.5%), the General and Provincial governments (42.5%) and Priors (37.8%). These latter placed great value on the factor that young people do not wish to make lasting commitments.

The difficulty that young people find in making permanent commitments (35.4%) occupied the third place in the classification with a good 7 points difference in comparison to the precedent and 5 points high in comparison to the following that speaks of alternative life-choices (30.5%).

The difficulty in taking on permanent choices is underlined above all by the Brothers of Southern Europe (38.9%), the USA (40%) and Central Europe (38.6%), and to a lesser degree in Africa (34.5%), Latin America (34.3%). It falls into 8th place in Asia (19.7%).

All age groups emphasised this, especially the younger group between 36-55 years of age (38.1%) and middle-aged group between 56-74 years (36.7%); much less were the young Brothers (31%, equal to 5th place). The General and Provincial governments (47.1%) and the Priors (43.2%) put it in 2nd place, while the formators put it 5th (32.9%).

Finally, ***the plurality of alternatives offered to the young today (30.5%)*** was considered by less than a third of the Brothers. Asia (41.7%), the USA (40%), Central Europe (31.7%) and Southern Europe (28.7%); very much less were the Brothers in Africa (19%). Regarding the different age groups there appears to be no particular meaningful differences; which serves to point out a certain homogeneity of views, while a remarkable difference emerges in a certain measure with the positions held, especially the formators (34.3%), the Priors (31.5%) and much less by the General and Provincial governments (26.4%).

In conclusion, this second group causes much concern regarding the life-choices of young people. They occupy a high place in the classification, on a global level, and also in relation to the characteristics of the different variables in the geographic zones, and the age groups as well as the positions held, formators, the young Brothers and the areas of Africa and Asia, discounting Europe and the countries of the post-modernity.

1.3.3. Religious-congregational kinds of causes

These factors especially relate to the lifestyles prevalent in the narrow limitations of the Church and the Order. Above all it speaks of the lack of witness amongst those concerned and the risk they run in making a vocation choice meaningless. It even seems to be a sort of inferiority complex that impedes any enthusiasm that is derived from a cheerful consciousness of the value of one's vocation and charism that is lived with passion and generosity. It deals with three situations that more directly influence vocation promotion and the enthusiastic and zealous religious lifestyle lived by the Brothers.

Of the three items that we now consider, the one that frequently pops up is related to the lack of witness by certain members of the Church (27.3%). Above this comes from the Brothers in Africa (50%), Asia (45.7%), the younger Brothers (41%), the two last age groups (15%); the

formators (37.1%) put this in 2nd place as also the General and Provincial governments, (25.3%); the graduates (33.7%) and the diploma holder (25.8%).

Finally we notice that this lack of religious and Christian witness was also pointed out in questions 26.6 and 26.7 regarding the community, and it was classified among the first difficulties met with in the integration of the young Brothers and was also pointed out by a little less than 50% of the Brothers.

The other two items (lack of valid proposals from the Brothers and of suitable personnel) occupy the lowest parts of the classification, between the 8th and 9th places; both on the global level and the various single structural variables. That this falls into the lowest place related to the vocational problems pertinent to the Order really amazes us and makes us wonder.

This makes it difficult to render simple answers since there are so many hypotheses that need to be looked into, and at times these are conflicting, as when the majority of the Brothers say that everything is working well so it is not worth allowing for any change. While others say this should be the superiors' job thereby exonerating them from any responsibility; others think the whole thing is such a novelty they are unprepared to give an answer. We offer a detailed analysis of some of the possible interpretations of the data that comes out of the investigation.

Separately studying these answers we find a lack of valid and attractive proposals (20.6%) sent in by one Brother in five. Probably the most critical, is that of the awareness and importance not to have a closed mind or to be timorous in the vocational proposals. When a Brother is first of all convinced and is enthusiastic about his own vocation, and is brave and open about it, this is clearly a generous outlook that constitutes a real gift and a service to whoever approaches him about it.

This factor is especially seen as a weak point in vocation promotion by the Brothers in Asia (26.8%) and Africa (26.2%), but considered last by those of the Central Europe (14.8%) and the penultimate in Latin America (18.6%).

Concerning the various age groups, the two most elderly came very low, the 36-55 age group (28.3%) came higher with 8 points percentage to the average, which confirms the analysis in the distribution for years of profession.

The Priors and formators emphasise its lack (21.4%) and the Priors (17.2%) also punctuate they are not particularly meaningful. Such sensibility finally seems greater among the 133 Brothers that don't hold any position of responsibility (21%) and put this in 6th place, in comparison to 7th and 8th by the Priors. Probably this problem is something of a surprise to many, for it is time to make a real start in series of planning initiatives.

In regards to the various age groups, while the two most elderly groups held low values, the 36-55 year group is the only one to show much interest in it (28.3%) with a higher percentage of 8 points to the average, which also finds confirmation from the analysis of the distribution for years of profession.

The formators (21.4%) and the Priors (17.2%) furnished results that are not particularly meaningful. Similar results came from the 133 Brothers who do not hold any position of responsibility (21%) who classify this situation in the 6th position in comparison to 7th and 8th by the Priors.

This problem is in all probability a surprise because these days it would be a good thing to give more careful reflection to proposals in starting up complementary planning initiatives.

Some positive data comes last on the list in the classification of these causes, which states that *there are not enough Brothers devoted to the vocation promotion 16.7%*. 84% of the Brothers were convinced that this problem doesn't exist, because the Order already has many formators devoted to vocation promotion.

Anyhow, this lack is particularly felt by a third of the Brothers in Africa (34.5%) and almost a quarter in Asia (24.4%) together with those of Latin America (23.3%). Not so remarkable however is the data from Europe and the USA, the over 56 years age group, the General and Provincial governments (8%), the Priors (16.2%). Not so for the vocation formators (21.4%) nor the young Brothers (31.8%) who present double the percentage to the average, putting this shortage into 4th of importance.

In conclusion, our analyses and reflections seem to be directed to the necessity for a deeper explanation on the items called for in the following question (#.46), and are anticipated here, since 38.5% of the Brothers maintain that vocational co-responsibility by the Brothers is lacking or doesn't exist at all. The next paragraph will treat of the appointments made by each Province and Delegation to adequately confront vocation promotion.

2. THE DUTY OF THE PROVINCES TO FACE UP TO THE PROBLEM OF VOCATION PROMOTION (QUESTIONS 46-48)

The problem of the lack of vocations is crucial for the Church and for the religious Orders and congregations, because it constitutes the basis of their continuity and their development. For this reason we have examined its different dimensions and values within the Order on the levels of conscience, perception, sensibility, responsibility, involvement and strategic organization, as well as on the individual level and also on the level of the different Provinces.

Then, in the development of our reflection, we will firstly study the formalities by which the various Provinces/Delegations endeavour to resolve the problem of the vocation promotion from both a structural and institutional point of view with projects, economic resources, availability of personnel, etc. We will tackle this from both an individual point of view and also community attitudes in regard to a formation of a favourable climate to foster and care for vocations. Later we will verify the concrete reality of these affirmations around the real availability within the Provinces of a Brother or a team of Brothers involved with vocation promotion.

First of all, question # 46 testifies to the vast range of situations in which the Brothers were interviewed and have been consulted (Tab.6.4); and the different programs or plans the various Provinces/Delegations are confronting vocation promotion. Some Brothers replied their opinions on how the Order should go about this problem on a global scale. The items have been placed according to a hierarchy of priorities based upon an average obtained by the statistical analysis.

2.1. Global analysis

The global study of the data notices the presence of a not too negligible percentage of Brothers who did not send in any reply: it varied between 9.5% and 17.6%. Among the elderly

Brothers this average reaches 43.2% points. In every case the answers received, especially from the young and middle-aged Brothers, permit us to formulate some subsequent judgments that are based on legitimately appraised replies, since they are mostly expressed by the Brothers who are active and more involved in these vocational projects.

Tab. 6.4 Introducing a global synthesis in percentages and average points.

What emerges first appears to be verified by three quarters of the Brothers who maintain that the problem of vocation promotion is confronted by the various Provinces with a quite a lot of worry (72.9%). Only 17.7% of the Brothers have rather divergent evaluations, manifesting criticisms and reserves, certainly not very radical, but rather of a certain consistence.

Opposition to this confirms the preceding data. In fact only 17.7% of the Brothers say that this matter is confronted with *much (3.6%) or enough (14.1%) concern*, in comparison to 67.3% who partially or totally dissent from similar judgments. In fact in the Tab.6.4 this attitude occupies the last place in the classification. Besides, it is discarded among the percentages of the two items given here by the increase of the “*no reply*” equal to 15%, in comparison to the 9.5% in the first item. In other words, the problem of vocation promotion in the various Provinces/Delegations is generally perceived as very worrying.

This concern is expressed by *the support of the major superiors (68.2%)* and more than two thirds of the Brothers, although only 17.2% of the Brothers are more critical and they seem to constitute enough influence to stand in the way by divergent evaluations and criticisms.

Support for Brothers responsible for vocation promotion is recognised by 65.2% of the Brothers. Also in this regard, the percentage of the critical reservations is attested to by 19.4%, including many more dissatisfied Brothers (6.6%). Nevertheless there are ample economic resources for the purpose of vocation promotion, but this is rarely accompanied by different activities as affirmed by 61% of Brothers, but it is denied by 22.8%.

It seems then, that while 60.8% of the Brothers show a responsive view of the problem of the vocation promotion, 27%, that is more than a quarter, express a negative and pessimistic response.

Tab. 6.4 – In what way is your Province or Delegation confronting the problem of vocation promotion? (In percentages and averages)

	No reply	Much	Enoug h	Little	None	Aver.
1. Greatly worried	9.5	29.0	43.9	14.7	3.0	1.91*
2. Enough support from the Provincial Government	14.6	25.6	42.6	13.3	3.9	1.95
3. It is delegated to those responsible	14.3	24.2	41.0	13.8	6.6	2.03
4. Economic support and activities sufficient	16.2	20.5	40.5	17.8	5.0	2.09
5. The Brothers are concerned	12.3	17.1	43.7	24.5	2.5	2.14
6. It develops to a Provincial program	17.6	16.2	42.4	19.8	4.1	2.14
7. The Brothers are co-responsible	13.6	10.1	37.7	34.0	4.5	2.38
8. The Brothers are co-involved in the program	12.5	8.1	30.4	41.5	7.7	2.55
9. It is a subject rarely spoken about	14.7	8.3	31.8	28.2	17.0	2.63
10. There is co-involvement by the Brothers and others	14.7	3.0	15.8	44.0	22.5	3.01
11. With indifference	15.0	3.6	14.1	31.5	35.8	3.17

If finally, besides the particular sensibility and interest shown, the percentages of co-responsibility decrease so as not to reach even half the Brothers (47.8%). Rather they are still lower by more than 10 points when it comes to direct involvement and vocation promotion projects of the Province (38.5%). Here the group of those who are critical is more numerous and reaches almost half (49.2%) of the Brothers.

Such percentages subsequently grow to reach as many as two thirds of the Brothers who openly declare a partial or total absence of involvement in vocation promotion and that by lay co-workers and outsiders is 66.5%.

Nevertheless, 58.6% maintain that vocation promotion develops according to the plan of the Province/Delegation, and that it is subject of information and conversation among the Brothers (45.2%). However, a good 40.1% deny this is so. Regarding the fact that this subject is spoken about much or little, both versions came up with almost similar percentages, which makes one think that such a problem is, at least in some zones, just passed over in silence and swept under the mat.

In synthesis, it seems to us that on an economic and institutional level some vocation projects are occurring, even if not in all the Provinces/Delegations, and perhaps not always with the same intensity. If in fact we examine the first 6 items of Tab.6.4, we can observe very high percentages for the interest and care shown in studying this problem in all its aspects: there is the support of the Provincial governments and the vocation promoters for a Provincial project and economic resources for the various promotional activities. However the personal involvement of the other Brothers is rather limited.

On the individual level, at least in 60% of the Brothers pronounce sensitivity to the problem. However, they ascertain a strong decrease in the percentages of co-responsibility and operational involvement both by Brothers and co-workers. At the same time they also lament that there is hardly any openness or general information on the various aspects of the problem. This is a widely discussed subject among the Brothers and shows that they are interested in the initiatives undertaken in the different geographical zones. Perhaps a lot of initiatives are veiled by a certain silence and are not made public, thereby blocking an awareness and well informed situation within the Order. A diffusion of a more direct knowledge of the vocational initiatives will in fact contribute to create knowledge and develop interest. It will also strengthen our image and religious identity towards society, and to further maintain the sensibility of our lay co-workers.

To sum up, it seems that to have a structural, economic and institutional level is much needed for a notable and binding breakthrough to arouse attitudes of co-operation and communication of more explicit information. Knowledge creates identity and stimulates enthusiasm. The lack of this is felt with some certain bitterness and suffering, testified in a particular way by the steady and constant group of Brothers whose criticism, perhaps also provoked from their point of view, speaks of a lack of co-responsibility and involvement in vocation promotion. This is not so much on an institutional and structural level, but rather more on the personal and individual level of each Brother.

2.2 A deepening of the analysis by various structures: zone, age, roles.

A more detailed and diversified study of the different types of variables will allow us to individualise where they accrue weak points and gaps, and where greater resources and the positive aspects may be found instead.

2.2.1. Prevalence of the vocational resources

Here we intend to individualise the positive aspects substantially emerged from the survey of question 46. Here is a series of dimensions and resources constituting what can be utilised and strengthened in vocation promotion.

First of all the *individual and personal level* is founded upon that positive, real and generalised concern about the problem confronting the Brothers to which they give much attention. They say this is confirmed by the indifference shown for this matter, and that communication of information is also very scarce. Nevertheless this is a subject that the Brothers always talk about.

Next there is the *institutional and structural level* which is clearly an open and positive availability of the Provincial government that has to support and put the various initiatives into place; and ascertain both the economic resources to be made available to the vocational promotion personnel and others who support them.

Now we move on to a more detailed analysis. We will review the various aspects by studying first the positive aspects that are present in the culture, and in the general sensibility of the Brothers and the communities. Then we will introduce the structural and institutional resources to be used by the superiors.

2.2.1.1. Vocational resources on the personal level

Vocational resources on the personal level are the positive behavioural attitudes towards vocation promotion. They constitute a good premise to a constructive appointment of sensibility, availability, interest, caring, sharing and the development of growth in the Province and the Order and favour the spirit of vocation. Seen this way the context of the subject we are studying acquires value and meaning.

72.9% of the Brothers maintain that their own Province/Delegation is facing a major worry with the problem of vocation promotion. This is felt in a very particular way by the Brothers in Central Europe (75.1%), Asia (85.1%) , Southern Europe (68.9%), 60.6% of the elderly Brothers and 76.2% of the younger ones. However, the Brothers of the middle-aged group are also the most critical (20.9% in comparison to 17.7% of the average). The General and Provincial governments are worried about it (75.9%), as also the Priors (76.1%) and 82.9% of the vocational promoters. Most critical are the Brothers in Africa (27.3%), the USA (25%) and Latin America (19.2%) and also from the graduates (24.4%).

Remaining still with personal resources, we see a clear sensibility from the Brothers (60.8%), also confirmed by the positive results of question #10 in which 25.9% of them manifested their availability to work in vocational promotion. Although not topping the classification in the percentages of excellence (***much:17.1%***), nevertheless on the level of ***enough*** it falls into second place with 43.7%, in comparison to the ***critical*** groups that was equal to more than a quarter of the Brothers interviewed (27%).

A more accented sensibility is recognized above all by the Brothers in Central Europe (73.6%), Asia (72.4%), the elderly Brothers (53.8%), keeping in mind that 32.6% did not respond to this item, the middle-aged group (66.2%), the General and Provincial governments (75.8%); while different criticisms and complaints were expressed about how individual Provinces handled the matter; the vocation promoters (38.5% in comparison to 27% of the average), the graduates (31.4%), the young Brothers (33.1%), Africa (42.9%) and Southern Europe (29.2%).

An item that is in rather an ambivalent position is related to the level of daily conversation and communication (***“it is a subject little spoken of”***) and the perception that the conversation on these matters is rather scarce touches 40.1% of the Brothers (***much + enough***), while 45.2% of the answers indicate a discreet information prevails (***little or not at all***). The fact of speaking about vocation promotion shows the level of information and sensibility manifested in the daily lives of the Brothers. The problem is maintained as the object of informal conversation or even debate. However, if nothing is said about this subject the interest can be extinguished and in a certain sense also involvement and responsibility, of which we will subsequently see that complaints will be pretty scarce.

It seems from the results of the investigation that the greater part of the Brothers are convinced that this is ***enough*** or they are quite satisfied (45.2%), especially the Brothers in Latin America (57.5%), Africa (46.4%), Central Europe (46.5%), the middle-aged Brothers (55.3%), the graduates (57%), the General and Provincial governments (59.7%), the formators (57.2%) and the Priors (49.5%).

On the other hand 40.1% tell us that ***little*** is spoken about, especially in the USA (55%), Asia (51.1%) and the young Brothers (44.8%), which is a good indication. Their criticism is well

worthwhile listening to so as to activate interest, involvement and strategies for the Brothers of the Order to tackle.

2.2.1.2. Vocational resources on an institutional level

In the institutional structure, expressed by the Province/Delegation, the Order is already activating some initiatives for the development of vocation promotion through the formulation and realisation of a vocation promotion projects for the Province with the creation of vocation teams and Brothers chosen to work in vocation promotion, plus the expenditure necessary for such activity.

Well then, what information do Brothers have about these efforts and initiatives that the Order promotes? What is their reaction when they are confronted with this plan on the official level? How will the various communities go about augmenting it? The analysis of these processes resulted from the answers sent in by the Brothers, and they allow us to reflect on the strategies promoted in the Provinces.

First of all, we notice a diffused and general appreciation, and a positive attitude and reception from almost all the Brothers for what is being done on the institutional level both by the General government and the Provincial governments.

68.2% of the Brothers maintain that there is suitable support of the Provincial government with the various initiatives proposed for vocation promotion. The criticisms and the personal reservations reach 17.2% and are distributed according to the following categories.

Quite critical are the Brothers in Africa (40.4% with 23 points higher than average), the USA (18.3%), Central Europe (19.1%), the middle-aged (26.1%) and young Brothers (24.3%), the diploma holders (19.2%) and above all the vocation promoters (28.6%).

More positive and favourable are the Brothers in Asia (78%), Latin America (76.2%) and Central Europe (70.9%); 60.8% of the elderly Brothers with over 50 years of religious profession, 77.9% of the graduates, 74% of the middle-aged Brothers and 82.8% of General and Provincial governments.

One aspect that is positively appreciated by the Brothers is *the recognition of the availability of the economic resources from the superiors for the different vocational activities (61%)*. Only 22.8% were critical which was not too surprising.

This criticism came from Africa with 69% of Brothers saying that they are uneasy with it (a good three times over the average criticisms) with only 22.7% who said they were satisfied with it. Here the percentages are reversed, and it is perhaps a sign of the poverty and the precariousness in which these Brothers live, which seem to attribute the difficulty of the vocation promotion to this fact. Also Asia seems to show a certain difficulty, however in a smaller measure (32.3%). Also quite critical were the young Brothers (35.6%), the middle-aged ones (28.3%) the diploma holders (24.9%) but less so the graduates (20.9%), and a third of the vocation promoters (34.3%).

Positive recognition is seen by the Brothers in Latin America (69.7%), Southern Europe (66.1%), Central Europe (64%), young Brothers (64.5%), the middle-aged ones (64.5%), the elderly (48.5%), the General and Provincial governments (73.5%), the Priors (65.7%) and the

graduates (69.1%). There is also a positive awareness from more than half the Brothers regarding vocation promotion organised by the Province (58.6%).

Especially recognising this are the Brothers in Asia (70.9%), Latin America (70.3%), Central Europe (61.9%), the younger (67.7%) and the middle-aged (64.8%) Brothers, the graduates (64.5%), the General and Provincial governments (70.1%), the vocation promoters (64.3%) and the Priors (59.9%).

In this dimension criticisms have been more numerous (23.9%) mentioning that vocation promotion has not always corresponded with the Provincial projects. Above all, the Brothers of Africa point this out (35.7%), Asia (23.8%) and Central Europe 26%. Analogous views come from the middle-aged (26.1%) and the young Brothers (26.8%), the diploma holders (25.6%), the Priors (24.4%) and the formators (30%).

More than half the Brothers agree that the Provincial vocation project is a concern for the Order and its future. 65.2% say that vocation promotion has to be delegated to Brothers responsible for this position. They say each Province must adequately activate a vocation promotion program. This is especially recognised by the Brothers in Asia (83.4%), Africa (71.4%), the USA (65%), Central Europe (65.6%), and 83.7% of the young Brothers and 69.7% of the middle-aged ones, 68.1% of the graduates and 81.4% of the vocational promoters.

The most critical elements (20.4%) come above all from the Provincial governments (26.4%), the Priors (22.6%), the graduates (22.7%), the middle-aged Brothers (22.8%), the young ones (21.3%), Central Europe (19.6%), Africa (22.6%), but above all from Latin America (32.6%) with 12 points higher than the average.

From a semantic point of view this concept of delegation could also have different interpretations, some of which might be less positive and make one think of a negative attitude to delegation in the sense of just leaving vocation promotion to those who have been officially assigned to it. If that is the case then obviously such an attitude is not very advisable, since the concern for vocations is the duty of every Brother in the Order.

2.2.2. Prevalence of critical aspects

The negative replies that we received can be sorted out one by one. A very negative attitude arises from the lack of co-responsibility permitting the Brothers to have very little involvement in the vocation promotion programs and even more so this applies to lay co-workers as well.

Fewer Brothers recognise any clear co-responsibility in developing vocation promotion within their Province (47.8%). Even though 10.1% say it is excellent (*much*), while the criticisms of those who say the contrary reaches 38.5%. The Brothers in Asia excel here (56.7%), followed by Latin America (55.8%), Central Europe (55.6%), the young Brothers (54.4%), and also the elderly ones 39.4% (but in 37.9% of the cases they did not reply), and the Priors (49.3%).

Complaints about scant co-responsibility of the Brothers (38.5%) can also be seen to come from the Provincial governments (48.2% with 10 points higher than the average), and more than half the vocational promoters (51.4%), the graduates (46.6%), the middle-aged Brothers (46.6%), the Africans (58.8%, with 20 points higher than the average) and the USA (53.4%).

Very few Brothers are involved in the program of vocation promotion in the Provinces. Out of a third of the Brothers amounting to 38.5%, only 8.1% maintain this is excellent. As an alternative the percentage of the criticisms and negative judgments are much higher reaching almost half the Brothers at 48.9%.

A certain involvement emerges from the answers given by the Brothers in Asia (48%) and Central Europe (52.4%). The other zones and categories are only 45%. 44.5% of the young Brothers said that there is a certain involvement of the Brothers in vocation promotion, and agreeing were 36% of the graduates, 39.6% of Priors, 42.8% of the vocational promoters and 46% of the General and Provincial governments.

Rather consistent were the criticisms that report little involvement in it (48.9%). This occurs above all from the Brothers in Africa (63.1% with 15 points above the average), the USA (53.4%), Southern Europe (51.6%), the graduates (57%), the formators (53.4%), the young and middle-aged Brothers (51.5%) and the aged (52.1%).

Although the ***involvement of the Brothers is very little, even less so is that of the co-workers (18.8%)***. About two thirds of the Brothers (66.5%) say that such involvement is very scarce or even absent altogether. Somewhat more positive are the Brothers in Asia (29.9%), Central Europe (31.3%), the young Brothers (26.8%), the diploma holders (20.1%), the General and Provincial governments (20.7%) and the vocational promoters (20%).

Rather remarkable difficulty is individualized especially in Africa (79.8%) and in Asia (76.7%); the younger age group (68.6%) and the next to that (74.9%), and of the graduates (76.7%); then come the General and Provincial governments (74.7%) and the formators (75.7%).

2.3. The presence of one Brother or a team of Brothers devoted to vocation promotion

The preceding reflection on the results of the question 46 tell us that in some Provinces there are quite a number of Brothers devoted to vocation promotion. We will look further into this by utilising questions 47 and 48.

2.3.1. The presence of only one Brother entrusted with vocation promotion

Question 47 wanted to verify the presence of only one Brother devoted to vocation promotion in the Province/Delegation.

The answers of the Brothers were most numerous in comparison to the preceding question (no replies were 6%). 25% of the Provinces (equal to 253 answers). The Brothers said that there was a Brother in this position and in 42.4% of the cases it was only part time, or according to various occasions (21.5%). This sufficiently underlines an ***enough*** reply which would have been better had they been fully employed in vocation promotion. Only 5% of the Brothers said this position did not exist in their Province.

2.3. The presence of a vocation promotion team

Here the results introduced some analogies and similarities with question 37 that centred upon the choice of formators. 49.8% of the Brothers responded that the Province is already

handling this matter. To question 40, 21.2% declared that they are exclusively devoted to formation, although 49.6% also spill over to bring in vocation promoters. We go further into question 47 by studying the distribution of this in the various geographical zones (Tab. 6.5).

Tab. 6.5 – The presence of only one Brother dedicated to vocation promotion. Distributed by geographic zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	L.Amer	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	61	37	11	3	3	4	3
	6.0	9.7	5.8	3.6	1.7	3.1	5.0
Full time	253	109	45	17	27	44	11
	25.0	28.7	23.8	20.2	15.7	34.6	18.3
Part time	429	161	83	31	91	42	21
	42.4	42.4	43.9	36.9	52.9	33.1	35.0
Occasionally	218	61	38	28	41	32	18
	21.5	16.1	20.1	33.3	23.8	25.2	30.0
Does not exist	51	12	12	5	10	5	7
	5.0	3.2	6.3	6.0	5.8	3.9	11.7

The response to the presence of only one Brother dedicated to full time vocation promotion comes from Asia (34.6%), Southern Europe (28.7%), Central Europe (23.8%), the elderly Brothers (27.2%) and the Priors (28.8%).

The greater part of the Brothers, especially the elderly ones (44.8%), say they have undertaken vocation promotion part-time in the Province (42.4%) especially in Latin America (52.9%), Central Europe (43.9%), Southern Europe (42.4%). Those who said the General and Provincial governments were aware of this (55.2%), and the Prior (48.6%), however this is a ready resource to utilise.

Tab. 6.6 – Presence of a Brother dedicated to full time vocation promotion. Distributed by office held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P Govt.	Prior Direct	Forma	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	61	1	9	3	48
	6.0	1.1	4.1	4.3	7.6
Full time	253	15	64	17	157
	25.0	17.2	28.8	24.3	24.8
Part time	429	48	108	28	245
	42.4	55.2	48.6	40.0	38.7
Occasionally	218	20	28	19	151
	21.5	23.0	12.6	27.1	23.9
None	51	3	13	3	32
	5.0	3.4	5.9	4.3	5.1

Of the 21.5% of Brothers who declared only the occasional presence of vocation promotion, the majority came from Africa (33.3%), the USA (30%) and from some sections of Asia (25.2%). Vocation promotion needs to be stimulated far more in these zones. In fact, it is really from the Brothers of the USA that the highest percentage originates where they say Brothers are not utilised for vocation promotion (11.7% in comparison to the 5% of the corresponding average). Also, in the different zones 27.1% of the vocation promoters have the perception that it is only an occasional job.

2.3.2. The presence of a vocation promotion team

The presence also of only one Brother entrusted with vocation promotion seems by now to be generalised throughout the whole Order. Almost two thirds of the Brothers, equal to the 60.7%, declare that in their own Province the appointment of the vocation promoter is not simply one Brother but a team of Brothers. The remainders answered (about 40%) but were divided among 16.8% of the “*don’t knows*” and another 16.1% who gave negative answers and a further 6.4% who did not reply.

Tab. 6.7 – Presence in the Province of a vocation promotion team. Distributed by geographic zones (in V.A. and percentage).

	Z O N E of ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	L.Am -	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	65	30	8	3	13	6	5
	6.4	7.9	4.2	3.6	7.6	4.7	8.3
Yes	614	259	106	51	123	66	9
	60.7	68.2	56.1	60.7	71.5	52.0	15.0
No	163	37	41	13	22	22	28
	16.1	9.7	21.7	15.5	12.8	17.3	46.7
don't know	170	54	34	17	14	33	18
	16.8	14.2	18.0	20.2	8.1	26.0	30.0

The greater number of vocation promotion teams are found in Latin America (71.5%), Southern Europe (68.2%), Central Europe (56.1%), and 60.7% of the Brothers in Africa. (Did they at first seem to express a certain doubt?) This appears so from Tables 6.7 and 6.8. There seems to be an absence of such teams in the USA (46.7%) and Central Europe (21.7%), but as it appears from the Tab. 6.8, this is also aside from the General and Provincial governments (21.8%) and the vocational promoters (21.4%).

Tab. 6.8 – Presence in the Province of a vocation promotion team. Distributed office held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD					
	TOTAL	G&P	Gv	Prior	Forma	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633	
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5	
No reply	65	4	5	8	48	
	6.4	4.6	2.3	11.4	7.6	
Yes	614	63	163	43	345	
	60.7	72.4	73.4	61.4	54.5	
No	163	19	37	15	92	
	16.1	21.8	16.7	21.4	14.5	
Don't know	170	1	17	4	148	
	16.8	1.1	7.7	5.7	23.4	

To ascertain its presence in the various zones of the Order, besides Priors (73.4%), the General and Provincial governments (72.4%), there are 54.5% of the Brothers (equal to 345 of the Brothers interviewed) who hold some position of responsibility: which means that such information has also spread a great deal throughout the Order, to all the different age groups with maybe some exception of the younger Brothers.

2.4. Some conclusions

Indeed the problem of vocation promotion is considered by almost three quarters of the Brothers who say that this matter must be attended to at once and any indifference to it must be overcome. From all the answers it is deduced that the Order on a worldwide scale has already started, at least partially, quite a diffused vocation promotion on the international level among its various Provinces. However much more needs to be done to stimulate vocation promotion.

On the institutional level there is a warning to give economic supports to vocation promotion programs. This is to support the vocation promotion teams or at least the Brothers whose job it is to organise vocation promotion in the Province. Every Brother needs to feel that he is personally involved with vocation promotion.

A positive resource to be evaluated is actually this very awareness of the Brothers. Their concern is evidence of this and it shows their willingness to become involved in vocation promotion within their sphere of apostolic and professional influence.

From a structural and natural point of view, there is a positive sentiment of support and openness to the superiors in regards to the necessity of vocation promotion, even if there are various problems, as for instance the poverty of Africa and the affluence of the USA. It would seem a good idea to begin methodologies and strategies of vocation promotion in the zones of Asia and Central Europe.

It is important to consider geographically the subjects we have been studying in paragraph, because they constitute some analytical values for the Order. They also have importance for the various roles carried out by the Brothers, because if the superior and the vocation promoters demonstrate a general recognition and awareness of the real situation, then the other Brothers will be stimulated to act upon this and do their part in promoting vocations.

These significant fundamentals emerge from a steady group of Brothers composed mainly of the graduates. They indicate the weaker points of this segment and they emphasise the lack of personal involvement and co-responsibility of the majority of Brothers and especially the co-workers.

The very positive innovation presented by the answers of so many Brothers to the two initial questions (#.9 and #10) is not overlooked or neglected. They show an ample and generous availability both to be prepared as formators (25.9%), by volunteering themselves for the various formative assignments in vocation promotion (14.4%).

In synthesis, vocation promotion these days is generally entrusted to a team of Brothers in 60.7% of the cases, especially so in Latin America and in Southern Europe. However in some Provinces only one Brother operates in this field and in almost half the cases only part time with 21.5% only occasionally. Only in 25% of cases do the Brothers show optimal situations in which the vocation animator can be devoted to vocation promotion on a fulltime basis.

3. LACK AND DIFFICULTY IN VOCATION PROMOTION (question 49)

Continuing in our process of ecclesial and vocational discernment within the Hospitaller Order, we go on to analyse the principal lack and difficulties that stand out in vocation promotion. While vocation promotion is understood by the formators and vocation promoters who do their utmost to fulfil their obligations, we see in our sociological study that it must also be the concern of all the Brothers.

The answers to the questions we asked are somewhat diversified, but they are enough to point out to us the greater concentration of answers about this matter of concern. They are quite important!

Although their formulation has been rather illusory and slender in their percentages, nevertheless the series of subjects tend to give substance to a profound weakness and grave problems that touch the fundamental scope of the way the Brothers conceive vocation promotion, and the strategy and reasonable methodology to be developed. Here is a lack of encouragement to activate strategies, and while it is obvious on the Province level, it is also observed on the global level as well. We will see the nature and gravity of this deficiency in the specific results of the various geographical zones. This calls for a more careful reflection by the formators and superiors to become more responsible in this matter.

The following table will pinpoint problems related to the Order. These are the results the Brothers gave to question 49:

“What do you think are the main things lacking in vocation promotion?”

%	
1. Insufficient Accompaniment of candidates	37.0
2. Lack of motivation of Brothers by few results	33.3
3. Vocation promotion confused with “recruitment of vocations”	33.0
4. Little openness of the local Church to religious vocations	33.0
5. Improvisation of duties in this service	31.1
6. Lack of integration in the local Church	26.2
7. Too quick to receive postulants	20.7
8. No reply	10.0

Indeed, an intelligent basis is emerging in regards to vocation promotion. In fact the greatest number of answers puts this in the first place of the classification (37%). Attention is called for the constant and careful accompaniment of vocations that already exists in the Order and it is important to effectively sustain them. (cfr. Tables. 6.9; 6.10; 6.11)

Insufficient accompaniment of the candidates is the main problem emphasised by more than a third of the Brothers (37%). The Brothers in Africa (58.3% with 21 points higher than average), Asia (51.2%), Latin America (43.6%), the middle aged (42%) and the young Brothers (38.5%) who are still in the initial phase of their religious life. The General and Provincial governments 48.3%, (equal to 10 points higher than average); the vocation promoters (41.4%); the graduates (45.3%); lesser from the Priors which might also include their communities (34.2%).

This draws upon a problem already treated, but for different reasons in the preceding questions 26 and 27. If accompaniment is not there, then it can be one of the principal causes of abandonment or difficult integration into the Order by the young Brothers. On the contrary, if accompaniment is developed carefully and sincerely, this is considered to be one of the causes that facilitate the insertion of the young Brothers into the hospitaller mission.

Another thing that causes a problem is *the lack of motivation by the Brothers* (33.3%). Although this was the last item in the questionnaire, it nevertheless was placed second among the choices of the Brothers. Other problems were the concept of vocation promotion as the “recruitment of vocations” and little interest and support from the local Church for religious vocations.

Tab. 6.9 – The main things lacking in vocation promotion. Distributed in geographic zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	GEOGRAPHIC ZONE						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	L. Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No reply	101	52	21	3	11	7	7
	10.0	13.7	11.1	3.6	6.4	5.5	11.7
Improvised position	315	105	55	27	81	38	9
	31.1	27.6	29.1	32.1	47.1	29.9	15.0
Scarce Accompaniment	374	126	44	49	75	65	15
	37.0	33.2	23.3	58.3	43.6	51.2	25.0
fast admission to post.	209	60	32	22	59	32	4
	20.7	15.8	16.9	26.2	34.3	25.2	6.7
Idea of voc as recruitment	334	130	50	36	44	54	20
-	33.0	34.2	26.5	42.9	25.6	42.5	33.3
No integration local Church	265	85	49	30	51	40	10
	26.2	22.4	25.9	35.7	29.7	31.5	16.7
Poor accept in local Church	334	122	60	25	56	54	17
	33.0	32.1	31.7	29.8	32.6	42.5	28.3
Brothers not motivated	337	158	57	17	31	45	29
	33.3	41.6	30.2	20.2	18.0	35.4	48.3
Other	69	22	20	5	7	4	11
	6.8	5.8	10.6	6.0	4.1	3.1	18.3

This deals with particular conditions present in the responsiveness and perception of the Brothers in the USA (48.3%), Southern Europe (41.6%) and Asia (35.4%); The middle aged Brothers (41.4%) and the elderly ones (37.9%), the General and Provincial governments (34.5%) and the Priors (33.3%).

Less enthusiastic are the Brothers in Africa (20.2%) and Latin America (18%) also the young Brothers (28.5%) and among the next age group (27%).

With identical percentage came the answers from the Brothers regarding the *confusion of seeing vocation promotion as “vocation recruitment”* (33%), and also the *little interest shown for religious vocations by the local Church* (33%).

This problem calls for a correct attitude and a mentality suitable for vocation promotion and is especially important in its initial phase. Vocation promotion cannot be simply equated with a commercial operation.

This defective conception of vocation promotion came from many Brothers in Africa (42.9%) and Asia (42.5%) with 9 points higher than the average. Partly held also by the Brothers in Southern Europe, the middle aged group (39.7%), the graduates and even the formators themselves (37.1%), the General and Provincial governments (36.8%) and the Priors (35.1%).

Tab. 6. 10 – The main things lacking in vocation promotion. Distributed in age groups and years of profession (in V.A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUPS					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	0-5	6-25	26-50	50 +
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	101	16	22	34	28	16	13	38	29
	10.0	6.7	7.2	10.5	21.2	7.7	4.6	10.9	19.6
Improvised duty	315	76	110	102	25	60	114	105	30
	31.1	31.8	35.8	31.5	18.9	28.8	40.7	30.1	20.3
Little Accompaniment	374	92	129	113	38	70	130	124	40
	37.0	38.5	42.0	34.9	28.8	33.7	46.4	35.5	27.0
Fast entry to postulancy	209	59	65	65	18	53	63	66	21
	20.7	24.7	21.2	20.1	13.6	25.5	22.5	18.9	14.2
seeing it as recruitment	334	74	122	95	39	61	110	115	42
	33.0	31.0	39.7	29.3	29.5	29.3	39.3	33.0	28.4
Non integration local Church	265	79	67	84	32	76	63	89	30
	26.2	33.1	21.8	25.9	24.2	36.5	22.5	25.5	20.3
Local Church non acceptance	334	80	102	105	41	69	96	112	45
	33.0	33.5	33.2	32.4	31.1	33.2	34.3	32.1	30.4
Brothers unmotivated	337	68	83	134	50	56	76	138	61
	33.3	28.5	27.0	41.4	37.9	26.9	27.1	39.5	41.2
Other	69	11	25	24	8	9	22	26	10
	6.8	4.6	8.1	7.4	6.1	4.3	7.9	7.4	6.8

Less than the average comes from the Brothers in Central Europe (26.5%), Latin America (25.6%), the middle aged (29.3%) and the elderly Brothers (29.5%). However, on the different levels of authority and responsibility this is a problem, as the table shows since it is constantly placed in the first three more problematic places and is the first problem that the local Prior has to confront.

The other difficulty, with the same percentage, was the verification of the lack of interest in the local Church for religious vocations (33%). While the first three problems listed were within the Order itself, here we find difficulties that are attributed to other situations and external causes. Difficulties of integration or for other reasons of a very delicate character can exist regarding the local church.

This problem is especially noticed with 9 points higher than the average, from the Brothers of the geographical zone of Asia (42.5%) for which it constitutes the second problem, but it is also seen with the General and Provincial governments (44.8%) at about 12 percentages points higher than the average.

The Brothers in Central Europe show the lowest percentage (31.7%), nevertheless this is the first problem in comparison to all the others. For the remaining geographical zones it doesn't seem to assume any particular importance being placed third or fourth on the scale of seven.

In all the other various groups, age, religious profession, academic titles, the percentages are placed around the average with only slight differences, some higher or lower in points but nothing more. Africa 29.8% (3 points lower than the average), this could be for historical situations and instability. Finally there is the USA 28.3%, where the problem is put third.

In the brief space of 3 percentages points we see four big problems regarding vocation promotion. We have already introduced the first three and the last is related to the improvisation in **those chosen to undertake vocation promotion** (31.1%).

Probably in the past this situation could be verified quite frequently, but as a third of the Brothers testify, that is not the case these days. This is very obvious (47.1%, 16 points higher than the average) in Latin America where it is considered the first problem. A little higher than average comes Africa (32.1%). The Brothers in the other geographical zone place this in the last places of the classification with lower than average, and the USA even puts it in the last place (15%).

Tab. 6. 11 – The main things lacking in vocation promotion. Distributed by office held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD					
	TOTAL	G&P	Gv	Prior	Forma	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633	
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5	
No reply	101	4	20	4	73	
	10.0	4.6	9.0	5.7	11.5	
Improvisation	315	29	77	25	184	
	31.1	33.3	34.7	35.7	29.1	
Poor Accompaniment	374	42	76	29	227	
	37.0	48.3	34.2	41.4	35.9	
Fast postulancy	209	11	48	17	133	
	20.7	12.6	21.6	24.3	21.0	
Idea of recruitment	334	32	78	26	198	
	33.0	36.8	35.1	37.1	31.3	
No integration in local chur.	265	14	48	27	176	
	26.2	16.1	21.6	38.6	27.8	
Local Church not welcoming	334	39	75	22	198	
	33.0	44.8	33.8	31.4	31.3	
Brothers unmotivated	337	30	74	21	212	
	33.3	34.5	33.3	30.0	33.5	
Other	69	6	17	11	35	

There is the risk of some doubt, especially among the Brothers 36-55 years of age (35.8%), while it is only a problem for 18.9% of the elderly Brothers. This confirms our initial past reference where this procedure was seen as *enough* as well as neglected or considered irrelevant.

However, today this feature demands a great deal more attention. The graduates (38.4%) and formators (35.7%) emphasise this. The General and Provincial governments (33.3%) and Priors (34.7%) are lesser but still a few points higher than the average. The demands made on the formators and vocation promoters make it difficult to predict what lies in the future.

A problem, that vocation promotion doesn't touch directly, but effects the relationships of the Order and its centres with the local Church, is that only about one in four Brothers has anything to do with the local Church (26.2%).

Although it falls into the last place, it nevertheless seems to be very accentuated in Africa (36.7%, with 9 points higher than the average), Asia (31.5%), Latin America (31.5%), while it is relatively a negligible problem in Central Europe (25.9%), Southern Europe (22.4%) and the USA (16.7%). The younger Brothers seem more impressed (33.1%) but not so the other age groups. Above all the vocational promoters (38.6%, with 12 points higher than the average) and

they place this situation as the second greatest problem of the vocation promotion but the Priors seem less concerned about it.

It doesn't really seem to constitute a problem for the vocation promoters when it comes to ***hastening young men into the postulancy (20.7%)***. It is generally placed toward the last places of the interviewing and investigating process. Nevertheless, this practice seems frequent enough, especially in Latin America (34.3%), Africa (26.2%) and Asia (25.2%), while in the other zones it seems to be absolutely negligible, as are also the General and Provincial governments (12.6%, 8 points less than the average), the graduates (18%) and the Priors (21.6%). Also this is the opinion of the young Brothers (24.7%) and the vocation promoters (24.3%).

In conclusion, we want to synthesise and point out in order of importance, the first three big problems that the different categories of Brothers maintain to be the most important.

Southern Europe: lack of motivation by Brothers, vocation promotion seen as recruitment, lack of Accompaniment ;
Central Europe: lack of rapport with local church, lack of motivation by Brothers, part time job;
Latin America: part time job, lack of Accompaniment , too quick to enter postulancy;
Africa: lack of Accompaniment , vocation promotion seen as recruitment, lack of rapport with local church;
Asia: lack of Accompaniment , lack of rapport with local church, vocation promotion seen as recruitment;
USA: lack of motivation by Brothers, vocation promotion seen as recruitment, lack of rapport with local church;

18-35 years of age: lack of accompaniment, lack of rapport with local church;
36-55 years of age: lack of accompaniment, vocation promotion seen as recruitment, part time job;
56-74 years of age: lack of motivation by Brothers, lack of accompaniment, lack of rapport with local church;
75 + years of age: lack of motivation by Brothers, lack of rapport with local church, vocation promotion seen as recruitment;

Major superiors: lack of accompaniment, lack of rapport with local church, vocation promotion seen as recruitment;
Priors: vocation promotion seen as recruitment, part time job, lack of accompaniment;
Vocation promoters: lack of accompaniment, lack of rapport with local church, vocation promotion seen as recruitment.

4. IDENTIKIT OF AN IDEAL VOCATION PROMOTER (question 50)

The whole of the preceding chapter (chap.5) was devoted to the training of formators, their relationship with superiors, the spirit of the Order and perspectives that are more suitable

for formation to face the challenges of hospitality. Here we want to comment on question #50; and to continue to analyse a series of objectives, ideals and assignments vocational promoters need to carry out with a spirit of fidelity and creativeness to continue their delicate formative mission to the service of the Order and the Church.

Here we synthesise a whole series of reflections that have already been advanced in the preceding chapters so as to confirm what we have already seen.

The “**Formation Program**” of the Order proposes means for reflection (## 98-102) on the nature of vocation promotion, its general and specific objectives and ways to make known the charism of the Order.

We now come to study the answers given by the Brothers about the formalities, preparation, direction, motivation, generosity and the adequacy of the preparation entrusted to the vocation promoters and their teams in answering a series of nine duties/roles considered to be important these days for the renewal of vocation promotion confronted with the challenges of contemporary society.

Obviously the evaluations are not shouldered onto a single Brother responsible for vocation promotion, but rather on the global and concrete role of the animators of vocation promotion. The purpose of this is to improve more and more the methodologies that have found to be weak and a problem. This can serve as a verification of the past and the present, but it also proposes to plan the future with perspectives of stimulation, ideals and orientations for a much better and more effective way to proceed.

4.1. Global analysis

The items proposed in question #50 constitute a very articulated airing and are sufficiently exhaustive in the principal functions that the Order entrusts to the vocation promotion. This deals with functions that we can place around two main fundamental nucleuses: those revolving primarily on the outside, aimed at young men, families, the local church and those directed above all at each community. Of this subdivision we will only make use of a deeper analysis, while we look at a global vision of them, regulated by a hierarchy of evaluations and priorities on an average basis.

A closer scrutiny offers a more exhaustive view of the answers given to question #50: “***Are the animators of vocation promotion prepared and motivated for the task of vocation promotion?***”

On the whole the Brothers’ replies were substantially positive, however they are much more on the dimension of the simple sufficiency (***enough***) and not on that of excellence (***much***). Notable are the two central columns of ***enough*** and ***little***.

While it is true that the percentages of the radical criticisms (if any) are absolutely meaningless, especially regarding the most important items (from 1% to 4%), it is also true that the column “***much***” was not even 20% (17.4%), keeping in mind that the percentage of the ***no reply*** was high enough 11.2% up to 21.7%, had an average that was about 14-15% without considering the answers of the elderly Brothers that reached 55.3%.

The percentage of the positive evaluations (*much and enough*) extended to a range of around 30 percentage points up to 63.1% and a minimum of 31.3%.

The greater part of the *average percentage* is placed in the first place with a very restricted variation within 29 percentage points, while at between 2.10 and 2.39, while knowledge of what motivated families did not disturb the rest of the reading.

A certain ambiguity is not excluded in these answers given by the Brothers, as to what is actually fact, or what they are led to believe by the reports of the animators entrusted with this role, or just an ideal and an objective to which they have been solicited. In any case the criticisms and reservations regarding the original reading put a slant of realism that has a factual and realistic character about it.

An overall view of the Brothers' answers tells us that here are a couple of matters that they consider to be priorities and call for further action; such as the lifestyle of the Brothers (62.2%) and to make the mission of the Order better known to society and the Church (63.1%). These are two questions that top the list because they touch upon the core of religious life today. In fact the percentages and averages (2.10 and 2.12) show very close and similar values.

Tab. 6. 12 – Duties entrusted to the vocation promotion team (in % and average).

	<i>N.R.</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Av.</i>
1. To present the Brothers' lifestyle in a clear and comprehensible way	14.3	17.4	44.8	21.3	2.1	2.10
2. Make the Order's mission known to society and the Church	11.2	16.2	46.9	23.2	1.8	2.12
3. Apply valid criteria for selection	21.7	11.1	35.5	27.9	3.9	2.31
4. Bring about an adequate accompaniment	15.5	11.6	37.9	31.6	3.4	2.32
5. Co-involve the Brothers to become co-responsible in vocation promotion	14.6	10.8	35.3	35.2	4.2	2.38
6. Work in with the local church in pastoral care	14.4	9.9	37.2	35.0	3.6	2.38
7. Know where young people stand today	14.5	10.7	36.6	33.2	5.0	2.38
8. Utilise every means (mass-media)	15.1	12.2	34.0	32.2	6.5	2.39
9. Know what the family thinks	16.8	6.9	24.4	42.4	9.5	2.65

A little less than two thirds of the vocation promoters have any preparation for this work. One Brother in seven says the preparation is excellent (16%-17%), while for a few less than half it was *enough* (45-47%). About half had critical reservations (from 23% to 25%), equal to more than one Brother in 5. However these items were emphasised from 10 to 20 percentage points. It

is necessary to say that the replies to these and the following answers did not come near enough to induce a predestined choice and were of little comfort.

Here are a couple more of the Brothers' choices. They reported the distinct activity within the Order, because it concerns *the application of valid criteria in the selection of young men (46.6%)* and the necessity to undertake their suitable accompaniment (49.5%). *Here the report of excellence is quite low and there are many more criticisms and the reservations that go between 31.8% and 35%.*

The third group goes beyond the previous two but come closer to each other (2.38% and 2.39%) and is quite consistent and similar. Here it reports a diversified plurality of situations and objectives that, in their variety, allow us to widen the range of the evaluations of the Brothers and enrich the series of functions to be recommended to the vocation promoters.

In regards to *vocation promotion in collaboration with the local Church (47.1%)*, a few less than half the Brothers agreed to this, despite the fact that more than a third criticised it or held reservations (38.6%). From time to time some questions in the questionnaire (#.25 and #49.5) held the same criticisms which should start ringing alarm bells.

Likewise, the problem of the Brothers' involvement in vocation promotion (#.46, #26 and #27) was answered in both positive and critical senses. Especially where vocation promotion involves the co-responsibility of the Brothers (46.1%) and not to simply leave this to one person. Here we see 39.4% of the Brothers having some rather negative and critical judgments. It deals with a percentage among the highest of the various questions, therefore it emphasises the importance for vocation promotion to solicit the co-responsibility of the Brothers in this duty. This starts with the community accepting the accompaniment of the young Brothers to make them feel accepted and fully part of the Order.

The positive percentage of the following item 47.3% respects the need to know all about the young person, where he comes from, his lifestyle, and his values. There are quite high percentages of positive evaluations as well as criticisms and requests for more information. On the other hand, this also constitutes one of the positive factors recognised in question 51 regarding the involvement of the community in vocation promotion and for the Brothers to get to know young people better.

Among the means useful to make the Order better known 46.2% is by making use of the mass media and other appropriate means (46.2%). 38.7% of the Brothers say that vocation promoters are not quite prepared in this. We will see more about this when we subsequently look at question 54.

4.2 Analytical intensification of various structures: by zone, age, role.

Here we look at the structure of the question, and advance the hypothesis to analyse the items in two fundamental nuclei of the principal functions that the Order entrusts to the vocation promoters.

1. The prime duty to:

- introduce in a clear and comprehensible way the values and the lifestyle of the St. John of God Brother;
- make the mission of the Order within society and the Church better known;
- work in the field of the vocation promotion in collaboration with the local Church;

- motivate and let families know about the religious life.

All of this involves two particular obligations:

- to know the reality of where young people come from;
- to know how to use the appropriate means (mass-average).

2. To first of all educate the communities:

- to apply valid criteria of selection;
- to bring about a suitable accompaniment ;
- to involve the Brothers in the responsibility for vocations

Here we confront the detailed analysis of each item and the various differences derived from the comparison of particular variables such as the geographical zones, the age groups, the roles of the Brothers, and the percentages.

4.2.1. First duties “ad extra”

The vocation promoter has a duty to both the Church and the society, because like every social structure and human organization, which applies to all religious Orders and congregations, there is the intrinsic and impelling necessity for them and for the Church to be of one mind.

Obviously we don't want to discuss here the theological and spiritual ins and out of religious life, its consecration and mission; since we have been over this before, but we do need to confront the problem in its more institutional and human dimension. That means becoming visible and aware of everything that goes to serve the continuity of the Church and the Reign of God.

Like all human organisations, religious Orders need the resources necessary to continue to exist. Among these resources, and obviously among the most important, there is the need to have the personnel to carry out this role. In this aspect, religious organisations suffer the influences and pressures, both positive and negative, that effect their external environment in the society in which they operate and according to a relationship with it that should be reciprocal.

Religious Orders are human and social organisations within the vast structure of the ecclesiastical system. They have proper and specific assignments derived by the charism of the institute, recognised by canonical right and approved by the Church and they are active within society. It is necessary for vocation promoters to promote the growth, continuity, development and visibility of the Order's charism and pastoral service within the Church and society. Therefore the vocation promoter contributes to the welfare of society, the diffusion of the Reign of God, and to the sanctification of its members.

That is why it is essential for the correct and global understanding of the nature of vocation promotion. Vocation promotion acquires its full value and effectiveness in the Church and in society when it fulfils the functions mentioned above.

More than half and less than two thirds of the Brothers (62.2%) manifested the view that vocation promoters must introduce in clear and comprehensible ways the values and the lifestyle of the St. John of God Brother.

This item in the questionnaire occupied the third place and registered as *favourable* even though the percentage was slightly inferior in comparison to the following one.

It deals with an aspect that also questions the type of integration of the communities into the local Church that already in the preceding question #25 was considered to be only satisfactory by half the Brothers. They wanted to emphasise in a clear and comprehensible way the true picture of their lifestyle and do away with hybrid and opaque forms of telling it where it is given a watered down and meaningless relationship.

This showed a notable consent of the Brothers (62.2%), of whom 17.4% expressed in a very positive way a good number of negative judgments (23.4%), some radically negative (2.1%).

The *major consensus* distributed in the geographical zones came from the Brothers in Africa (71.4%), Asia (67.6%), Central Europe (66.1%), the USA (60%) and Latin America (59.3%). Less so are those of Southern Europe (57.8%). Equally favourable are the judgments of the young (69.9%) and middle-aged Brothers (72%), General and Provincial governments (79.3%), the vocation promoters (77.1%) and of the local Priors (66.2%).

Most numerous criticisms originated from the Brothers in Latin America (29.6% in comparison to 23.5% of the average) and from Asia (28.3%), as well as 25.1% of the young Brothers, 26.1% of the graduates and 22.1% of the Priors.

Within the Church and society *the obligation to make the mission of the Order known* received second place in the percentages (63.1%). The most criticisms (25%) came from the vocation promoters. The *no reply* list indicated the difficulty some Brothers had in expressing a proper judgment on the subject.

A positive evaluation came from the Brothers in Southern Europe (65.5%), Latin America (66.3%), Central Europe (62.9%), and Asia (61.4%). The most critical (32.2%, 8 points higher than average) came from Africa (60.7%) and the USA (46.7%), the General and Provincial governments (77%, with 14 points higher than the average), and the Priors (67.1%). The first two age groups were more favourable with around 66% in agreement, together with the graduates (66.8%) and also to the Brothers with no responsible roles (59.9%).

Disagreement (25%) came from Africa (34.5% with almost 10 points higher than the average), from Asia and the USA both with (30%), Central Europe (28.6%), Latin America (24.4%), Southern Europe (18.1%), and 28.4% of the middle-aged Brothers and vocation promoters (30% in fact!) and from the graduates (28.5%).

That this collaboration needs to be intensified received criticism from Latin America (47.7%, 9 points higher than the average), Central Europe (43.9%) and Asia (40.9%). The young Brothers also showed negative judgments (42.2%) together with middle-aged ones (43%) and the graduates (41.1%). Less critical were the elderly Brothers, and there were reservations from major superiors (31%), the Priors (37.9%) and the formators (38.5%).

One of the central elements of vocation promotion, at least in the past, is *consideration of the family background*. This has constituted the reason for this item (to know about and to motivate families), above all when vocations are concerned, since this is still characterised by a strong family influence. This also refers to later vocations, where it is important to know the

environment of origin of the candidate. It is still important for parents of pre-adolescents and teen-age children to motivate them toward a vocational perspective.

The answers given by the Brothers to the item *"to know and to motivate the families"* (31.3%), were not the most numerous (no reply =16.8%); nevertheless they denote the perception that 31.3% of the Brothers showed regarding this factor, and quite some important perceptions in vocation promotion. The Brothers in Latin America (42.5% with 11 points higher than the average), while in the other regions the percentages are more reduced: 25.2% in Southern Europe, 30.6% in Central Europe, 33.3% in Africa, 32.3% in Asia and 33% in the USA. Not so however with the young Brothers (41%) and 30.3% of the middle-aged ones. Then came the General and Provincial governments (39%), formators (42.9%), the Priors (32%) and the graduates (34.9%).

The criticisms that are more numerous (51.9%) came from Asia (62.2%), Africa (58.4%), Central Europe (55%), Southern Europe (49.5%) and the USA (41.7%); also from the young Brothers (53.1%) and the middle-aged ones (62.8% with 11 points higher than the average), these are the most active Brothers in the Order. There are also negative evaluations by the major superiors (56.3%) and Priors (54.5%); lesser criticism comes from the vocation promoters (45.7%).

Finally there are *two types of competency* to be highly considered to be useful and necessary before appointing vocation promoters. They need a good knowledge of young people today and a familiarity with the conditions of their lifestyle and their views of life. According to where they are placed, they need to know how to use the appropriate means of social communication to suitably present and diffuse the image of the Order to young people and others. We will now see how the Brothers viewed these two competences and their reactions to the questions of the questionnaire.

To know the reality of where young people stand (47.3%) is an aspect that is positively attributed to the vocational promoters by almost half the Brothers, more than the 38.2% who had negative judgments.

Positive judgments come from Asia (57.4% with 10 points higher than the average), Latin America (47%), Southern Europe (46.8%), Central Europe and Africa (43.4%). A much more negative criticism comes from the other regions with a 47.6% percentage higher by 9 points than the average. Positive judgements come from the middle-aged Brothers (53.5%), the younger ones (51%), the vocation promoters (54.2%), and especially from the General and Provincial governments (65.5% with 18 points higher than the average).

Critical reservations were expressed by the Brothers (38.2%), especially from Africa (47.6%), Central Europe (43.9%), Latin America (42.5%), Asia (37.8%). Southern Europe had the same percentage as the USA (32.4%). Particularly critical were the young Brothers (43.1%), the diploma holders (41.3%), and the vocation promoters (37.2%). It would be interesting to discover their reasons since they were not made evident in the replies we received.

The use of appropriate means of social communications (46.2%) to make the Order's mission known within society and the Church was acknowledged by a little less than half the Brothers. However it also gets a high mark in the column of excellence (much: 12.2%, third in the same column).

Use of the mass media is especially appreciated by the Brothers in Central Europe (58.2% with 12 points higher than the average), Asia (48.8%), Latin America (45.4%), but with a low percentage from Africa (29.4%) that shows that there is not much access to it (64.3%) in mission areas. The young Brothers are very positive (51.4%) as also the middle-aged ones (48.9%). These latter however are also the most critical (45.3%). The judgments of the graduates are positive (50.6%), and still more so General and Provincial governments (57.5%) and the formators (54.3%). Not so however are the Priors 46.9% who are limited in a positive judgment with 40.5% negative.

In conclusion, the vocation promoters were less prepared (38.7%) and motivated to make use of the mass-media, especially the Brothers in Africa (64.3% with 26 points higher than the average), Asia (45.7%) and then they rise with the other geographical areas, from the young (42.7%) and middle-aged Brothers (45.3%), and the graduates (42.4%).

4.2.1. Duties turned primarily to "ad intra"

Vocation promotion cannot be simply reduced to a marketing exercise. It also takes in the internal dynamics that are involved, relative to the careful evaluation and selection of candidates. This has to be carefully done using accurate dynamics of accompaniment of the young Brothers on the individual and community scale. In the preceding chapters we have abundantly developed this matter (cfr. questions 26 and 27). The Brothers have verified all of this and so we now introduce the results that were judged to take first place in the classification.

The Brothers call for a more careful and prudent initial choice and the need to make use of several ***valid criteria of selection and a suitable application of it (46.6%)***. This received quite a high percentage of agreement, but not any higher than many other items relating to the same question. However what was given as a priority (***Much: 2.31***) was quite low among the answers (31.8%), and there were many who did not answer (21.7%). This means that in the general perception this is retained as an aspect to be strengthened and realised. There is a high percentage (21.7%), that came from 55.3% of the middle-aged Brothers) who did not give an answer.

More positive replies (46.6%) came from Central Europe (55.5%), the USA (56.6%), Africa (50%) and from Asia (49.6%). Also from the young Brothers (51.4%) and the middle-aged ones, (51.8%), the General and Provincial governments (64.4% with 18 higher than the average) and from the formators (55.7%).

The most negative elements (31.8%) come from the Brothers in Asia (44.1% with 13 higher than the average), Africa (41.7%), Latin America (39.5%), the young Brothers (41%), the middle-aged one (39.8%), the graduates (39.5%) and the Priors (36.5%).

Are the vocation promoters prepared to undertake a suitable accompaniment? This question, (others like it are questions 26.2; 27.2; 49.2), is difficult to answer. We have already seen many answers: a considerably positive evaluation is given by 49.5% of the Brothers while 35% gave negative judgments.

The more optimistic answers came from the Brothers in Central Europe (57.7%), the USA (53.3%), Africa (51.2%), Latin America (50%), the young Brothers (59.4%), the middle-aged ones (53.1%), the graduates (53.5%), the General and Provincial governments (60.9%) and the formators (62.9%).

The critical replies came from Asia (45.7%), Africa (41.7%), Latin America (38.9%), the young Brothers (39.8%) and the middle-aged ones (35.8%). There were reservations from the young Brothers (35.2%) and critical replies from the graduates (37.8%), the Priors (37%), the General and Provincial governments (34.4%) and 30% of the formators.

There still remains the internal dimension that involves the Brothers in the co-responsibility for vocations. This makes daily life of the community jointly liable in sustaining a suitable accompaniment of the young Brothers, and to make them content with cordial friendship and genuine fraternity. This will be a tremendous help to them as they set out upon their hospitaller mission. In addition, this involvement can be also extended to the other features of religious life. For instance an occasional collaboration in the role of vocation promotion, or warmly supporting such activity. In fact the possibilities for involvement are numerous. All depends upon the possibilities and the good will of the Brothers to participate in this important feature in the life of the Order.

We received, more or less, the usual answers (no reply = 14.4%), so that assumes an average place in the hierarchy of preferences with points of *much*: 2.38 divided with the knowledge of the young Brothers' lifestyle and their background.

46.1% of the Brothers maintained that the vocation promoters are prepared and motivated for the task entrusted to them. They said that *co-involvement of the Brothers* was appreciated. Involvement in co-responsibility drew 39.4% of the Brothers who disagreed saying that little or nothing was done in this regard.

Positive answers came from Asia (55.9% with 9 points higher than the average), Central Europe (51.8%), Africa (46.4%), the young Brothers (52.3%), the middle-aged ones (51.8%), the major superiors (60.9%), and the formators (60%).

The most numerous criticisms come from the Brothers in Latin America (44.2%), Africa (45.2%), Asia (39.4%), Southern Europe (38.9%), the young Brothers (41.9%), the middle-aged ones (41.4%) and the elderly (39.8%), the graduates (41.9%) and the Priors (41%).

In conclusion, this question covers quite a variety of different items that are articulated. However, we notice some steady repetitions in almost all the items constituting elements for reflection and/or confirmation. For example, the Priors are more and more critical compared with the formators and the General and Provincial governments. In addition to the reservations of the Priors, are the major superiors and the graduates who in some positions are quite positive.

The young and middle-aged Brothers always express a great volume of answers that in some cases are very positive, but that doesn't take away from the fact that they are just as numerous in expressing their criticisms. Also the elderly Brothers expressed their judgment, but it never particularly resulted as being predominantly visible in the differentiation to the percentages. Then there were also strong differences expressed by the young and middle-aged Brothers.

A comparison of the geographical zones does not succeed in finding any constant characteristics about each item. It is necessary in this regard to induce a more particular indication than simply putting them into particular geographical areas. Every generalisation in this sector risks becoming a distorted category for a genuine awareness of geographic problems.

5. THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY: THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF VOCATION PROMOTION (question 51)

If vocation promotion is not perceived as “recruitment” (which it must never be!), then it acquires a value of fundamental importance in the field of charism, since it is the religious presence of the ordinary simple daily life firmly and intensely lived in the exercise of the generous service of charity toward humanity and is greatly meritorious in the sight of God. However, without neglecting the holiness of the life of the Brothers, their spirit of prayer for vocations, the grace of God the Father who is “Master of the harvest” and who above all has at heart the diffusion of His Reign. Therefore God is aware of the problem of vocations, and today expects the example and the witness of each Brother who values and appreciates his vocation to set a visible example of his lifestyle which could have a strong impact on the impressions of young people.

We are convinced that the vocation promotion team is not enough to promote vocations, but what is also needed is the co-involvement and responsibility of every Brother, so as to make their lifestyle known and appreciated by the enthusiasm they show in valuing the Order and their identification and the respect they have for it.

This process therefore calls for the witness of the whole community and it is essential and fundamental that it introduces it into the world as characterised by the visible presence of the Gospel values that are manifested in a lifestyle of interpersonal relationships that make religious life attractive, interesting and desirable.

In addition there is a social context that today demonstrates a loss of firm points of reference, both ethical and religious. The value and testimony of a religious community that lives fraternally and is seen to intensely express its ideals, makes an extraordinary impact. Such a community doesn't deal with the creation of a safe warm nest or a glass bell of protection for immature subjects that dream of living life in the search of empty guarantees. But it does offer a strong and demanding ideal of life that can be seen quite evidently in a community that is co-involved. In every case it seems to be able to say that the quality of the community's lifestyle is the litmus paper for the religious quality of the life of a religious Order, so for this reason it needs to show the attractive lifestyle that calls for generous and courageous souls.

They said of the first Christian communities “*See how they love one another!*” And Jesus said “*Come and you see!*” and this made them ask “*Master where do you live?*” That question still arises today when it is often asked, “*Where can we find you?*”

5.1. Global analysis

These convictions and principles seem to be satisfactorily diffused within the general culture of the Hospitaller Order. We have previously treated of this in the specific chapter that examined questions #.22, #.27 and #.30 to #33, but these must necessarily be completed with the specific question #51 of the questionnaire so as to deepen its value in reference to the increase of new vocations to the Order.

It was expressed in the terms that proposed: “*For the introduction of a series of positive factors by which a religious community can favour the increase of new vocations, do you think these are present in your community?*”

Throughout the nine following items there is a need to come up with the ample range of activities and ideas for a better community lifestyle directed to attracting and increasing vocations.

In comparison to the preceding question (#50) the one relating to the functions attributed to the vocation promotion team seems to have drawn many Brothers to say quite a lot on this subject. In fact the percentages of the “*no reply*” decreased to bring the average from 8% to 10%, but the preceding one was higher (16%). The same averages are slightly less and dispersed among a vast range (1.80 - 2.61) which is a sign of quite large convergence toward the positive aspects and had a great differentiation of opinions and variety of answers.

Question #54 will be introduced in the last chapter and will give us details of these factors that once more repeat and strengthen the initiatives and proposals suggested for vocation promotion to be more effective.

Tab. 6.13 – Community factors presented in the community and considered helpful for attracting new vocations (in percentage and averages)

<i>In the Community</i>	<i>N.R</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Few</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Av.</i>
	.					
1. Cared for by the elderly and Brothers	9.1	30.8	49.9	8.1	2.1	1.80*
2. Prayers for vocations	7.0	26.4	48.7	16.6	1.3	1.92
3. Simple, sober and welcoming lifestyle	5.5	20.2	53.1	19.3	2.0	2.03
4. There is a good spiritual life in the community	8.2	15.9	54.0	20.7	1.3	2.08
5. The Brothers give witness to the joy of vocation	8.8	17.3	47.5	24.0	2.4	2.13
6. An authentic expression of Brotherhood	7.1	14.9	49.5	25.2	3.3	2.18
7. Responding to the expectations of the young	13.0	8.0	39.9	32.5	6.5	2.43
8. We know how to mix with young people today	11.6	7.0	29.1	44.2	8.2	2.61
9. Knowing how to get on with the young	10.3	6.6	27.9	49.9	6.2	2.61

What immediately strikes us in this chart is *a triple distinction of the factors* helpful in following up the development of more analytical considerations. We are therefore able to distinguish:

1. a couple of practical ways to act (items 1-2)
2. a series of attitudes and lifestyles (from the items 3 to 6)
3. a triptych of openings directed toward young people (from items 7 to 9).

In this triptych there is a subdivision of radically critical elements (not all) and the items are reduced, while those of excellence (*much*) especially emerge in the first couple of factors, while the rest progressively decrease and in these there are some agreements as well as critical reservations and negative judgments. A higher percentage (from 30 to 50%) came from the Brothers in agreement.

The global report seen in table 6.13, shows that the majority of Brothers (4 out of 5) held on the positive factors regarding the attraction of vocations, saying that the elderly and ill Brothers (80.7%) should take care of this. The other 20% was divided among those who disagreed (9.1%) including those with reservations or criticisms (10.2%).

It is interesting to discover that within the general culture of the St. John of God Brothers, this fraternal gesture positively contributes to the attraction of vocations. There is a mixed opinion that in reality the witness of the daily life of the Brothers caring for their ill and elderly Brothers is seen to attract vocations. More so however, is the emphasis upon the intrinsic value and virtue of the work of charity the Brothers offer to God.

Likewise, three out of four Brothers considered prayer for vocations (75.1%) to be the most positive way to attract vocations, but 17.9% disagreed.

We see in the second series of factors (from 3 to 6) various approaches and community lifestyles described. Many answers came in about this percentage-wise; several have been reduced by the “*no reply*” list (from 73.3% to 64.4%) and the list of criticisms (from 21.3% to 28.5%).

In the first section, three out of four Brothers recognised that *a simple, sober and welcoming community took first place (73.3%)* while only 21.3% gave negative judgments, criticisms and reservations. This points out that the Brothers claim that *a good climate of spiritual life does exist (69.9%)*.

The answers to the other attitudes relative to the serenity and fraternity in the community are a little less, with 64.8% of the Brothers recognising a climate of happiness in their own vocation or an authentic expression of fraternity (64.4%). In the first case (happiness), the Brothers with reservations come to 26.4%, and if fraternity is manifested by external expressions, then their reservations climb to 28.5%. This confirms some element of difficulty or uneasiness with at least a good quarter of the Brothers.

While there were many doubts and criticisms expressed, there were also many who did not reply (from 10% to 13%). Last of the three factors related to the orientation of openness towards the young Brothers in the community, there were few replies to this question (39%). Amongst the reasons given was that the older Brothers did not understand the way young people talk (52.4%), or they couldn't get on with young people (56.1%). Regarding these last two mentioned, more than half the Brothers said that something must be done at once to remedy this matter.

This goes to show that a good part of the Brothers have a positive attitude to the problem of opening up to young people, nevertheless they are in the minority with 47.9% to 34.5%.

5.2. Deepening the analysis

For the analytical deepening of each item we will use a triple subdivision of factors that we maintain are logical and illuminating for further reflections on the positive factor of vocations. First of all there is the concrete behaviour in accordance with the attitudes, lifestyle and orientations of the community toward young people.

5.2.1. Practical behaviour

We have observed that a favourable practical behaviour of the community regarding the fostering of vocations was indicated by the concern of the elderly and sick Brothers (80.7%).

This was seen as excellent by many Brothers (30.8%); especially, in the USA (43.3%), followed by Central Europe (37.6%) and Latin America (34.9%). Considering the sum of the two positive columns, attention is drawn to the elderly Brothers with most in Latin America (84.9%), Southern Europe (82.6%), Central Europe (81.5%), while it is relatively less in the geographic zones where there are newer foundations and consequently not so many elderly Brothers. Such concerns are felt by the General and Provincial governments (89.7%), the Priors (85.2%), the vocation promoters (77.2%), in the two central bands of the interviewed ones, the middle-aged (83.4%) and young Brothers (80.1%).

Actually this item at the top of the classification of the favourable vocational factors presents us with some doubt, since we had partly tried to explain this in the preceding paragraph. There is a theological aspect to this, such as the witness to charity and the reality of the dogma of the Mystical Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints, resulting in concern for the care of the ill and elderly Brothers, which in itself can be a source of attraction in the vocational perspective, therefore it is necessary for the community to make this visible to the young Brothers. This needs to be given priority in the Brothers' generous dedication.

On the other hand, we have to bow before the data of the truth; *prayer for vocations* (75.1%) has always been considered since this is the apostolic preaching of the Church, and is one of the positive and principal factors we have to implore from God since Jesus told us this in his preaching: "*Beseech the Lord of the harvest to send many workers into his harvest.*"

This factor was in fact considered not only by three quarters of the Brothers as one of the principal elements to attract vocations, but also it tells us that there is a deep conviction and a concrete attitude towards this in the communities. Probably it is actually present in all the communities, but it is only considered a priority by three quarters of them. Especially in the zones of Asia (83.5% with 8 points higher than the average), Central Europe (83%) and Latin America (77.3%); in the other regions the percentages are indicated around the average, while few is considered or not at in the communities of Africa (33.4%) which has the highest percentage of critical reservations in negative terms.

Those who give special importance to this are the middle-aged (79.2%) and the young Brothers (77.8%), these latter are also the most absent in their replies (19.3%). The elderly Brothers are not the only ones who recognise its value, but also the 79.8% of the Brothers in the first 5 years of profession, together with the Priors (80.6%), the General and Provincial governments (79.3%), the vocation promoters (78.6%), the diploma recipients (76.1%), and 73.2% of the graduates.

All of this could positively be considered to be one of the signs of the quality of the spirit of supernatural faith within the Order.

5.2.2. Profound attitudes and lifestyle

Among the deepest attitudes and the life that the St. John of God Brothers consider positive factors in attracting vocations, is a happy and sober community lifestyle. This took the first place (73.3%), and while it came first in what the question asked for, it nevertheless received only the third place on the scale in agreement. The simplicity and sobriety of the Brothers' lifestyle is particularly present in the communities of the USA (78.3%), Latin America (77.9%), Central Europe (76.2%) and Asia (73.2%), this last mentioned had the most reservations (24.4%) along with the Brothers in Africa (26.2% with 5 points higher than the average) and also Southern Europe with only (22.9%).

Those who say this lifestyle is present in their communities are the Brothers in Africa (28.6%), the Priors (25.2%), the USA 25%, Asia 24.4% and the General and Provincial governments 14.9%.

There was much criticism from the young (22.6%) and middle-aged Brothers (22.5%), the graduates (27.4%), the diploma holders (20.2%) and the Brothers who do not hold positions of responsibility (24.9%).

The presence of a good climate of spiritual life (69.9%) is often accompanied in the communities by a sober, simple and pleasant lifestyle. This constitutes the best milieu for perseverance in vocation, above all where the young Brothers are concerned. It thereby becomes a motive for attraction and reflection in fostering vocations. This is maintained by 69.9% of the Brothers, especially in Latin America (77.4% with 7 points higher than the average), Asia (75.5%), Africa (69%), the young Brothers (72%), the graduates (75%), the General and Provincial governments (75.8%) and the Priors (77.5%).

There are also some reservations (22%), especially in Africa (27.4%), Central Europe (26.5%), the USA (23.4%), as well as from the 26% of the young and 23.4% of the middle-aged Brothers and from the 25.7% of the formators.

The attention of the Brothers was focused on this presence or absence in the communities, and above in regards to its vocational effectiveness. This is simply our own hypothesis, but we hope it may be able to help you to think about the impact of these results; also because this item could be compared to question #30 that already was seen to be quite positive.

The witness of a happy religious life (64.8%) is always part of this group of sincere attitudes that have a positive presence in the community. Indeed it is always a pleasant revelation to see Brothers living their daily life with happiness for it forcibly expresses how they approach their vocation. It is interesting to see that two out of three Brothers feel that this is a great attraction for vocations.

This comes above all from the young Brothers (71.6%) with around 7 points higher than the average. Lesser so are the middle-aged Brothers with an average around (64%). The greatest number of reservations came from the 36-55 middle-aged Brothers (with 31%, five points higher than the average of 26.4%); then came the graduates (34.3%) and the formators (30%), the communities in Asia (31.5%) and Southern Europe (28.7%) and Central Europe (25.9%).

If this factor can be an indicator of a cheerful climate in the communities, those of Latin America (73.2%) and Africa (71.4%) seem to top the list.

We now come to discussing fraternity in the community, already touched upon in questions # 31 to #35, relating to the lifestyles of fraternal and community living. The perception of ***a lively community life animated by authentic expressions of fraternal charity (64.4%)*** is always considered as a positive factor in attracting vocations. This is based in the Gospel message ***“come and see”***. This is aimed at stimulating within young men a more open view towards religious consecration. Fraternal life and the joy of one’s own vocation are, in fact, two catalysts that are capable of drawing young men toward an active life dedicated to God and neighbour.

The elderly Brothers answered this question well (61.3%), as also the young Brothers, (71.2% with 7 points higher than the average); the major superiors (71.3%) and above all the formators (74.3%). Also positive replies came from the Brothers in the USA (78.3% with 14 points higher than the average), Asia (76.2%), Latin America (68%) and Central Europe (67.2%). There were also reservations in these factors (30.8% in comparison to 28.5% of the average), as well as in Asia (31.5%) and Africa (32.2%).

2.5.3. Orientation and openness towards youth

It needs to be remembered that vocation promotion is basically aimed towards young people. If in the preceding items we have been centred upon community, its lifestyle, animation, the witness to fraternity and the happiness of living the consecrated life, then this is not to be simply left within the confines of the Brothers' residence. The preparatory Committee that formulated the questionnaire visualised openness to the world of the young and this fundamental dimension of vocation promotion must always be born in mind. With this attitude and awareness we now move on to examine other factors related to a relationship with young people.

What immediately comes to mind is the general lack of attention given to this sector of the juvenile world, since this item was placed last in the classification, thereby showing how little the Brothers know about young people these days.

An analytical reading of the answers will allow us to make a more articulated consideration and go deeper into the subject in order to do something practical about it.

In regards to *the day-to-day schedules and habits of the communities to understand young people*, 47.9% retain that something is now being done about it, while 39% of the Brothers say absolutely nothing at all is being done.

The first to recognise the absence of this factor and its importance, are the General and Provincial governments (52.8% with 13 points higher than the average). This is the highest percentage of all the Brothers. The most critical are the middle-aged Brothers with 43.6%. This gives a good indication, because such awareness is very clear that the major superiors see the urgency of the situation and can look to the future and plan accordingly.

Looking at the geographical zones we see great uncertainty to recognize this incongruity of these times in community life coming from the Brothers in Africa (45.2%), Southern Europe (44%), Asia (41%), the 36-55 age group (43.6%), the 56-74 age group (40.2%), the graduates (41.9%) and formators (41.4%).

A certain openness and closeness of the community to the world of the young is found by the Brothers in Central Europe (57.6% with 10 points higher than the average), Latin America (56.9%), Asia (55.1%), the young Brothers (56.3%), the Priors (52.2%) and formators (52.8%).

Another element for consideration is the way the Brothers communicate and speak with young people. A great deal of what the Brothers say is often considered incomprehensible to them and thereby stands in the way of a relationship that needs to be direct, simple, frank and to the point. It is important that the Brothers learn to live with them without surrendering to the temptation of patronising them, but rather maintaining themselves with dignity and kindness without being afraid of the juvenile exuberances around them.

Only 36.1% of the Brothers say that young people understand what they are talking about and to some extent 54.4% recognise this separation and inadequacy. Being aware of this situation can be a means to do something practical to overcome it.

The results that emerged here tell us that this dimension is really central both to vocation promotion and relationships among the different generations of Brothers. Language is not purely and simply words in their etymology, but all that goes with this: emotions, impressions, judgments, evaluations, and experiences.

This is also perceived from the data received from Brothers of different generations and mentality. In fact our percentages tell us how the perception of language understood by young people (36.1%), is the greatest percentage (but even greater) is that of the young Brothers (51.9% with 15 points higher than the average), and from the middle-aged Brothers (41.4% with 4 points higher than the average). Already this data, with such a distance between the two, opens up very diversified perspectives. If we consider the other two older age groups, we see the middle-aged (25.3%) and elderly Brothers (21.2%) with more expressive differences.

Not all the Brothers (52.4%) understood what was meant about the language of young people (that it is not easy to recognise). Here the percentages warn us that they are mostly from the elderly Brothers 47.8%, while those of the middle-aged ones come next 59.3%. From the young Brothers come 44.1% and the middle-aged ones (36-54 years) to 53.1%.

In every case a greater understanding of language means a greater facility of communication and this is especially emphasised by the Brothers in Asia (62.2% with 26 points higher than the average), Central Europe (45%), Africa (45.2%), the vocation promoters 44.3%, but only 32.1% of the General and Provincial governments and 35.6% of the Priors.

We can get some very constructive and promising answers if we direct our attention to **the most critical percentages that recognise such a difficulty (52.4%)**. Recognising this breakdown are the Brothers in Southern Europe (61.8% with many points higher than the average), Latin America (58.7%), Africa (48.8%), Central Europe with 43.4%, the USA with 45% and 34.6% for Asia. Then come the major superiors (62.1%), the Priors 54.5%, and the vocation promoters 48.6% while the young Brothers are quite familiar with the mentality and language of young people.

Finally it seems that **there is not a suitable level of knowledge of the world of the young (56.1%)** in more than half the Brothers. Less negative are 34.5% of the Brothers who maintain that there is quite a lot of such knowledge or at least enough of it. Fortunately this leaves a bit of space to make up the gap.

Positive perceptions come from Asia (52.7% with 18 points higher than the average), Central Europe (42.8% with 8 points higher than the average), Latin America (34.9%), the young Brothers (44%), the middle-aged ones (39.4%) and vocation promoters (44.3%).

Those who recognise that the level of knowledge of the world of youth is scarce are the Brothers from Southern Europe (60.3%), Africa (61.9%), the USA (58.3%), Latin America (57%), the middle-aged Brothers (61.7% with 4 points higher than the average). There is a possible initial sign of separation among the generations, but perhaps on the level of the first two age groups it is not so marked; also the graduates (59.3%), the General and Provincial

governments (58.6%) together with the Priors (56.7%). This is a warning to be aware that this is a providential basis for future improvement in the vocation promotion of young men.

A precious observation to be gained from all this is that the formators become absolutely aware of the matter and be prepared to take the necessary steps to tackle the situation. A valuable observation crosses this whole series of items, and it is tied up to the confirmation that those who in some way are in contact with young people, for example, the formators and the vocational promoters, make sure that they become aware of his situation and are well prepared to tackle the task.

In conclusion, among the positive considerations of the community to foster vocations, we can further clarify a subdivision observed in the preceding paragraph, namely what is actually being done, not only in the community, but outside of it as well. Firstly, we are aware that there is a good prayer-life in the communities and also a profound sense of fraternity. Then there is also a clearly diffused perception that much still remains to be done. This calls for a greater flexibility in the day-to-day life of the community if young people are to be attracted to it and made welcome.

6. AVAILABILITY OF BROTHERS PREPARED TO BECOME INVOLVED IN VOCATION PROMOTION (question 52)

In predicting any increase and improvement in vocation promotion, we would like to present a whole series of possibilities for the availability of Brothers to become involved in vocation promotion. Already in the first part of the investigation we advanced two questions (#9 and #10) that are relative, not to this specific matter, but rather more on the general view of the formation. We received many positive answers to these questions. In fact 25.9% of the Brothers interviewed said they would like to become involved in vocation promotion. Going more into this, we will specify this availability in the different sectors of formation. But there are 53.4% who do not feel that they are prepared to take on these assignments. Those who are prepared to do so are 14.4% of the Brothers who are willing to offer their service to some portion of formation: 8.8% for postulants, 7.4% for novices, and 8.5% for scholastics.

Here we are analysing the question with greater articulation and a more concrete understanding of the formation of the young. Only 3% of the Brothers did not reply. The rest generally answered question #52. *“What would you be able to contribute by collaborating in the field of vocation promotion?”*

	%
1. Witness	52.9
2. Live the life of a St. John of God Brothers with joy	46.0
3. Daily prayer	38.0
4. Introducing candidates to the vocation promoters	21.7
5. Supporting the vocation promoters	20.2
6. Being prepared to be a formator	7.5
7. Other	0.5

We can see the value of this question by the insistence of the Brothers and by their convictions that have sent in to us since half of them (52.9%) were positive. They testified to their happiness as Brothers (46%) and this witness of happiness is repeated in question 27 (6%),

and 81.6% of the Brothers considered some factors that could greatly facilitate the insertion of young men into the mission.

The Brothers said that their daily prayer (38%) constitutes a further rich component to their co-responsibility and interest in vocation promotion, and also their availability to welcome the reception of the candidates and the Brothers in formation (21.7%). This is verified and confirmed once more in the questions related to the necessity of the accompaniment, see questions 49.2; 33; 27.1; 27.2; and 26.3.

A good **20.2% are prepared to support the responsibility of formation**. However only **7.5% were prepared to offer themselves as formators**. This latter information about the real availability appears very limited, while replies to question #10 reached 25.9% but only 14.4% said they were willing. What can one say? Surprising!

On the whole, we ascertain that such availability is primarily assembled by elements of how a happy fraternal community life is intensely lived in a spiritual nature. However all of this seems to escape the problem, even if there is nevertheless one Brother in 5 who is prepared to occasionally give support. We think that here they could be encouraged to participate and help with their time and energies, those who are responsible for the direction and planning of vocational projects.

The collaboration by witness (52.9%) seems to be the basic conviction winding throughout the whole of religious life. Here we see the theme of the relationship with vocation promotion confirmed. All the geographical zones show this to constitute the fundamental element, especially in Africa (64.3% with 12 points), Latin America (54.1%), and Southern Europe (54.5%). The other regions put it in the second place of preferences; the USA (60% with 14% higher than the average), Asia (59.8% with 13 higher than the average) all who maintained the priority the daily life lived with joy, while in Central Europe, first place went to daily prayer (53.4% with 15 points higher than the average).

Tab. 6.14 – Willingness of the Brothers to collaboration in vocation promotion. Distributed in geographical zones (in V.A. and percentage).

	GEOGRAPHIC ZONE						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	Lat.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	30	20	3	1	3	2	1
	3.0	5.3	1.6	1.2	1.7	1.6	1.7
Witness	535	207	96	54	93	56	29
	52.9	54.5	50.8	64.3	54.1	44.1	48.3
Daily prayer	385	145	101	16	56	48	19
	38.0	38.2	53.4	19.0	32.6	37.8	31.7
Willing for formator role	76	16	11	9	25	11	4
	7.5	4.2	5.8	10.7	14.5	8.7	6.7
Welcoming to candidates	220	72	45	22	54	22	5
	21.7	18.9	23.8	26.2	31.4	17.3	8.3
Living in joy	466	191	58	44	61	76	36
	46.0	50.3	30.7	52.4	35.5	59.8	60.0
Helping vocation promoters	204	63	38	20	33	31	19
	20.2	16.6	20.1	23.8	19.2	24.4	31.7
Other	5	2	2	0	0	0	1
	.5	.5	1.1	.0	.0	.0	1.7

Witness value is considered a positive priority both among the young Brothers (45.6% with 3 points higher than the average), and especially so by the elderly (62.1%) and middle-aged Brothers (58.1%). For years of profession, the diploma holders (53.2%), the graduates and Priors (55.4%), the formators, but the General and Provincial governments consider the priority is the daily life lived with joy (56.3% with 10 points higher than the average).

The happy life of being a St. John of God Brother (46%) was given priority in the USA (60%) and Asia (59.8%), while in all the other zones it took second place, and in Central Europe third place, after daily prayer (53.4%) and witness (50.2%). The 36-55 years age group gave this priority (49.8%), the older Brothers (49.8%) the young (43.5%) and the elderly Brothers (40.2%), however it was always among the first three choices. The General and Provincial governments gave this a priority (56.3%), and second place by the Priors (48.6%), formators (44.3%) and of the Brothers without responsible positions (43.9%).

The value of the daily prayer to implore good and holy vocations (38%) was the choice of the elderly Brothers (58.3% with 20 points higher than the average), the middle-aged (41%) and the young Brothers (29.7%) and the next age group (32.2%).

Tab. 6.15 – Willingness of the Brothers to collaborate in vocation promotion. Distribution in age groups and years of profession (in V.A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUP					YEARS PROFESSED			
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	1 - 5	6-25	26-50	51+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	30	3	7	10	9	4	3	13	9
	3.0	1.3	2.3	3.1	6.8	1.9	1.1	3.7	6.1
Witness	535	109	150	189	82	93	139	195	94
	52.9	45.6	48.9	58.3	62.1	44.7	49.6	55.9	63.5
Daily prayer	385	71	99	133	77	65	96	136	77
	38.0	29.7	32.2	41.0	58.3	31.3	34.3	39.0	52.0
Willingness to be formator	76	40	28	8	0	35	29	10	1
	7.5	16.7	9.1	2.5	.0	16.8	10.4	2.9	.7
Welcoming to candidates	220	68	73	67	11	55	74	68	19
	21.7	28.5	23.8	20.7	8.3	26.4	26.4	19.5	12.8
Living happy life	466	104	153	152	53	99	123	171	60
	46.0	43.5	49.8	46.9	40.2	47.6	43.9	49.0	40.5
Helping vocation promoters	204	58	71	60	12	41	69	70	16
	20.2	24.3	23.1	18.5	9.1	19.7	24.6	20.1	10.8
Other	5	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
	.5	.4	.3	.6	.8	.5	.4	.6	.7

This constitutes the nucleus of priority in Central Europe (53.4% with 15 points higher than the average) and Southern Europe (38.2%) The superiors put this in third place (32.3%) and Africa (19% with 20 points higher than the average) puts it in the penultimate position. It does better with the Brothers without positions (42.3% with 4 points higher than the average).

Tab. 6.16 – Willingness of the Brothers to collaborate in vocation promotion. Distribution by office held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G.P.Gv	Prior	Form	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	30	3	3	3	21
	3.0	3.4	1.4	4.3	3.3
Witness	535	47	123	35	330
	52.9	54.0	55.4	50.0	52.1
Prayer	385	28	72	17	268
	38.0	32.2	32.4	24.3	42.3
Willingness to be formator	76	5	14	16	41
	7.5	5.7	6.3	22.9	6.5
Welcoming candidates	220	16	59	20	125
	21.7	18.4	26.6	28.6	19.7
Brothers' happy life	466	49	108	31	278
	46.0	56.3	48.6	44.3	43.9
Helping vocation promoters	204	21	52	12	119
	20.2	24.1	23.4	17.1	18.8
Other	5	0	0	1	4
	.5	.0	.0	1.4	.6

The welcoming reception of candidates and Brothers in formation (21.7%) confirms what went before (questions 33, 27.1 and 51.1) regarding accompaniment (questions 26.2; 27.2; 49.2 and 50.2). This is considered to be one of the fundamental priorities for perseverance in one's vocation. This is the prerogative in all the geographical zones and is placed between the third and fifth places out of 6. The age groups put it in fourth place but with different percentages. It comes third place in Africa (26.2%), and fourth in Latin America (31.4%), Central Europe (23.8%), Southern Europe (18.9%). The young Brothers (28.5% with 7 points higher than the average), while the other groups were less (the elderly: 8.3%). It was noted much more by the formators (28.6%) and from the Priors (26.6%), the General and Provincial governments were less (18.4%).

Sustaining and supporting those who are responsible of formation (20.2%) was given the fourth and fifth places; the USA (31.7% with 11 points higher than the average), Asia (24.4%) and Africa (23.8%). This is a sign of the generosity of the Brothers who would like to do something positive to help in vocation promotion; The young Brothers (24.3%) and the next age group (23.1%), but the elderly Brothers who did not have the necessary energy were less (9.1%). Then came the graduates (25.6%) and the superiors at all levels (24%).

A readiness to become formators was demonstrated by only 7.5% of the Brothers and was put in the last place. A relatively greater availability came from the Brothers in Latin America (14.5% with 7 points higher than the average). Then came Africa (10.7%), Asia (8.7%), the graduates (11.6%) and the vocation promoters (22.9%). Other percentages are much lower (up to 4.2% for Central Europe). Generosity was shown by the young Brothers (16.7%, with 9 points higher than the average), as was also from the next age group, but as was expected much less by the elderly Brothers, as confirmed on the scale of years of profession. Their collaboration however is generous, fraternal and sincere, primarily putting themselves as examples of prayer, witness and living a joyful life and taking an interest in vocation promotion.

In conclusion, we put the first three judgements by the Brothers in the Order in which they gave most importance to in collaborating in vocation promotion.

- geographic zone		
Southern Europe:	witness, happy life,	daily prayer;
Central Europe:	daily prayer; witness,	happy life;
Latin America:	witness, happy life,	daily prayer;
Africa:	witness, happy life,	welcoming candidates;
Asia:	happy life, witness,	daily prayer;
USA:	happy life, witness,	daily prayer;
- Age group		
18-35 years:	witness, happy life,	daily prayer;
36-55 years:	happy life, witness,	daily prayer;
56-74 years:	witness, happy life,	daily prayer;
75 e + years:	witness, daily prayer,	happy life.
- Office held		
Major superior	happy life, witness,	daily prayer;
Prior	witness, happy life,	daily prayer,
Vocation promoter	witness, happy life,	daily prayer.
No office :	witness, happy life,	daily prayer.

7. THE CHARISATIC VALUES THAT THE ORDER PROPOSE TODAY TO YOUNG MEN (question 53)

The first chapter of the *Formation Program of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God* centres on the identity of the Brother, and particularly on the specific charism of the Order, its spirituality, and on the life of the Founder. It also speaks of the attitudes and qualities of the Brothers, but what above all interests us here is condensed in §5 “*The creative fidelity of the charism*” (articles 27-33), that concludes with the fundamental values of the charism. Pointed out among these are: the icon of the Good Samaritan, communion with the Church, the centrality of suffering humanity, and the enculturation of the charism to meet the needs of new times.

A picture of values has been built upon the basis of these main orientations and indicates what can be attractive when proposed to young men of this generation. It is a profile that has been submitted for the evaluation of all the Brothers in the terms of the underlying question that arises and upon which they could express their preferences and judgments.

To concentrate their reflections on the proposal of this picture of values to be introduced to young men of today are the different aspects of the charism of the Order. This visible and readily available image is capable of giving meaning to the life of a young man who desires to answer a vocation directed to the service of the poor and sick.

7.1 The general picture

We introduce the most evident results in this paragraph. Indeed the question proposed (#52) it put in these terms: “*How do you see the values of our Order made more attractive to young men today?*”

Tab. 6.17 – The degree of Brothers’ appreciation of the attraction of the Order’s values to young men of today (in percentage and average)

	<i>N.R.</i>	Much	Enough	<i>Little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Av.</i>
1. Charism of the Founder	6.9	58.5	29.7	4.5	0.3	1.43*
2. Caring for people regardless of race, religion, nation.	6.4	55.3	34.4	3.7	0.2	1.45
3. Caring for the sick and needy	7.1	52.4	36.6	3.8	0.2	1.48
4. Solidarity	10.6	38.2	42.5	8.6	0.1	1.67
5. Authentic and joyful fraternal life	7.3	41.7	38.8	12.0	0.2	1.68
6. Intense spirituality	9.1	38.6	37.2	14.8	0.3	1.74

Variouly distributed in the 6 items listed these values showed an appreciative response that can be interpreted by the high percentage in the *much* column With an average of 1 (Av: 1), and even within a narrow range of only 30%, especially indicated in the first three values, that there is a judgment predominantly directed toward the column of excellence (*much*). The number of those who did not answer was rather limited but the elderly Brothers had the highest percentage with 26%.

A more careful reading to table 6.17 shows that 88.2% of the Brothers say *the figure and charism of St. John of God* is quite attractive for today's young men. While more than 58.5% maintain that the charism is very attractive, although 4.8% say it leaves some perplexities. Even

higher than the figure of the Founder came the policy of the Brothers' extending their service to all regardless of race, religion and nationality (89.7%).

This clearly outlines the powerful mission of the Brothers' hospitaller charism that today is particularly felt, especially towards those who are in particular need. We see this policy of service "*without distinctions of race, religion and nationality*" as a priority with only a few negative and critical elements, even lower than those of those of the preceding item (3.9%). The third value which is closely tied to the first two, shows *caring of the sick and needy (89%)*, which only drew 4% negative replies.

Of these most important subjects that we considered, all had little differences in the average column and the least *no reply*. Therefore this seems to focus upon the identity of the Order that it proposes today, and that the figure and specific charism of the Founder are guarantees for the Brothers throughout the world. Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical "Deus caritas est", says a charism shows that the love of God is concretised for his people. It is God incarnate in the charitable works of the Church, translated into practice by his most generous children, the saints of the charity – one of whom is St. John of God. St. John of God is an icon that is recognised in the world of today and his Brothers diffuse his fundamental and principal characteristics through the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

In fact, the value of solidarity (80.7%) tells us that the St. John of God Brothers are considered as one of the most important visible means by which the Order can lift up its head in pride before young people today. Those whose replies showed some reservations came to 8.7%.

There was more criticism on the last two subjects (12.2%). This speaks of the authentic and happy fraternal life (80.5%), where once more the characteristic of happiness is featured (cfr. questions 27.6; 31 and 32).

One gets the impression in reading this that it touches the fundamental elements that are more internal, strong and solid and sustaining in the structure of the Order, and they are devoid of any embroideries and trimmings that might confuse its features.

Actually, all this is based upon an intense spiritual life (75.8%), (cfr. questions 18, 27.3; 27.5 and 30). Three quarters of the Brothers considered this and they are certainly the vast majority, but there were a few who differed 15.1%, nevertheless, it puts the Order in a good light.

In conclusion, the charitable service, above all to the needy and sick, sustained by a deep spirituality, today still constitutes a systematic picture of the values of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God to young people of this generation.

7.2. A deeper analysis

The analysis of the picture we have studied tells us that the values can reasonably be divided into two more sectors and highlighted: an interface turned towards the world and society; and also service of social charity *ad extra*, and an interface turned within the Order related to fraternal life in a community with a vibrant spiritual life. However such a subdivision also emerges from the percentages that are quantitatively similar and are incorporated in the two great sections mentioned above.

7.2.1. The values of the Founder and his charitable charism

Indeed the figure and charism of St. John of God (88.2%) constitute for all the Brothers in the Order the inspiring nerve centre of their whole religious work. This makes an impression on young men and they remain impressed and this can influence the choice of their state in life, consequently it constitutes a strong attraction for new vocations. It almost recognises the summing up of the St. John of God Brothers and is confirmed by the fact that it received first place in the hierarchy of averages.

Also from the data we received, we are able to sort out some differences that, not being meaningfully raised, nevertheless accent its specific aspects among the various geographic zones, age groups, academic titles and the offices fulfilled by the Brothers of the Order.

Where the value of the charism of the Founder seems to receive the highest marks comes from the Brothers in Asia (90.5%), Africa (90.5%), Latin America (88.4%), Southern Europe (87.9%), Central Europe (87.8%) and the USA (83.3%) from where we also observed the highest percentage of critical reservations (8.3%).

Within the age groups we see that the young Brothers expressed the highest percentage in the esteem of the Founder (91.2%), with only 5.8% reservations. Perhaps with the passing of the years such enthusiasm may seem to decrease, but we see in the percentages related to the three age groups that follow, with respectively 90.9% (the next age group), 90.4% (middle-aged), and 81.8% (elderly), that show the data is actually higher. We see the qualified technicians (88.3%) and the graduates (87.8%), and also with 7.6% of the inevitable perplexities. The General and Provincial governments have the highest percentages of respect and admiration for the figure and charism of the Founder (93.1%), followed by the Priors (90.5%), the formators (88.6%) and from the Brothers without positions of authority (86.7%).

Nine out of ten Brothers maintain that the charism of the Order is the basis upon which the Brothers care for people without any distinction of race, religion or nationality (89.7%), and this is exactly what they want to propose to today's young men. In decreasing order we see, the USA (96.6%), Africa (95.2%), Asia (92.1%), Central Europe EC (88.8%), Latin America (88.3%) and Southern Europe (87.6%).

Also here the percentages of the first two age groups are high: the young Brothers (93.7%), and the next age group (93.5%), followed by the middle-aged (88.3%) and elderly Brothers (78.7%). The greatest number of reservations came from the two intermediary age groups. Here we also see 93% of the graduates, 92.8% of the Priors, 92.2% of the major superiors and 87.1% of the formators, who also showed a higher percentage of reservations (7.1%).

The respect for the values just described is subsequently confirmed by the percentages, a little less than the item that introduced the same contents of ***care toward the needy and the sick (89%)***, without stressing the equality of all people. Here Asia leads (93.7%), then Central Europe (92.6%), Africa (91.7%), the USA (90%), Southern Europe (86.1%) and Latin America (86%) which also has 5.8% of critical reservations as does the USA (6.7%).

In the age groups the highest percentage comes from the second age group (93.2%) and the young Brothers (92.5%); followed by the middle-aged (87.4%) and elderly Brothers (77.3%) who had more criticisms than the others (5.4%). Next came the General and Provincial

governments with 94.2%, the Priors (92%) and formators (88.6%), which reduced the criticisms (38 out of the 1012 Brothers who were in agreement).

In the context of charitable service toward the neighbour, there is also the value of solidarity that constitutes a very important resource and a motive for choice, to which today's young people are equally drawn. A high percentages of Brothers interviewed show this to be 80.7%. The highest came from Asia (86.6%), then Latin America (84.3%), the USA (83.3%), Africa (81%), Southern Europe (79.5%) and only 75.2% from Central Europe from where the highest number of criticisms came (also 14.8% with 6 points higher than the average), also the USA (13.3%) and Africa (11.9%).

The young Brothers were very sensitive to this issue (86.2% with 6 points higher than the average) as was the next age group (84%), the graduates (84.9%), the General and Provincial governments (87.4%), the Priors (85.6%); vocation promoters (78.6%) and the diploma holders (79.5%).

None of the above dealt with any radical criticism, but a certain reservation was expressed saying some wanted to discover its reasons. This mainly came from the General and Provincial governments (8%), the vocation promoters (12.9%), the graduates (8.7%) and there were some who wanted to go even further into the subject.

7.2.2. The internal values of the religious community

We now turn our attention to the religious community and the interior characteristics of the Order and we look at the value of an authentic and cheerful fraternal life (80.5%). This comes within the same scope related to solidarity.

Above all, we emphasise and confirm that this note of happiness seems to almost constitute a characteristic that is very beautiful and tremendously positive and fascinating about the Order, and this is seen to be so on a global scale (cfr. questions 27.6; 31 and 32).

This is a positive fact and is agreed upon by three quarters of the Brothers, above all of those of Asia (88.1% with 8 points higher than the average), then Latin America (81.4%), Africa (80.9%), the USA (80%), Central Europe (79.9%) and Southern Europe (77.9%). Especially emphasising this were the young Brothers (84.5%), the diploma holders the General and Provincial governments (83.9%) and the formators (84.3%), the Priors (81.5%) and the graduates (80.3%).

The intensity of a deeper spiritual life was for 75.8% of the Brothers a value that still constitutes an attraction for today's young men. For three quarters of the Brothers the aim for deep spirituality is sufficiently found within the Order and that gives us a suitable answer.

This is especially noted in the USA (83.4% with 8 points higher than the average), in Asia (82.7%), Latin America (78.5%) and in the Central Europe (76.7%), while the greatest critical reserves are expressed by the Brothers in Southern Europe (14.5%), but especially so in Africa (29.8% double the average), the young Brothers (17.6%) and of the next age group (19.3%). Also the General and Provincial governments (20.7%) and formators (17.1%) who manifest a certain perplexity regarding this value, at least in the terms pointed out by the critical percentages that have emerged. In a reasonable interpretative hypothesis it could be thought that these reservations are a more critical judgment compared to precise concrete situations of lesser

spiritual life fervour existing in some regions of the Order, no doubt this could take place with the general average (75.8%) shown above.

In conclusion, it seems that there are plenty of worthwhile reasons for the charisma of the Founder, and above all the visibility of his mission directly expressed in the service of the charity towards others in various needs. This is especially so in a sick society saturated with egoism so evident in self-interest. This is a fascinating reference that is attractive to youth who have a desire to spend their life in the service of sick and needy. The spirit of consecration seems to come later, but in reality it is what sustains the mission and is the strength of the Order and this is the conviction of almost all the Brothers.

8. CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have looked into the situation of vocation promotion within the Order through a series of articulated progressive steps.

First of all there was the sociological study of the factors that contribute to the lack of the vocations in the different regions (q.45). This puts into evidence the prevalence of social and cultural factors such as consumerism and secularisation, the loss of a sense of religion in life and the lack of valid proposals. But there were also other factors derived from delicate family situations such as an only child; then there were the frequent and numerous psychological personality difficulties bothering the young. In this case the different regional contexts qualify also to give much evidence in the way of providing prominence to these factors. This can be attributed to post-modern western society and the materialism that is taking hold of countries of advanced development or are on the way towards it.

We now look at the articulated and effective views from the various age groups and years of profession, academic titles and office held. This will enrich our analysis.

Even though importance is attributed to the phenomenon of secularisation and the consumerism, nevertheless there is a clear perception that it is the weight of socio-cultural causes that was the main impression of most of the Brothers. These are related to factors of a psychological-individual kind, and it is the responsibility of the elders to educate the young in the choice of their vocation. Each Brother has to feel that he is called in the first person to assume the courage to follow his own vocation, and he should encourage young people of this generation to make a similar decision. What are the individual communities of the Order doing about this?

The Provinces and Delegations are putting structural, economic and institutional resources at the disposal of vocation promotion, but they are not always done at the same intensity. We were able to discern great levels of concern about this problem: there is support from the major superiors who have established vocation promotion teams in the various zones where there is already Provincial planning and many economic resources for vocation promotion. However the personal involvement of the co-workers is very limited.

On the individual level, at least 60% of the Brothers say that they are aware of the problem. However there is still very little sharing of the problem to involve co-workers. They also say there very little seen outside the sphere of the Brothers' influence regarding vocation promotion in the different geographical zones. Perhaps a lot of initiatives about the work in the Order is veiled by a certain silence and thus remain in the dark. A more direct and wider

knowledge of the vocation initiatives would serve to create an awareness that could lead to the development of interest. It would also strengthen each Brother's own image and religious identity in the Order. This includes his presence, position and mission in society. Over all it would help to spread and to maintain a vocational sensibility among the co-workers.

The resources necessary for vocation promotion on the individual and institutional levels is supported by the major superiors who urge the development of a specific vocational plan and strategic program to be planned in each Province. This will constitute teams for vocation promotion with specific roles and programs to fulfil. Nevertheless it runs the risk of negativism and much criticism regarding the lack of co-responsibility and involvement by the Brothers and even more so by the co-workers. Sometimes the impression that this process of vocation promotion should be left to those who are delegated to the task. This could be a means of avoiding the problem and cutting oneself off from it and even losing any enthusiasm and generosity connected with it.

Many Provinces have plans of structural initiatives, not only to organise a plan, but also promoting and appreciating the value of the religious vocation. But this is still just in the first stages and, in some cases, rather mordant and in other cases perhaps too formalised and artificial. In any case much will have to be done about it. The Brother chosen to animate his confreres and co-workers must have the necessary attributes to fulfil the task well. He must be especially able to animate the co-workers in regards to vocation promotion, either on a full-time or partial basis.

Only 5% of the Brothers responded that in their Province nothing has been done about this. However, 60% said there were vocation promotion teams functioning, especially in Latin America and Southern Europe. Nevertheless it still needs to be recognised that in some Provinces there is only one Brother dedicated to vocation promotion either full time or part time and in almost half the cases it is simply only on a part-time basis while 21.5% of the Brothers said this was simply done on certain occasions. Only in 25% of the cases do the Brothers emphasise an optimal situation in which vocation promoters are fully occupied with this task.

The lacking of vocation promotion is found in various geographical zones. In each case there are at least five types of problems listed, all with more or less similar percentages. These items are the insufficient accompaniment of candidates, Brothers lacking any motivation due to the scarce results that they see for the efforts they spend on it. Still they remain generous but confused with the means employed in vocation promotion. Added to these is the difficulty of relationships with the local Church that does not support religious vocations. Then there is difficulty found in integration into the local community, especially in Africa and Asia. This could constitute a certain problem of partnership of socio-religious importance.

Less noticeable yet perceived with the same gravity, are other aspects with quite notable frequency; as for example, the improvisation attributed to the Brothers responsible for vocation promotion. In the past this "making do" seemed ordinary enough, but the situation is different now with the changed conditions of society. This was solicited by the formators themselves as well as from the graduates. Then there is the excessive haste to receive young men as postulants, something especially noticed in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

This last problem prompts us to emphasise a recurrent element in the investigation that has a different perception of the problems with the two categories of major superiors, namely the General and Provincial governments. They have a more global perspective than the local Priors,

and they are in contact with the real and urgent demands, and besides they are in a more immediate position to solve particular problems.

To meet these difficulties, it is necessary that the animators of vocation promotion have clearly appointed assignments to fulfil. They must attend to the purpose of the task entrusted to them and perform it well for the benefit of the Church and the Order.

The revitalization of vocation promotion is considered an important duty today when we must confront the challenges of contemporary society. We have structured this around two great nucleuses: one turned to the outside and one directed within the Order.

The evaluations are not particularly exciting, nor are they radically negative. We can speak of promotion soon enough: the highest percentages are in fact those of the two columns of “*enough*” and “*little*”. In every case it is emphasised that it is necessary to strengthen the quality of the roles to introduce in clear and comprehensible terms the values and lifestyle of the Brothers (62.2%) and to make the mission of the Order better known in society and the Church (63.1%).

Following this come a couple of internal roles. First of all in the application of a valid criteria of selection (46.6%) of young men, then in second place, the need to develop their suitability (49.5%). Here the table shows this to be very low, while the criticisms and the reservations have respectively gone from 31.8% to 35%.

There is a *third group of duties*, related to the work of collaboration with the local church (47.1%), but as many Brothers remarked, there is an urgency to become involved in co-responsibility for vocations (46.1%) without simply being delegated to this by the vocation promoters. Most useful for this purpose is the promotion of knowledge of the Order directed to young folk and their families (also to motivate them) and to make good use of the means of social communication.

Here we also notice, as above, that there are some constant matters calling on our attention for consideration and/or confirmation, as for example, the difference of opinions between Priors, vocation promoters and Provincials.

Besides the young Brothers and the next age group, expressing many positive answers, here were some critical ones from the elderly Brothers who expressed their judgments more negatively, but these made little difference to the percentages, even though they differed greatly from the replies of the younger ones.

Finally, the geographical zones are so characteristically different from each another that it is difficult to come up with some suitable generalisations without risking some distortion of the awareness about local problems.

Within this process of renewal of vocation promotion is an *awareness of the importance of the witness* of the whole religious community to introduce to the world the visible presence of the values of the Gospel. These days it is more and more essential and quite fundamental, to illustrate a lifestyle of interpersonal relationships that is attractive, fascinating and desirable.

Pointing out the *positive factors that foster new vocations*, the elderly and ill Brothers were unanimous (80.7%) and they emphasised this with prayer for the vocations (75.1%). They

maintained as equally important, a serene climate of spiritual life (69.9%) that calls for a community lifestyle that is sober, simple and pleasant (73.3%), and where a climate of happiness is expressed for one's own vocation (64.8%) articulated in the fraternity of the common life. This seems to emerge as the description of an ideal community, not the real situation of the actual communities. In fact the radically critical elements (not all) are almost absent in the first column, where instead those that emerge as clearly excellence (*much*), progressively decreases to the last three items related to the condition of young folk. Here we see some decrease in the positive replies and an increase in critical reservations and negative judgments that assume a high percentage (from 30% to 50%) thereby confirming elements of trouble and uneasiness with at least a good quarter of Brothers.

There is much to be desired in the orientation of opening the communities up to young men. This is because strict timetables and customs of some communities. On the question about opening the community up to young men, most answered "*Few*" or "*none*" (39%); that the language is not understood by young people (52.4%); and that the Brothers' level of knowledge about young people is inadequate (56.1%). These latter observations seem to invite the communities to earnestly begin to improve their approach young people. Some Brothers say they already are doing this in their own community; nevertheless it seems they are a happy but slim minority, and that calls for much greater improvement in this matter.

In regards to the availability of the Brothers to take on the responsibility of vocation promotion, there seems to be quite some uncertainty, especially when comparing this with the preceding answers to questions 9 and 10 where only about 25% said they were available. Question 52 puts forward the offer of collaboration as primarily based upon spiritual aspects, such as giving witness, a cheerful fraternal life, daily prayer, and the accompaniment and the reception of the Brothers in formation. Actually taking an active role in vocation promotion remains somewhat perplexing, because most of the Brothers prepared to do this are already involved with it. Probably the question was not precisely put, however the fact remains that, beyond the important aspect of being available, very few have come forward to actually do so. Nevertheless, the elderly Brothers are admirable because they have lived a long life in the Order and now give of their generosity by the offering of their prayers, their friendliness, their moral support and the witness of their life.

Here is a proposal about the vocational charism of the Order's mission. From the picture of the Order's many values, it emerges that most of the Brothers share a belief that today's young people still retain an attraction for a meaningful interest in their search for fulfilment in life.

First of all, the main point is the charism of the Founder (88.2%), together with the mission of the Order to care for suffering humanity without distinction of race, religion or nationality (89.7%), especially those who are most needy (89%). These three elements seem to constitute the identity card of the Order. It gives a more direct and immediate image with which it introduces the social values of the person in today's society who is emerging with particular needs.

To this the value of solidarity is accompanied (80.7%) by the group of correlated values. These are followed in a particular way with two more things that this study revealed as characteristics of the Order. This is the authenticity of a cheerful fraternal life (80.5%) and the intensity of the spiritual life, both individual and community (75.8%). This came out as having the largest number of answers from the Brothers 15.1%, something we find quite fascinating.

On these values, almost all the Brothers focused themselves upon the figure of the Founder and his specific charism of social charity as being the most meaningful and important element.

This is a charism that Pope Benedict XVI recently emphasised in his first encyclical "*Deus caritas est*" in which he says the love of God is concretised and incarnated for his people in the charitable works of the Church, and translated into practice by his most generous children, the saints of charity such as St. John of God. This is the icon that today's world seems to recognise as distinctive of the St. John of God Brothers: the service of charity, above all towards the most in need, and this service is sustained by a deep spirituality.

This is the synthesis that has also been for a long time the popular image, and is now diffused and interiorised as the fundamental characteristic of the charism of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A VOCATION PROMOTION CAPABLE OF MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF HOSPITALITY

Hospitality defines the identity of the St. John of God Brother because it belongs to his special consecration that is the object of a unique vow. This vow of hospitality taken by Brothers of the Hospitaller Order emphasises the merciful life of Christ by which the Brothers express their special vocation that places the human person as the epicentre of their apostolate. Therefore the Brothers *“always respect the rights of the person to be born, to live in dignity, to be cared for in illness and to die with dignity”* (art.23a). Hospitality is considered as the precious fruit of the other evangelical counsels, since it is based upon fraternal love in community, the spiritual environment of the spirit of hospitality that is the purpose of each Brother’s formation. For these reasons the formation of the St. John of God Brother must answer to the challenges of today's hospitality and be sensitive and enlightened to *“the issues of suffering and marginalisation with suitable means to address the situation and/or transform, eliminate the personal and social structures that produce it”* (Formation Program 2000, Introduction, 7d, p.19).

This charismatic dimension of hospitality confronts a remarkable challenge in the post-modern society of today, particularly as a clear vocational proposal that is at the heart of every vocation promoter.

In the preceding chapters we have studied what is missing, the articulations and dimensions and realisations of the Provinces, the methodologies, objectives and the factors that foster an increase in vocations. The obvious charismatic values of the Hospitaller Order are still attractive to young men today. This can be facilitated because the Order’s charism is centred upon the person and also various ideological positions that appeal to young men.

Our questionnaire gave ample space to the creativity of each Brother to answer to a question-stimulus set before him so that he could offer his own suggestions and proposals for a better undertaking of vocation promotion today.

The collaboration of the Brothers was quite notable with 56.6% responding positively, some sending in one or more suggestions that were sorted through by the committee of Brothers on the preparatory committee. These submissions fell into a series of 15 sectors containing similar proposals organised around a homogeneous central nucleus.

This chapter sets forth the results of this section of the questionnaire and offers some comments and evaluations.

1. STRUCTURES AND ARTICOLATIONS SUGGESTED IN THE REPLIES RECEIVED (question.54)

The answers varied from simple to complex, and were sent in by 573 Brothers, equal to 56.6%. No replies came from 439 Brothers, equal to 43.4%. 1167 Brothers sent in their suggestions.

The answers were distributed keeping in mind the percentages, in accordance with the usual varying differentiations of the geographical zones, age and years of profession, academic studies, office held, etc., as appears in tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3. This distribution can also give an explanation of the nature of the suggested proposals on the basis of their origin.

Tab. 7.1 - Distribution by geographical zones of the proposals for vocation promotion challenging the Hospitaller Order today (in V. A. and percentage)

	ZONE OF ORIGIN						
	TOTAL	S.Eur.	C.Eur.	Africa	L.Amer	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	479	211	93	20	49	76	30
	47.3	55.5	49.2	23.8	28.5	59.8	50.0
Suggestions	533	169	96	64	123	51	30
	52.7	44.5	50.8	76.2	71.5	40.2	50.0

Considering the geographical zones, the percentages of the Provinces show that the greatest number comes from Africa (81%) and Latin America (77.9%), with much more data than the average. In fact all the other regions have responded with lower percentages to the appropriate average under 56.6%.

Tab. 7.2 – Distribution by age and years of profession of the proposals for vocation promotion challenging the Hospitaller Order today (in V. A. and percentage)

	AGE GROUP				YEARS OF PTOFESSION				
	TOTAL	18-35	36-55	56-74	75-96	Fino a	6-25	26-50	50+
T O T A L	1012	239	307	324	132	208	280	349	148
*Percentage	100.0	23.6	30.3	32.0	13.0	20.6	27.7	34.5	14.6
No reply	479	103	143	151	75	98	119	168	81
	47.3	43.1	46.6	46.6	56.8	47.1	42.5	48.1	54.7
Suggestion	533	136	164	173	57	110	161	181	67
	52.7	56.9	53.4	53.4	43.2	52.9	57.5	51.9	45.3

Keeping age in mind, the young Brothers answered in great numbers (60.3%), the elderly Brothers came up with 50%.

The greatest numbers of suggestions came from the graduates (65.7%), almost 2 out of 3. Fewer suggestions came from the diploma holders and technicians (54%). Amongst the office holders the gr

Tab. 7.3 – Distribution by office held of the proposals for vocation promotion challenging the Hospitaller Order today (in V. A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD					
	TOTAL	G&P	Gv	Prior	Forma.	None -
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633	
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5	
No Reply	479	36	99	17	327	
	47.3	41.4	44.6	24.3	51.7	
Suggestions	533	51	123	53	306	
	52.7	58.6	55.4	75.7	48.3	

The General and Provincial governments (62.1%) and the Priors (59.9%) were interested in the problem and expressed themselves with competence and wisdom showing that they were capable of tackling its cause.

Now we come to study deeper the individual answers related to the suggestions for a revitalisation of vocation promotion in the Order. We set out a series of 19 subjects that we will develop according to a helpful and synthetic methodology that unifies the four larger sectors of the analysis that we will consider in the following paragraph.

2. GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS UPON THE SUBJECTS THAT EMERGED FROM THE PROPOSALS

The Brothers' answers to the questionnaire came to 52.7%, equal to 533 out of the 1012 replies. Based upon this result we get a particularly prepared and accurate result based upon the 1167 proposals. Nineteen focal points were drawn up. These were schematically introduced into the synthesis of table 7.4 that points out the most notable features.

To the possible objection that the value of the data of the percentages may be subjectivity encoded, we can categorically state they can be substantially considered objectively and correspond to the reality of the work that had previously gone into them.

Tab. 7.4 tells us that the greatest part of the answers give absolute priority to community life and the witness of a life consecrated to hospitality (16.3%). This is emphasised particularly by the Brothers in Latin America (19.8%), Southern Europe (16.8%), the middle-aged Brothers (20.7%) and the elderly ones (17.6%) and those with over 50 years of profession (15.2%) and also the Priors (18.9%).

With a discreet separation, around the 4-5 of the percentages points, are three other types of proposals put forward: those related to the lifestyle of the Brothers (12.5%), stressed in a particular way by Southern Europe (14.7%) and Latin America (13.4%); and the Brothers familiar with vocation promotion (11.8%), especially from Latin America (15.7%), Africa (15.5), Central Europe (14.8%), Southern Europe (10%), the young Brothers (16.3%) the vocation promoters (17.1%); The lifestyle of the community (11.2%) received the most answers from Southern Europe (12.6%), Latin America (12.8%), Central Europe (12.7%), the elderly Brothers (15.9%) and the middle-aged ones (13.8%), most advanced age group and the formators and vocation promoters (14.3%).

Tab. 7.4 – Proposals for the innovation of vocation promotion. Classified in 19 items based upon the total percentages, in order of consistence of the percentages.

	%
1. Community: witness to a consecrated life in hospitality	16.3
2. Lifestyle of the St. John of God Brother	12.5
3. Vocation promotion: its use and strategies	11.8
4. Community interior life	11.2
5. Support of the Province and community for formators and vocation promoters	
6. Training of formators and vocation promotion	6.7
7. Vocation promoters: training in formation and pedagogic of candidates	5.9
8. Cooperation: parish, diocese and other religious institutes	5.8
9. Accompaniment and discernment of candidates	5.5
10. Adapting to change: social, ecclesiastic, consecrated life	5.5
11. Vocation promotion with youth	4.3
12. Fulltime vocation promoters and formators	4.1
13 New form of hospitality	4.0
14. Attention to choosing formators and vocation promoters	3.9
15. Socio-cultural and family knowledge of families	3.5
16. Technical-professional and spiritual knowledge for the Brothers	2.6
17. Every Province to use the Formation Program of the Order	2.1
18. Educate and the Brothers to utilise the co-workers	1.6
19. Education in faith and values	
1.1	

We picked out 4 percentage points from the group of answers that articulated between 7% and 5.5% out of 6 items that are quite pressing.

First of all there is *the necessity for the Province and community to support the vocation promoters (7%)*: This is especially so in Africa (20.2%) and Latin America 9.3%), from the young Brothers (9.6%) and the next age group (12.5%), the General and Provincial governments (16.1%) and the vocation promoters (15.7%).

The urgency for training the formators and the vocation promoters (6.7%) is particularly pointed out by the Brothers in Africa (21%) and Latin America (11%), middle-aged Brothers (10.7%) and the General and Provincial governments (12.6%).

The need to prepare formative and pedagogic programs for the formation of candidates (5.9%), is especially pointed out by the Brothers in Latin America (14.5%), the young Brothers (6.8%), the graduates (10.5%) and the vocation promoters (11.4%).

Tab. 7.5 - Typology of the proposals of innovation of vocation promotion. Distributed by geographical zones (in V.A. and percentage)

	GEOGRAPHIC ZONES						
	TOTAL	S.Euro	C.Euro	Africa	L.Am	Asia	N.AM/AUST
T O T A L	1012	380	189	84	172	127	60
*Percentage	100.0	37.5	18.7	8.3	17.0	12.5	5.9
No Reply	479	211	93	20	49	76	30
	47.3	55.5	49.2	23.8	28.5	59.8	50.0
Attention to choice	39	7	6	13	8	3	2
	3.9	1.8	3.2	15.5	4.7	2.4	3.3
Training of formators	68	14	9	18	19	6	2
	6.7	3.7	4.8	21.4	11.0	4.7	3.3
Fulltime dedication	41	11	4	4	18	3	1
	4.1	2.9	2.1	4.8	10.5	2.4	1.7
Support of the Province	71	15	9	17	16	9	5
	7.0	3.9	4.8	20.2	9.3	7.1	8.3
Programs and strategies	119	38	28	13	27	10	3
	11.8	10.0	14.8	15.5	15.7	7.9	5.0
Vocation promotion of youth	44	16	8	4	11	3	2
	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.8	6.4	2.4	3.3
Training in paedology	60	20	6	4	25	3	2
	5.9	5.3	3.2	4.8	14.5	2.4	3.3
Accompaniment candidates	56	15	8	7	20	3	3
	5.5	3.9	4.2	8.3	11.6	2.4	5.0
Know the socio-cult-fam	35	7	4	5	13	2	4
	3.5	1.8	2.1	6.0	7.6	1.6	6.7
Community interior life	113	48	24	5	22	11	3
	11.2	12.6	12.7	6.0	12.8	8.7	5.0
Witness of consecrated life	165	64	27	14	34	19	7
	16.3	16.8	14.3	16.7	19.8	15.0	11.7
New forms of hospitality	40	11	3	3	6	11	6
	4.0	2.9	1.6	3.6	3.5	8.7	10.0
Lifestyle of the Brothers	127	56	23	7	23	15	3
	12.5	14.7	12.2	8.3	13.4	11.8	5.0
Prepare: tech. Prof. Spirit.	26	11	5	1	3	4	2
	2.6	2.9	2.6	1.2	1.7	3.1	3.3
Adapt to soc-church changes	56	12	13	11	11	6	3
	5.5	3.2	6.9	13.1	6.4	4.7	5.0
Educate in faith and values	11	3	1	1	4	1	1
	1.1	.8	.5	1.2	2.3	.8	1.7
Apply Formation Program	21	3	0	2	9	5	2
	2.1	.8	.0	2.4	5.2	3.9	3.3
All involved in voc. Prom.	59	15	14	14	12	3	1
	5.8	3.9	7.4	16.7	7.0	2.4	1.7
Involvement of co-workers	16	3	6	2	2	1	2
	1.6	.8	3.2	2.4	1.2	.8	3.3

The order of these items drawn up in the initial coding of all the questions did not come out of the general classification.

Vocation promotion is to be shared by the Brothers (5.8%) constituted quite a lot of concern to the Brothers in Africa (16.7%, three times higher than the average) and still more for the formators and vocation promoters (22.9%) with a percentage four times higher than the average.

Accompaniment and discernment in the selection of candidates (5.5%) was seen as something to be careful about. This was the mind of the Brothers in Latin America (11.6%), the graduates and the Priors.

The necessity for adaptation to social changes, the Church and the consecrated life (5.5%) had the same percentage of suggestions.

Tab. 7.6 - Typology of the proposals of innovation of vocation promotion. Distributed by office held (in V.A. and percentage)

	OFFICE HELD				
	TOTAL	G&P.	GvtPrior	Forma.	None
T O T A L	1012	87	222	70	633
*Percentage	100.0	8.6	21.9	6.9	62.5
No reply	479	36	99	17	327
	47.3	41.4	44.6	24.3	51.7
Attention to choice	39	0	10	5	24
	3.9	.0	4.5	7.1	3.8
Training formators	68	11	13	5	39
	6.7	12.6	5.9	7.1	6.2
Fulltime Voc. Promoter	41	6	8	6	21
	4.1	6.9	3.6	8.6	3.3
Support by the Province	71	14	14	11	32
	7.0	16.1	6.3	15.7	5.1
Program and strategies	119	11	27	12	69
	11.8	12.6	12.2	17.1	10.9
Voc. Prom with youth	44	5	7	6	26
	4.3	5.7	3.2	8.6	4.1
Experience in format & Voc.Pr.	60	4	19	8	29
	5.9	4.6	8.6	11.4	4.6
Accompaniment candidates	56	2	14	6	34
	5.5	2.3	6.3	8.6	5.4
Knowing socio-cult-fam	35	2	7	6	20
	3.5	2.3	3.2	8.6	3.2
Community interior life	113	11	23	10	69
	11.2	12.6	10.4	14.3	10.9
Witness of hospitaller life	165	14	42	11	98
	16.3	16.1	18.9	15.7	15.5
New forms of hospitality	40	3	11	6	20
	4.0	3.4	5.0	8.6	3.2
Brothers' life style	127	11	35	9	72
	12.5	12.6	15.8	12.9	11.4
Prepar.tecn-prof.,spirit.	26	2	8	1	15
	2.6	2.3	3.6	1.4	2.4
Adapting to change soc-church	56	8	12	4	32
	5.5	9.2	5.4	5.7	5.1
Educate in faith and values	11	1	2	1	7
	1.1	1.1	.9	1.4	1.1
Apply Formation Program	21	3	5	2	11
	2.1	3.4	2.3	2.9	1.7
Sharing Voc. Promotion	59	5	11	16	27
	5.8	5.7	5.0	22.9	4.3
Using co-workers	16	5	4	1	6
	1.6	5.7	1.8	1.4	.9

The list of the items drawn up in the initial coding of all the questions came out of the general classification show that the Brothers in Africa emphasise this (13.1%), the young Brothers (8.7%) and major superiors (9.2%).

Besides within only one percentage point that went from 4.3% to 3.5%, there are collected five other types of indications that call for:

- *careful attention to vocation promotion of youth (4.3%)*, especially in Latin America, and from the qualified technicians and vocational promoters (8.6%);

- the possibility that *the Brothers responsible for the vocation promotion and for formation be dedicated to these duties full time and not have other duties to perform* (4.1%): graduates and vocational promoters;
- *attention to emerging new forms of hospitality* (4%): Asia and the USA, young Brothers, vocation promoters and Priors;
- *the prudent choice of the formators and vocation promoters* (3.9%): Africa (15.5%) and vocation promoters (7.1%);
- *attention to the cultural and family context* (3.5%): The young Brothers and formators (6%).

The last group of the other 4 items shows that even with very low percentages, they are nevertheless worthy to be taken into consideration, because they point out what aspects have come to the attention of the Brothers, nevertheless these are considered less remarkable in comparison to the other priority urgencies:

- *attention to the technical-professional and spiritual preparation* (2.6%): the qualified technicians (3.3%) and Priors (3.6%);
- *that all Provinces use the Order's Formation Program* (2.1%): Latin America (5.2%) and General and Provincial governments;
- *to educate and to bring about the co-operation of co-workers* (1.6%): Central Europe, the USA, the elderly Brothers, the graduates and the General and Provincial governments (5.7%);
- *to educate in the faith and in values* (1.1%): the elderly Brothers (2.7%);
- *attention to the socio-cultural and family background* (3.5%): Latin America, the young Brothers and the formators (.6%).

In conclusion, in the distribution that we have introduced, we look at a process based upon classification and the ***quantity of the percentages***. This is important because it shows what the Brothers think about the matters that have been developed. The following typology completes the preceding reflection on the 19 subjects indicated in Tab.7.7. Similar matters are defined in four major sections:

1. Formators and vocation promoters (21.7%);
2. vocation promotion: strategies, formation programs and accompaniment (31%);
3. community life: consecration and hospitality (46.6%);
4. process of adaptation and integration (16.1%).

The methodology that we will use centres upon the presentation of the more interesting, insistent and innovative explicit contents of the proposals drawn up from the transcript of the each suggestion received.

Tab. 7.7 - Proposed innovations in vocation promotion in the answers of the Brothers.

Distribution of the answers to the 19 items in the order maintained in the initial coding and not based upon percentages.

	%
1. Attention to the choice of formators and vocation promoters. .	3.9
2. Training if formators and vocation promoters.	6.7
3. Fulltime formators and vocation promoters.	4.1
4. Support of the Province and community of formators and voc. Promoters.	7.0
5. Vocation promotion: programs and strategies	11.8
6. Vocation promotion to youth	4.3
7. Voc. Prom. Training in pedagogy for formation of candidates.	5.9
8. Accompaniment , discernment and selection of candidates	5.5
9. Knowing the socio-cultural background	3.5
10. Community and interior life	11.2
11. Community: witness of a consecrated life in hospitality	16.3
12. New forms of hospitality.	4.0
13. Lifestyle of the St. John of God Brother.	12.5
14. Technical-professional and spiritual preparation of Brothers.	2.6
15. Adaptation to changes: social, ecclesial and consecrated life	5.5
16. Education in faith and values.	1.1
17. All Provinces to use the Order's Formation Program	2.1
18. Voc. Promotion shared: parish, diocese, other religious institutes.	5.8
19. Inform and integrate co-workers.	1.6

3. FORMATORS AND VOCATION PROMOTERS

Departing from reading down through the list of the coding, we have sought to incorporate the four items referred to in regards to the formators and vocation promoters that are reported as a whole up to 21.7% of the total answers. This means that more than a fifth of the answers speak of *the Brothers to be chosen as formators and vocation promoters being given the support of the community.*

3.1. A careful choice of formators and vocation promoters (3.9%)

The concern of the Brothers is expressed that the choice of formators and vocation promoters needs to be made with great accurateness, a sense of responsibility and accountability (3.9%). A great part of the Order's formation relies upon them and consequently the vocational perseverance of the Brothers. This calls for very qualified personnel invested with generosity for the good of the Order in its continuity and effectiveness in the Church and society.

Particularly suggested are the following:

- Responsible and coherent men whose consecrated life transmits what they profess and manifests the spirit of the hospitality;

- That the Brothers appointed possess the ability to get along with young people;
- That they be mature and able persons for the job and can work in a team harmoniously;
- That Brothers be selected to go to Rome to study, and when they return to the Province they put into practice what they had studied;
- That they be consulted before being chosen;
- That they be motivated and aware of the importance of their mission, and that they be straightforward, happy in their hospitaller vocation, frank and understandable;
- Chose formators who have the human and religious qualities to accompany young people;
- That they be men who are interested in a formation appointment;
- That they be carefully chosen on the basis of character and a positive pastoral experience;
- That they be available, open, pleasant, comprehensive, with a good knowledge of our charism and happily live their own vocation;
- That he is capable of carrying out a formation that stimulates a young man to devote himself to God and neighbour;
- That each community have a Brother capable of carrying out vocation promotion;
- That the Brothers chosen for the job be young and understand young people of today;
- That a profile be made for the selection of the responsible of vocation promoters and formators;
- That a group of formators be appointed and one to be their director.

3.2. The training of formators and vocation promoters (6.7%)

The importance to give suitable training to formators and vocation promoters was called for by very many Brothers, equal to the 6.7% of the answers received, which corresponds to around 70 proposals. Many were quite simple and similar to each other so they were discounted. From the results it appears that those chosen must be spiritually and culturally well prepared, and their spiritual values must be well integrated in their personality, without clashing with their technical or professional qualifications.

The most original replies are as follows:

- Predispose a program of formation for promoters and the formators: to train the formators in the method of hospitality, the charism of the Founder, and strong motivation for this mission.
- Give a suitable academic formation through the study of psychological science and psycho- pedagogy, so they may be able to apply this criteria to promote vocations, rather than to recruit them.
- In our Order so many things are impromptu: adequately prepared formators are difficult to come by.
- Learn to have serene and mature human relationships: growth in an attitude of trust and dialogue between formators and those learning from them.
- Arrange meetings between formators to gain an exchange of knowledge and experience.
- Train capable formators in ethics.
- That General Definitory of the Order to make possible some international meetings for formators so they may exchange experiences and ideas.
- That formators undertake self-on-going formation.
- To be men of our times, listen to the voice of God and know how to respond to the signs of the times.

- To be concerned for the quality and the number of Brothers.
- Prepare the formators so that they understand the thinking of young people: their values, their story, their culture and knows how to communicate with them.
- That the Province always show interest and support for the training of the formators: instilling within them a more intense fraternal life.
- In order to impart a good formation, the importance of the role of the formators should be recognised and that they need a good foundation in theology and the spirituality of the Order.

3.3. The exclusive duty of formators and vocation promoters (4.1%)

This section of answers looks at the demands made upon the Brothers responsible for vocation promotion and formation and says this duty must be their exclusive concern (4.1%). This corresponds to about forty replies. These are not many however, overall, they draw enough consistent numbers to submit this eventuality to our attention.

Below are suggestions that were submitted.

- That the Brothers chosen for the task be prepared to take on full-time dedication to the task and avoid other commitments that may stand in their way to do so.
- Chose at least two Brothers who are prepared for this position.
- Prepare a mature Brother capable of taking on this activity.
- Formators have to do this work exclusively so they need to be relieved of other duties.
- Scholastics must have a permanent master and live together in one place to avoid dispersions.
- That those responsible for this duty do it exclusively fulltime.

3.4. Support of the Province and Community to the vocation promoters (7%)

In the spirit of the Brothers' involvement in this valuable work of formation and vocational promotion, we have emphasised the general desire of the Brothers to update the task of formators and vocation promoters in the Order. In this paragraph we hear what they have to say about it.

- Involve all the Brothers of the Province in vocation promotion.
 - Dedicate a Brother to motivate all the communities to be involved in vocation promotion.
 - That the Province train all the Brothers to become involved in vocation promotion.
 - Coopt all the Brothers to support the formators.
 - Prepare the community to welcome vocations.
 - That all the Brothers promote the Order and vocations.
 - That a Brother in the community be the formator dedicated to this assignment.
-
- To help poor students with financial problems for their studies.
 - Estimate what is needed for vocation promotion.
 - Give financial aid to sustain poor men who may have a vocation in their desire to study for the religious life.
 - To dedicate much human and economic resources.
 - Educate the community to be accepting and to collaborate in the reception of young men.

- That every Brother has his part to play in vocation promotion and that this is not simply the assignment of just one Brother.
 - The leadership of the Province must consider this office to be the main point for the future life of the Province.
 - Hold formation meetings to share experiences and instil encouragement.
 - Every Brother must have a sense of motivation for the young men to become interested in our lifestyle and our charism.
 - That all Provinces and Delegations be able to face up to the challenges of hospitality, and that all the Brothers of the Provinces or Delegations become involved and assist the vocation promoters.
 - Every Brother has to feel to he is part of vocation promotion regardless of age or illness.
 - Involve the rest of the Province: Brothers, co-workers and volunteers.
 - That communities be open to prospective vocations: “Come and you see.”
 - Open up a place for aspirants.
 - That the Brothers show their gratitude and recognition to the vocation promoters.
- Greater awareness in the Provinces of the importance of vocations.
 - The General government and Provincial governments must take on a greater responsibility in this field.
 - Avoid frequent changes of formators.
 - Each community must have a calendar of the events of vocation promotion.
 - Every Brother should be able to express his talents to the best of his ability (for example. if a Brother is a good preacher, he could preach during the Mass; if another sings well he can lead the choir, or to play an instrument, or teach young people, etc.).

4. VOCATION PROMOTION: STRATEGIES AND ACCOMPANYMENT (31%)

A second part of spontaneous suggestions on vocation promotion by the Brothers appears in the five coherent and consistent paragraphs as follows.

The numbers of these answers have a greater constancy than the preceding ones reaching up to 31% of the total, but already only the first paragraph ("tools and strategies") that is coming up next, comes to 11.8%. In fact it alone constitutes around 120 specific answers that we will divide into more systematic and coherent sub-titles.

Vocation promotion: instruments and strategies (11.8%)

A vast field was covered around the replies that came in about vocation promotion. That is why a further arrangement is necessary to give order and rationality to the proposals received.

These proposals suggest quite different articulations, as for example, to be open to new possibilities and to dialogue with the members of the community; to use the means of social communication; to urge the Prior to create a pleasant community environment; to be approachable to young men and use their manner of speech so that one will be comprehensible to them; to bring about vocation promotion in each house of the Province and to make our mission known, etc.

We think the following may help to structure the most original answers around these four separate dimensions;

1. Basic general attitudes.
2. Strategies and projects: events to be realised.
3. Tools and a concrete means to realise them: mass media, speech, etc.
4. Organisational structures to be improved.

4.1.1. Basic general approaches

- Make known the charism of St. John of God and the Order's history.
- Get to know the thinking of modern youth and use modern means.
- Make known a positive and realistic image to the candidates without creating false expectations.
- The history of our Order is rich with the examples of men who have loved our Lord and have been touched by him to follow him in caring for those who suffer. We have to make these men known to them.
- Make our saints known.
- Present the charism and our Order with clarity to young diploma recipients and graduates.
- Persevere in what already exists.
- Pray to the Master of the vineyard "so that he may send workers into his harvest". The Lord will provide.
- We must be open to receive mature men with vocations.
- Better attention to the worthiness of vocation promotion.
- We must make prospective candidates welcome.
- I think the Order should look at discourses about vocations from a global point of view and use them on the Provincial level.
- The Brother entrusted with vocation promotion should have a welcoming attitude.

4.1.2. Strategies and projects: events to carry out

- A vocation promotion that is planned by young men for youth.
- Seek to know young people and welcome them to experiences of our community life.
- Invite young men by means of the press, radio and television, to the celebrations of the feastdays of the Order and our get-togethers.
- Develop a strategy of catechesis.
- The organising and dynamics of vocation promotion are correct.
- Involve co-workers in our vocation promotion.
- Go into universities and extend our means of meeting young people because we cannot wait any longer for young men to come to us.
- Prepare a good program of vocation promotion.
- Hold days to explain hospitality.
- Offer a temporary plan to young men.
- Form a vocation promotion team that includes laymen.
- Take part in annual vocation days and prepare a Brother go into other towns to speak of the hospitaller charism.
- Bring about vocation promotion independent from pastoral health care.
- Have a specialised program for young men prior to their going into military service.

- Go to young men in the small towns and villages.
- Present the Order in manifold ways, as for example: pilgrimages, lectures in the parishes, juvenile meetings, articles of newspapers and magazines etc.
- Participate in juvenile functions, prayer vigils etc.
- Go out to meet young men and tell them about St. John of God. Open our communities to young men who desire to know more about our lifestyle.

4.1.3. Concrete ways and means to start with

- Use of a suitable way for accompaniment by good example.
- Utilise modern means of communication.
- Tell them where we are, not just through hospitals, but also through means of communication.
- Distribute literature in schools, universities, churches, etc.
- Visit colleges, parishes, high schools, etc.
- Continue to use mass-media and the local churches to promote vocations.
- Use of speech understood by young people.
- The vocation promoter to have the means of communication and transport to reach young people.
- The vocation promotion office of the Province should publish some brochures and make use of videos, DVDs, etc.
- Invest in means that show us how to use marketing, publicity, etc.
- Visit colleges and schools to make our mission known.
- Give the resources and funds to be used for vocational promotion.
- Financially help poor young men to complete their schooling.

4.1.4. Improve arrangements

- Allow time for the Brothers to meet the candidates.
- Let young men have the experience of community life: silence, prayer and hospitality. Offer spaces of meeting between Brothers and candidates.
- Better reception of young men in our communities.
- Create a community that welcomes the candidates.
- Participate in gatherings of young people and tell them about our vocation.
- Be open to young men through schools for nurses.
- Have a community truly welcoming to young men searching for a vocation.
- The nursery of vocations was the apostolic school or 'juniorate'.
- Have a special community to welcome young men who want to try our lifestyle for a determined period.
- Create an organisation of volunteers to introduce young men to the Order.
- Have houses of the Order that organise a program for aspirants.
- Periodically review the centres of formation that currently are too open to the external world.
- Find better ways to be open to youth.
- Create a community that welcomes candidates.
- Participate in a 'forum' of young people and speak of our vocation.
- Be open to young men in our nursing schools.
- Have a real place to welcome young men searching.

- A community should be created to welcome young men who want to spend some time with us.
- Create a group of volunteers who might later want to join the Order as Brothers.

VOCATION PROMOTION AIMED AT YOUTH (4.3%)

Vocation promotion aimed at youth is no longer tied to juniorates, but is also aimed towards more mature young men. It offers them a vocational development of a life of Christian faith expressed in a generous devotion consecrated to God and neighbour through the specific charism of an Order that in a particular way can be seen in young people by their attitudes, dealing with others and their aspirations.

Many interventions were received on this subject that are worthy of consideration.

4.2.1. Essential attitudes to adopt

- Trust young men and be open towards them.
- Get close to young men and gain their trust.
- More understanding of youth: know and welcome them.
- Understand that Religious Life is a call of the Lord for youth to answer.
- The Brothers should go out to meet young men and not wait for them to come to us: help them.
- Encourage vocations by getting close to young people and help them to know how to overcome their problems.
- Become involved with youth movements.
- The Brothers should share their personal experiences with young people.
- Get to meet young men of all the social classes, as well as those who are less well off.

4.2.2. Proposals to adopt

- Become involved with vocation promotion to youth.
- Help the young to discover their own vocation.
- Undertake direct activities with youth, helping them to put themselves into contact with reality and to awaken them in solidarity. Establish a more intense relationship with the young people.
- Have frequent contact with young men who may feel called to be St. John of God Brothers. Get the opinion of their parish priests.
- Be able of to tell young men to “come and you see” how we live and invite them into our communities.
- Invite young men to join our community for a determined time to share the charism of the Order. This is a way to foster vocations.
- Be more involved with youth groups: start up camps.

4.3. Vocation promotion: plans for the formation of candidates (5.9%)

This paragraph systematically organises and rationalises the Brothers' proposals in relationship to vocation promotion. For clarification we have divided the methodology into different specific segments. Here we intend to better organise the proposals related to the

possible pedagogical methods that need to begin or improve. It does not make an incoherent list of proposals, but we believe it opportune to organise this around three principal central points, although we are aware of possible repetitions of the suggestions sent in:

- the main attitudes, real or assumed;
- the theoretical contents of these methods;
- the methodological proposals to work on.

4.3.1. Attitudes, real or assumed

- Belief in the ability of young people to offer themselves.
- Offer to young men sound experiences, but first of all this will have to count upon the availability of the Brother priests to work in this sector, and to develop a positive culture aimed at their future.
- Make it quite clear to young men what our charism involves: openness and sincerity with the candidates.
- Have better interpersonal relationships among formators.
- Make the period of formation a dynamic time of trial: to respect the ways of young people without pushing them so that they can discover their vocation for themselves.
- Examine the young men about the mission and lifestyle of the Brothers.
- Be in no hurry but get to understand and respect the pace of youth.
- Have a better dialogue, trust and mutual respect between formators and the young men in formation.
- Bring in young men while still respecting their restlessness and their lifestyle.
- Responsibly try to turn the hearts of young men towards a love for the hospitaller vocation (vocation pedagogy).
- Do not be over demanding towards the candidates.
- The Brothers should have a program that can attract young men as well as older ones who may be interested in joining the St. John of God Brothers: (age should not be an obstacle).
- That vocation promotion be open and coherent, and the formators are truly open towards the young men and can clearly converse with them about our hospitaller vocation.
- Criteria for the discernment of vocations. Evaluation **for** acceptance of candidates to the novitiate, first profession, and final vows.

4.3.2. Theoretical and practical procedures

- Offer real hospitality to men who want to enter our Order.
- Learn how to mix tradition and innovation and then go ahead.
- Maybe make a questionnaire to help men know more about the religious life.
- Help young men to learn more about human needs and to give their service.
- Give more attention to the integral growth of those who are in formation to assure their progress and integral maturation, especially in our mission.
- Given the test of time, candidates need to be seriously interested and fully mature.
- Educate candidates in the basics of the faith and the spiritual life, because if the candidate to the Religious Life doesn't have a deep and personal union with God he is unlikely to persevere.
- Men are more ready to enter religious life after secondary education and some life experiences.

- Give a solid formation in theology, psychology and pedagogy to meet the needs of these days to formators.
- Formation based upon a gradual discovery of the Religious Life and its demands, perhaps with some secrets to be revealed.
- John of God gives sound advice to young men in his letter to Luis Bautista.
- Invite young men to come and live with us to experience service and devotion in the hospitaller mission.
- Form a better spirit of service by the Brothers to extend our works.
- Educate and to conform to Christian life.
- Initiate formation with a style of simple life and of little comfort.
- Motivate a lasting action for people who need the help of our welcoming fraternity.
- Give young men some experience in working in our hospitals and centres so that they may know more about our apostolate.
- Teach a spirit of devotion and sacrifice to serve the poor to those in formation.
- Provide a suitable psychological-sexual formation to Brothers in the initial stages of their formation and continue this permanently so as to avoid future problems.
- Have a clearly solid formation to prepare for life and not simply “to produce religious”.

4.3.3. Proposals for methodological ways for action

- Organise special conferences on hospitality.
- Be more open; have Centres of Formation (not "ghettos").
- Be understood in your speech.
- Adequately prepare candidates before their entry into the Order.
- Have an integral project of vocation promotion that answers to the expectations of young people.
- Plan a program for those in formation subject them to periodic evaluation. Work as a team and periodically appraise the plan with the other members of the Province.
- The director of vocation promotion should work with other vocation promotion people on the local level and also national level.
- Give witness by telling the story of your own vocation.
- Organise seminars and courses for young men on the hospitaller religious life.
- That the vocation promoter finds the time to accompany and listen to the young men.
- I am worried because candidates enter far too young in Asia and Africa.

4.4. Selection of candidates, discernment and accompaniment

4.4.1. Selection of candidates

- Know the candidates' motivations.
- Be sure that the candidate is responsible in his decision and desire.
- Do not be afraid to use Canon Law in selecting candidates.
- We must be sincere in selecting only those men who have a good likelihood to persevere. Prefer quality to quantity.
- When making the selection, do not accept candidates who are too young.
- Make an in-depth examination before making any decision. If it emerges that there are serious difficulties, these have to be spoken about and not covered up or ignored. Therefore, negative matters, even if they are not pleasant, must be revealed. Only by

doing this will the plan have any hope of realistically being put into practice. Above all involve the participation of the Brothers in this discernment.

- Criteria for selection should not be founded upon the need for nurses, but on the disciplines of social work, administration, etc.
- Make a serious discernment of candidates, despite the shortage of new vocations (quality before quantity). Be available to welcome young men who find it hard to come to any decision.
- Selection of candidates should be made by a commission, but only after careful consultation.
- Do not accept only well-educated candidates, but also those men who have a real vocation but lesser education.

4.4.2. Discernment

- Before accepting them as postulants, offer to young men the possibility to know our lifestyle and our identity, so that they may be able to discern their own vocation: after that they can decide for themselves whether they wish to unite themselves to us or not.
- Carry out discernment and dialogue to see if the candidate is suitable.
- Be open and welcoming to young men seeking vocational orientation.
- Apply the criteria for discernment and make use of the human sciences.
- Have a long waiting period for young men to discern before entering.
- Be tolerant with young people.
- Help young men to understand that our mission is not a form of volunteering but a vocation.
- Know what is the true vocation of the St. John of God Brother.
- Be ready to help young men in their difficulties.
- Help candidates and those already in formation, to decide for themselves to make a renouncement when something is seen to be at odds with the Religious Life.
- Discernment has to be individual as well as collective, namely the opinion of the whole Province in regards to each candidate.

4.4.3. Accompaniment

- Have a period of accompaniment and a process of experiences that are necessary for their discernment.
- Personalised accompaniment and fraternity up to solemn profession.
- The formators have to instruct, correct and require a greater understanding of the Brothers in formation.
- During the formation of the candidate be careful to find out his motivation, intellectual, psychological and spiritual qualities, etc. Develop his religious vocation.

4.4.4. Guiding candidates

- General and Provincial governments should first of all see that the Brothers guiding candidates have the necessary skills and time to do this.
- We must support those men who direct the young Brothers.
- Undertake the guidance that complies with the formative examination.
- Recognise if the candidates have any difficulties and prolong the discernment period.
- Remain close to the young Brothers during the initial three stages of formation.

- Form a community with the sole purpose to accompany and guide candidates.
- Have a personal plan for guidance.

4.5. Attention to the socio-cultural and family situation

We have always valued the specificity of the different socio-cultural contexts of the geographical zones of the Order's presence. In this aspect the Brothers' proposals have been in a positive and general way, confirming what is necessary and is quite obvious. However, what really is original is the approach made to know about the candidate's families. In this regard the approach needs to be done very carefully.

On the other hand, there is also another aspect, and that is for parents to encourage their sons, therefore they too need to become recipients of the mission of the St. John of God Brothers, and at the same time actively help their sons to realise their vocation.

Here are the suggestions of the Brothers emphasising this matter, and we have divided then into two parts:

1. Attention to the socio-cultural context
2. Attention to the family context

4.5.1. Attention to the socio-cultural context

- A realistic knowledge of the world that surrounds us without prejudice or fear.
- Have a realistic vocation promotion that explains the truth about the Province and the Brothers.
- Always accompany young men who visit the places where the Brothers reside.
- Know different realities of the place where we undertake accompaniment .
- Always be conscious of the social reality, because it means getting a better understanding of youth and their milieu.
- It is important to understand the existential situation of the young men today (social and religious) and to know how to appreciate and accept them. To know their world and understand what they think of tomorrow's world.
- Do not make any rule universal in respect to vocation promotion, since societies and the cultures are very different in the various geographic regions.
- Let every region develop its own programs that are suitable to the local area.
- Be aware that youth is the fruit of its society and its generation and that they come from different environments to our own and have experiences that were once unthinkable to us.
- Hospitality contains all the practices together with the culture and traditional customs under one umbrella.
- Be aware of the real world around us without prejudice or fear.
- Undertake vocation promotion beginning with the local Brothers.

4.5.2. Attention to the family situation

- The family situation: Problems of a family nature. Values promoted in the family. Degree of family solidarity.
- Co-involve the family involving it in the mission of the Order.

- Get to know the family, its social and cultural environment and its activity in the local Church. Visit the young men and their relatives where they live.
- Work in with the families in the places where they live.
- Involve the fathers of the families.
- Go to the villages of the candidates to see how the family lives and feels about their son entering the Order.
- Accept young men from healthy families devoted to the Church and people in need.
- Vocation promoters should spend some time studying the candidate and learn about his family, his antecedents and visit his home.

This paragraph tells us much about the different interventions of the Brothers treating of the many different dimensions of vocation promotion; also, about the connection of vocation promotion with strategies and methodology of the formation of the candidates, in the different phases of the selection. It also tells of the discernment and of the guidance, without neglecting that non irrelevant aspect that is also the relationship with the families of origin, recipients and subjects of the same pastoral vocational.

5. FRATERNAL COMMUNITY IN THE CONSECRATED LIFE OF HOSPITALITY (46.6%)

The greater part of the proposals made by the Brothers refer mainly to community life in the Order, it's interior life, religious consecration, hospitality as a specific charism, the personal life of the St. John of God Brother and his spiritual and technical-professional preparation.

The proposals received from the Brothers constituted half (46.6%) of all the suggestions received. Regardless of whether there be just one vocation promoter or a team, the Brothers feel that they need to be involved in it and they feel jointly liable for the development of the spirituality and continuity of the mission that the Order fulfils in the Church and society. That is why it is once more vital to mention the great importance of the example of the Brothers both as individuals and as a community where they carry out their mission.

5.1. Fraternal community and interior life (11.2%)

This paragraph is divided into three sectors related to a fraternal community, its interior life of faith and relationship with God, and finally its relationship with prospective vocations. These sectors emphasise the duty to put the following directions into action.

5.1. *A community of fraternal life*

- Greater fraternity, prayer, dialogue and trust, through a positively lived fraternal spirituality and a lively serious religious life.
- Always bear the value of solidarity and a coherent message in mind.
- Be faithful to the charism of the Order.
- Personal conversion. To be a true St. John of God Brother is to admit that “I am a sinner and I often fail.”
- Live and take seriously the spirit of the Rule, the Constitutions and the Gospel.

5.1.2. *Community of interior life and spirituality*

The insistence on prayer is a very strong point to make and was the intercession with the highest percentage thereby making it the most forceful proposal. This indicates the most significant approach to the consecrated life.

- To be men of unwavering prayer: we have to be men of prayer and witnesses of our spirituality praying to be faithful and true to the end.
- To develop the internal life and an authentic life of prayer.
- Insist that the community have a spiritual life and the authentic spirituality of the Order.
- Witness to the Faith through a spirituality that is humble, fraternal and nourished by the Eucharist.
- A community strengthened by a strong spiritual life and a great spirit of faith and trust in Christ. Have a community life that is spiritual and places Christ as its only model and the centre of our life. Great trust in God and allow the Holy Spirit to act.
- Put God and prayer before everything else. More adoration of the Eucharist, with daily adoration day and night.
- Let the community be centre of prayer for young people.
- We must totally trust in the Lord and put ourselves into his hands.
- We are too rigid in our liturgical celebrations.
- Pray daily that God may send a new Pentecost into our world, especially in the rich countries of Europe; and also that young men may be given the grace to follow him in the religious life.
- Introduce innovation into the prayer life of the Brothers.
- Go to God who is the source of life and intensify our lives in Christ
- Do not be afraid to speak of our spiritual experiences and encourage questions and discussions on all the aspects of our vocation.
- Intensify our faith with trust and poverty in spirit.
- Raise the level of spiritual life: being men identified with Christ, in openness and availability and to trust in the Holy Spirit.
- Increase the Order's prayer life and make it more fervent.
- Each house to have a spiritual leader, preferably a priest of the Order.

5.1.1. *The community and vocations*

- Besides the efforts to manifest the Holy Spirit, all should increase their interior life to give an impulse to vocation promotion.
- The community to be a model of welcome to young men.
- Unceasing prayers for vocations.
- Foster vocation promotion by living and cultivating a filial love toward God the Father.

5.2. The community as a witness to a life consecrated in hospitality (16.3%)

Here we are faced with a series of proposals that reached the highest percentage with 165 suggestions. Among them are some that are very similar, but all converge on the purpose to encourage, promote and solicit the beauty of community life. This is visibly evident in the life consecrated in hospitality with the specific charism of the Order. It draws upon an insistence upon the necessity of the witness that in reality is the wonderfully rich love for the Order. Emphasising that this is the richest, original and most interesting elements that widen the range solicited by the characteristic hospitality and mission of the Order.

- Value of hospitality.
- The manner of living one's consecration.
- Specific elements of the consecrated life: contents.
- Giving visible witness.

5.2.1. The importance of hospitality.

- The value of hospitality underlines the importance of hospitality in the context of the younger generation, putting into prominence the giving oneself to practice and live in the spirit of hospitality.
- To have pleasant and lively communities: welcoming, with mutual respect and profiting from the religious experience of the elderly Brothers and their faithfulness to our hospitaller life. The elderly Brothers don't often know what direction the Order is now taking.
- A busy community life filled with hospitality and the personal practice of hospitality. Live our life of consecrated hospitality to the fullest.
- I believe it is time to return to the roots of hospitality.
- Superiors must enforce hospitality to centre upon the charism of the hospitality.
- A genuine, open, prayerful, industrious, and happy community open to young men.
- That communities be pleasant, cheerful and fraternal with an attractive lifestyle that all can see. A community that faithfully serves God and the poor with fraternal love. Do not isolate the old and ill Brothers from the people that the Order assists.
- A welcoming mutual respect for the religious experience of the elderly Brothers because they have persevered and are still witnessing to the hospitaller life.
- Know all there is to know about hospitality. Give witness by our lives to authentic hospitality to young men searching to know their vocation.
- Emphasise the value of hospitality and especially in regards to young men and encourage them to generously live in the spirit of hospitality.
- Have welcoming communities with mutual respect between the young and elderly Brothers

5.2.2. The manner of living one's consecration.

- Do our work well and with joy in the service of God and the poor.
- Authentic fraternal love for the Brothers and the Order. And above all, it is necessary that this is shown by actions not just words
- Be welcoming, available to serve and believing in the worth that we do. Let this be seen by young men as our lifestyle.
- Genuineness and loyalty in the work we do and let our joy and sharing be seen by all.
- Witness to the lifestyle of the St. John of God Brothers that is based upon the figure and charism of the Founder; genuine and cheerful fraternal life, etc).
- Be genuine, humble, comprehensive, happy and spiritual.
- Bring back the charism and the mission that we have lost.
- That the Brothers and co-workers faithfully serve the sick.
- Cheerfully serve the outcasts and spend some genuine time with the people we serve.
- Encourage mature men to be deeply spiritual and ready to make sacrifices to contemplate entering the Order.
- It is necessary to have a passion for God and humanity: to meet Christ in the sick.
- Be transparent to all so that they may see our fraternal lifestyle.
- Persons willing to assist the suffering.
- May we live out our mission in the best possible way.

- That everything I do I do for the Lord.
- Cultivate a missionary mentality: be genuine and kind to those we serve.
- If we are authentic religious, even though some may have been sullied, we must not consider this to be a failure, since true authority only comes from God. Human power and authority are transitory things and we should not depend upon them.
- Show respect and accept other people's weakness.
- Greater opening and involvement for communities in apostolic appointments.
- As Brothers of St. John of God we have to continue the work that he has begun: to care for the sick, the poor and of the elderly, and to practise charity.

5.2.3 Fundamentals of the consecrated life.

- Giving visible witness in living one's own consecrated life
- Go back to living with the sick.
- A community truly based upon the spirit of religious life dedicated to caring for the sick.
- Have welcoming and lively communities.
- That our communities reflect an ambience of men living a consecrated life.
- Witness to a genuine lifestyle that is capable of spreading enthusiasm.
- Dedicate oneself further to serve the sick.
- Life of prayer, work and dedication to living in the lifestyle of St. John of God.
- That we always be at the side of those who need us most.
- Co-involve youth (men and women) in works of hospitality as volunteers in hospitaler spirituality (caring for the neighbour).
- More solidarity between the Brothers and more mutual respect between them to improve community life.
- That the presence of the Brothers be seen and felt in our centres.
- Vocation promotion flourishes when community life is vibrant and the Brothers pray, work and live together.
- Be fully aware of the value of community so that the witness is coherent.

5.2.4. Giving visible witness.

- Young people today need to look to individuals or groups of people who can understand their ideals and can help them to give meaning to their life.
- Be witnesses in the way spoken about by John Paul II and St. John of God.
- That the Brothers give a visible witness in our hospitals and help people to reach God.
- Witness when faced with suffering and illness.
- Give witness of our fraternity in devoted service.
- Be examples of hospitality in our centres.
- Help our Order to spread knowledge of St. John of God and its charism.
- Let it be seen that we are consecrated men.
- Regard the Brothers love the sick and poor.
- Let our community life be an example of the spirituality of the Hospitaller Order.
- Tell the world who we are and what we do.
- Be genuinely consecrated to personal and community prayer and witness by our lifestyle. Don't live a double life by a "yes and no" attitude towards obedience, chastity and poverty.
- Serve God and our neighbour in the world about us.

- Witness to the need for our Hospitaller Order: its genuine importance and necessity in today's world.
- Allow the young Brothers to live their hospitality with naturalness and normalcy.
- A meaningful presence within and outside of the community.
- The importance above everything else to have a personal witness to the value of the consecrated hospitaller life. This determines a personal contribution to the formation of personality in the light of faith.
- Reach out to young men with the message of St. John of God.
- Show that our hospitaller service is not restricted by the fashions of times, it is a great gift and an important apostolate.
- That the Brothers give greater witness to our apostolic works and serve with patience and humility.
- That the Brothers' witness goes beyond the hospital.
- Have greater witness and let it be seen.
- Show the world around us the value of our hospitaller centres.
- Show the world around us, not just our technical-professional performance, but also our spiritual values.
- That the Brothers give authentic witness so that the co-workers may follow their example.
- That the Brothers witness by their devotion, generosity and availability.
- Witness to our devotion to God, suffering humanity and the Church. Let our joy be seen and not only the difficulties and challenges that we have to face.

5.3.1 New forms of hospitality (4%)

The charism of hospitality constitutes the special hospitaller mission of the St. John of God Brothers. However its enculturation in its various contexts is one of the objectives that every process of renewal usually has a tendency to intend for itself. In our case the stimulus of the social transformations to which we have assisted, is a call to consider it carefully. 4% of the Brothers' proposals said these points are the most innovative component.

In this paragraph we particularly consider the proposals that were the most mature, reflected, elaborate and original, neglecting those that were more generic and obviously discountable.

We believe this is useful, nevertheless to bring it forward following all the interesting and comprehensive replies that had very articulated and natural comments on the relationship of the young men with hospitality. This makes one think:

“Today hospitality in the hospital can be practised without being religious and the young people love adventure that they hardly find in the hospital. In our communities everything is stabilised; the co-workers do everything; the young Brothers and the candidates working in a hospital are considered a weight to carry or, at the most, just assistants. Today's hospitality offers to the young Brothers few opportunities to fulfil themselves. The young Brother can discover his vocation in the service to disabled persons, outcasts, the homeless, alcoholics and addicts and also in the Third World, where they can live and practice hospitality directly. The young Brothers imitate us; what we do, they also try to do. But if what we do is too little, too simple and uninteresting, they abandon us.”

- These days 'life expectancy' is much higher in many countries, necessitating the need to help people in need. Numerous associations try to answer this need, so why shouldn't we religious answer the challenge?
- We should be more concerned that our Order is heading for extinction.
- Create a community of young Brothers capable of founding a new style of prayer life, fraternity and apostolate according to the demands of the new hospitality.
- Be aware of the concept of hospitality that goes beyond the relationship with the sick and the running of hospitals. Don't confine ourselves to simply serving within the confine of our hospitals.
- Study the documents of the Order and the teachings of the Church on the social matters.
- Young people today are less attracted to a Religious Life that involves the service of teaching and the health, activities that the State has already taken care of, therefore the need is to look at something new to do.
- Work in the field of hospitality outside the centre as this could be a means of giving witness and attracting vocations.
- Look to see what smaller works we can do for the greater good.
- Reduce our works and strengthen the communities. Hospital work is too troublesome for the Brothers.
- I think that we are open to face up to new challenges; this may not be for some but it doesn't have to stop others. We have to be open to new ways of hospitality according to the necessities of modern society.
- Hospitality extended in friendship to people rather than institutions.
- Less conservatism, more openness to the new poor.
- Radical change to a lifestyle in common and taking on responsibility.
- Our works should be simple and directly aimed at serving the poor.
- Postulants and novices should have the experience of service to the poor in our centres as well as in the local community.
- These days young people are very sensitive and passionate to have solidarity in the health field. (In this way, the charism of St. John of God also becomes also the charism of young men who may follow him.)
- Go back to the origins, to John of God serving the poor. Get away from our structures and serve the needs of the people outside them.
- Be sincere and open to the new needs of the society.
- Creative hospitality is found in domiciliary assistance to the sick.
- We must free ourselves from the traditional concept of religious organizations.
- Take on duties in the social field neglected by the government.
- The Order has to better understand and undertake caring for the poor. Our lifestyle must be seen to be poor like they are.
- Go out and serve the poor and the homeless.

5.4. Lifestyle of the St. John of God Brother (12.5%)

Here we study the community in the consecration, mission, and lifestyle of each Brother and the community as a whole. This constitutes a central dimension of witness and visibility seen by the world around us.

A remarkable number of proposals came in, equal to 127, which is a tangible sign of the centrality and importance of this subject in the minds of the Brothers.

The lifestyle of a Brother and a community is characterised by the motivations that animate them, and from the values, deep-set attitudes, as well as the external and visible behaviour in the sort of interpersonal relationships that help build or break the community.

There are many Brothers who want to return to a simpler lifestyle, to be poorer and return to the origins, authenticity, simplicity, deeper personal spiritual life, a rediscovery of the original charism, the coherence and the authenticity of a vocation lived with joy, to an open community that is pleasant and fraternal in its solidarity and mutual understanding. Such a community listens to the need to change the reality of its actual lifestyle and resist every form of secularism, and individualism.

We have organised the replies in the following scale:

- motivations and values
- deep-set attitudes
- external behaviour
- interpersonal relationships

5.4.1. Motivation and values

- I have to wonder if I have a correct place in my community? Or do I have a simply a decorative role. As a religious, I ask myself is it power that drives me?
- I am happy and proud that my confreres are Brothers and not priests.
- To show the authenticity as a value that is worth the trouble.
- Rediscover our original charism and to adapt it to new forms of the apostolate.
- Deepen the spiritual life and do not shirk service.
- Be generous and live the poverty we profess to oppose the consumerism that doesn't attract young people. Our lifestyle should not attract young men with the intention to accumulate goods.
- Live our charism with the conviction that we participate in the work of Christ's redemption.

- Let it be seen that we work with the poor in fidelity to the charism.
- Work without any prejudices.

5.4.2. Deep-set attitudes

- Be ready to offer oneself to today's world, in solidarity and fraternity with dependability and optimism. Consistency in what is said and what is done.
- Always be prepared to learn from our mistakes.
- Tolerance and understanding from superiors, so as to personify the figure of St. John of God and Christ. A spirituality that takes care of the sick.
- Different lifestyles of the Brothers - identity - role - greater emphasis.
- Joy and thanks to God for this great vocation.
- Living with joy in our service in the Church, through the sick and needy. To be religious who are open, pleasant and hospitable. To show respect and joy for one's own vocation. That is what attracts vocations.
- Change our lifestyle and try to live in a way that leaves no doubt that it is open, simple and poor. One that is at the service of the poor, without forgetting to maintain adequate services of quality in our centres.

- Living our own vocation with sincerity, with its bright and dark sides, and assuming with reality the diminution of the number of Brothers: not to be downhearted when confronted with defections and to maintain a great deal of enthusiasm.

5.4.3. External behaviour

- To have a lifestyle that is harmonious, simple and faithful to prayer.
- Promote a simple and pleasant community.
- To have a more pluralist community.
- Become poorer and go back to the spirit of St. John of God as a means to increase vocations.
- Oppose secularism and the individualism in the society and in our apostolate.
- A simple lifestyle could be the means of having a true spiritual life that is solid and faithful to the apostolate.
- Do not try to invent something new but return to a simple lifestyle.
- Would St. John of God or a young man look at our lifestyle today and be surprised at the element of sacrifice that they see? Where is the intense spiritual life?
- Open our community to receive men intending to explore their religious faith. What they will see is the Brothers and what they do in the apostolate.
- Don't run expensive institutions but go out and live closely with the poor.
- Improve our lifestyle to give witness to our co-workers.
- Have charismatic communities that may attract young men because they will resemble the first Christian communities and be deeply united to Christ.
- Our communities must not be isolated but actively participate in the life of the Church.
- What sort of lifestyle do we have in the communities and the Province? Just how many Brothers do we have who are really actively involved in the hospitals and charitable works?

5.4.4. Interpersonal relationships

- A genuine and cheerful community life, with true fraternal and convivial exchange.
- A cheerful fraternal community life that prays; one that has men who follow Christ the good Samaritan in the style of St. John of God.
- Appreciate the religious, charismatic and leadership qualities of the Brothers.
- It is necessary to have open fraternal dialogue, collaboration and understanding.
- To share our lives in fraternity so as to encourage the Brothers to live their vocation in truth, joy and love. Maintain the unity of the community to combat division and to create real dialogue.

5.5. Attention given to the technical-professional and spiritual training of the Brothers (2.6%)

For the exercise of the apostolic mission a certain competence is necessary to develop what is required in relationships and collaboration with the other Brothers and in the continuous updating of the technical-professional competence of each Brother. For the religious this cannot be separated from a strong spiritual formation; rather this is what gives it strength, motivation, constancy and principles. This must always be integrated in one's personality with a dynamic equilibrium that is adaptable to the growing demands of the society in which one lives.

Here we have chosen the suggestions that, in part, refer to the training of the vocation promoter, and also the general necessity for proper technical and professional competence for each Brother in whatever role he must perform.

The suggestions sent in expressed a very particular and interesting point of view, because they spoke of the conscience and convictions of the Brothers, and also because they were forthright and had a spirit of innovation suggesting new methods to approach. They called for the necessity to have a strong educational, theological, psychological technical, professional and spiritual formation in the spirit of the Founder and the Order.

We have distinguished the answers on the basis of the different specific environments.

5.5.1. Human, theological-spiritual and permanent formation

- Undertake the various stages in the different houses and works.
- Form the Brothers in the spirit of the Founder and the Order.
- Better utilise the charism and vocations of the Brothers that are already in the Order.
- Encourage human formation.
- In synthesis: Brothers in every Province/Delegation must, regardless of age, undertake permanent formation.
- The vocation promoter must be a mature person and capable of fostering vocations.
- Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit and not worldly interests.

5.5.2. Technical and professional training

- Less technical and more religious service (evangelisation).
- A suitable preparation in both the professional field and the vocational field, so as to live our charism and consecration. We should be more qualified as religious than professional men.
- Offer to young men a good preparation from the cultural and spiritual point of view.
- Our hospitality has different service potentialities, therefore we should not limit our candidates only to be nurses. They should be open to other careers.
- Don't be afraid to work to the same timetable as our lay co-workers.
- Raise the level of our competences.
- Postulants should acquire the basics of medical science.
- Professional training must be satisfactory and finally receive a diploma.

6. PROCESSES OF ADAPTATION AND INTEGRATION (16.1%)

Here we are speaking of some proposals that insist upon a plurality of subjects. What they substantially report is a common element that is underlying the trials, present in every condition of personal and social development; namely the processes of adaptation and integration, of flexibility, orientation, individualisation and collaboration.

The answers were not very numerous, nevertheless they show a certain innovation with a prospect that could be useful to the Brothers motivating the theme of renewal in the Order. There are particularly some replies that are related to adaptation to the changes in society, the Church,

the consecrated life and the problems related to the pastoral care, the Formation Program and the human and religious formation for the task of integration with the lay co-workers.

6.1. Adaptation to changes: social, ecclesial, and the consecrated life (5.5%)

Adaptation to social transformations asks for an intelligent reading of society and attention to the movements and the directions toward which it might be moving, and attention open to new methods and to appraise them and sometimes to assume some decisions. The interest of the Brothers has been rather diversified; however we put them into the following:

- demands of adaptation
 - attitudes to confront
-
- Know how to read the signs of the times, but the main ones should be to know the history of the Order and the Province together with our traditions.
 - Perhaps it would be a good thing to get to know the mentality of today's youth, and discard what it is not proper for the religious life.
 - That our communities radically live the charism of St. John of God, and incarnate it into the reality of today. Open our centres to the sick rather than to look for any financial profit.
 - Formation has to be valued on the basis to the times and the reality of today and not based upon ideas of the past. Learn what is needed in today's changing world.
 - Develop a program to understand today's youth and their world. Learn how to keep in step with them.
 - Follow the teachings of the Church and the Order. Bring the history of John of God to them in a ways they can understand and be inspired.
 - Vocation promotion must face the challenges of hospitality today and the future. It needs to keep in mind the signs of the times for an approach centered upon the aspirations and spiritual expectations of modern youth.
 - Often the superiors are the greatest obstacle to develop a new type of apostolate, because their power can suffocate it. The best superiors must be men who are open to new hospitaller initiatives; and
 - concrete proposals.

6.1.2. Attitudes to confront

- Observe and recognise the signs of the times and respond to current prevailing technical progress.
- Activism in professional life risks losing the sense of the sacredness in our dedication to Church and society.
- Be aware of professionalism.
- Face up to the change of the times, in life, modernisation and globalisation.
- To be open to what is new and to be open-minded without losing our own identity.
- Not to be afraid to change or to leave the old structures: renewal and acceptance of the signs of the times.
- Look at our works and see if they are faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Today there is fear of change in the consecrated life, but it is important to face up to the reality of living our religious ideals with conviction in new ways.

- Conserve the solid centrality of the person, to whose service our usual institutions must serve.

6.1.3. Concrete proposals

- Young people of today join benevolent works for a brief period during their vacations, such as in the works of Mother Teresa or in Africa, in the fields of teaching or in leprosariums.
- Young people of today are very sensitive and they have lots of possibilities to acquire knowledge and education about today's social problems.
- We must equip our services for the marginalised and we should be leaders in this.
- We must improve our pastoral serve towards the sick and the poor. If we do this, hospitality will be more spontaneous and will be practiced in a natural way according to modern means.
- Not to imitate what other congregations are doing, but to learn from what they do.
- Reopen juniorates, scholasticates and places for pre-postulants.
- Investigate other lifestyles.
- A better definition of our apostolic work.
- Open our works to volunteers during the summer vacations.
- Establish and unite the communities.
- Open interprovincial novitiates.
- Promote international exchanges beyond the confines of the Province.
- Create alternative communities composed of Brothers, religious chaplains, co-workers and volunteers that pray, work and live together in the spirit of St. John of God.
- A special adviser to answer candidates questions on spirituality, community and the apostolate.

6.2. A Formation Program and integration with co-workers (4.8%)

The Formation Program constitutes being the axis of every group operating with the intention of transmitting the ideals and values of the Order to the new generation and to become involved with young people to imbue them with our charism.

When this deals with a religious Order that solicits candidates to the state of consecrated life and apostolic mission, its first objective is to impart education in the Faith and Christian and religious values.

On this subject several Brothers proposed many suggestions which we have divides to two parts:

- Formative educational project in the Faith, Christian and religious values
- Formation and integration with co-workers.

6.2.1. Formation Program for education in the Faith, Christian and religious values

The main thing suggested by the Brothers was to have a basic plan of formation diversified into stages, respecting the lines brought up in the Formation Program. Also to make

use of very clear and explicit criteria of formation, above all predisposing every Province to have a suitable formation program for young men in formation. Therefore that requires:

- Having a formation plan proper to the reality of the Province and the country.
- Encourage young Brothers in the community to collaborate in programs for new candidates.
- Avoid improvisation in programs and that the formators do not relax the important and programs established for formation.
- Have formations programs appropriate to each country and culture.
- Use the guidelines affirmed by Canon Law and the documents of the Church and the Order. These clearly show us how to have formation according to the style of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

Education in the Faith and the values of Christian and religious life

- Motivating hospitality as a social and religious value.
- Give witness to what we believe in.
- Hospitality comes from the heart, not from reason.
- Educate the young Brothers in the life and spirituality of St. John of God.

6.2.2. Formation and integration of co-workers

One of the greatest gaps found in the questionnaire was the difficulty to work out a suitable relationship with co-workers. It seems this is a subtle perception, rather than a perception in which the Brothers freely expressed themselves faced with this situation. Many expressed their views in a favourable way, others lesser so.

It is important to affirm that the greater number of Brothers were in favour of extending to the laity their collaboration in joyfully serving the sick with a spirit of service and solidarity.

Some even said it would be useful to open our works to them and even create an association of lay co-workers, both men and women, so they can share the charism of hospitality. In fact, both the Brothers and co-workers are doing the same work in the spirit of St. John of God; or at least it will be worthwhile to form them in the same spirit of the Founder. Some Brothers more openly affirm that there are some Brothers gifted with the understanding that co-workers these days have more difficulties than the demands of yesterday.

The relationship with co-workers appears to be one of the subjects most difficult to open to discussion. In fact, other Brothers emphasise with equal vigour the necessity to give preference to the dialogue and contact between the Brothers, co-workers and associates.

In the first case this strengthens the idea that:

- The laity must be involved in the task of vocation promotion, in as much as they are inserted better in the world of the youth.
- The involvement of our co-workers is an important responsibility for the future of the Order. Therefore Brothers and co-workers have to urgently confront the problem of the scarcity of Brothers.

- A team of co-workers should be formed for vocation promotion.
- Collaboration with the co-workers must be the means of reaching young men and volunteers, and to organise meetings for this purpose.

In the second case there is a warning that

- The status of the Brothers should not be seen as equal to that of the co-workers.
- We must live in community in the places where our services are most needed and not in the large comfortable hospitals where the laity work and accept the responsibility.

7. CONCLUSION: Working together for a formation proper to the Order.

The apostolic mission establishes that every Order and congregation have relationships with the universal Church and specifically with the local Church. However, in each case each congregation and Order maintains its own specific charism.

In the perspective of vocation promotion, the suggestions that we received all spoke of the various aspects and demands of hospitaller work in regards to vocation. This applies to the various levels of relationships with other Orders and congregations, dioceses and parishes. It then broadens on to the wide-ranging experiences of Christian life in movements and Church associations. In their complexity these proposals have allowed us to gain the synthetic and conclusive vision that we have explained in the preceding paragraphs.

Vocation promotion is able to have an advantage when we work together in harmony with the local Church and try to create a closer relationship and reciprocal collaboration working with youth in the parishes, meeting with them in their various youth groups and associations. This process of integration with other congregations also favours a comparison and an exchange of projects, formative experiences, objectives and promotional initiatives. On the level of co-workers this also favours cohesion and improvement of relationships within the Order's health centres and communities and thus sharing our ideals. If this collaboration also widens to diocesan or national levels, then it becomes stronger, friendlier and more effective

Shared vocation promotion, particularly on the diocesan level, opens up new roads to the St. John of God Brothers vocation teams to make the Order known and more attractive. The next thing to do is to dialogue with the various religious institutes. Then a third thing is to orient the vocation promotion towards the various youth movements in the Church. This will demand spending some time with them, to converse and to build bridges of mutual understanding.

The other sections of vocation promotion must not be neglected, (the local area) such as visits to Catholic schools and colleges, clubs and universities. These visits could be undertaken by Brothers specifically chosen by the vocation promoter and they do not have to be given any precise role of vocational responsibility.

For example, initiatives in organising sporting fixtures, musical shows, and various activities in the parishes and schools, thus giving to young people the opportunity of knowing something about the charism of the Order. Such occasions can take many and various forms, such as inviting young people to the share to health programs, excursions and prayer meetings. The same on a more active scale could be used for volunteers.

This last mentioned must not be neglected, because today this is a field that particularly calls to our attention, as it treats of the value of human life and the importance of the person, the sick, the poor and to render them the service of charity promoted by the Church and the Hospitaller Order.

Dear Brother Timothy,

I cannot find any documentation in my personal records about this but my recollection is that the Provincials of the English-speaking Provinces were asked by the General Curia to organise the translation of the “RESEARCH REPORT ON THE STATE OF FORMATION IN THE ORDER” by Prof. Don. Renato Mion sdb of the Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, from Italian into English.

I seem to recall also that the Provincials agreed to invite Brother Benedict O’Grady to make the translation with a ‘proviso’ that I proof read his work on its completion. Brother Benedict, with some assistance from Brother Gavin Greenwood, made the translation and I took it over from him for a final proof read.

I have proof read the work to the best of my ability and have made the necessary corrections. I must point out that, while I have corrected any typographical and grammatical errors that I detected, I have not attempted to make the text more lucid – it is not particularly lucid in its original Italian. It is, after all, a statistical report. Niether have I interfered with the tables. That would be like removing a bottom card from a house of cards!

I wish to advise you, as far as our Province is concerned at present, it seems to have done what was requested of it. I am not sure what happens next and you, perhaps after consulting the other Provincials (essentially those of England, Ireland and the USA), will be able to advise me.

Questions to be settled would include:

1. How is the translation to be handed over for printing and distribution – in hard copy or electronic format?
2. Who will print the translation – the General Curia, each individual Province, one Province on behalf of all the others?
3. What will be the format of the printed version – in Times New Roman font, point 12, it requires 266 A4 pages; if printed double sided it would require something like 140 pages?

I attach the translation in electronic format so that you can see what it looks like – you might even want to print it in hard copy. I will be glad to finish with this matter so that I can turn my attention to the more pressing matter of proofing the liturgical texts and preparing them for submission by the General Curia to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian O'Donnell o.h.