



Final Document

V Regional Conference of Europe
14-18 March 2016 – Sorrento (Italy)

“Living Hospitality Hopefully and Boldly”



The document contains the resolutions adopted by the participants to the V Regional Conference of the Order in Europe. The actual implementation of the resolutions will be discussed at the next meeting of the Europe Commission planned for 04-05 April 2016 and subsequently submitted to the General Definitory of the Order for its approval.

1) V Regional Conference

The fifth Regional Conference of Europe was hosted by the Rome Province of the Order in Sorrento (Naples). This is a place of outstanding importance in the history of the Order, because the first religious that came from Spain arrived here in 1571. This date marked the beginning of the expansion of the Brothers' mission in Europe.

The title of the conference was **“Living Hospitality Hopefully and Boldly”**. The programme was prepared by the Order's Europe Commission and focused on the following three themes:

- 1) the future of consecrated life in Europe
- 2) strategies for the future of the European Provinces
- 3) what kind of Europe Commission do the European Provinces want for the future.

Father Bonifacio Fernández CMF moderated the sessions.

In his opening speech, the General Superior, Brother Jesús Etayo Arrondo stressed the importance of this particular time, because it will be the only Regional Conference scheduled for the 2012-2018 sexennium.

The Hospitaller Family is being called to face with determination extremely serious challenges to the life of the Order and the continuation of its centuries' old mission in Europe.

The fact that the conference was organised in the Jubilee Year of Mercy provided an opportunity for us to revive the gift of hospitality given us by Saint John of God and make it a present-day expression of mercy towards the weak and suffering.

2) How the Jesuits are organised in Europe: Ideas for the Order's Future

The participants considered with interest the “platforms” set up by the Jesuits to establish a network at a local level between the communities, co-workers, and volunteers in the different centres. They also welcomed the Society's international approach, such as their multinational novitiates and communities.

The Schools of Hospitality should be enhanced because they play an essential role in providing charismatic formation for Brothers and Co-workers. Even the Jesuits have begun to promote something similar with their leadership programme.

The idea of having a “Coordinator” whose role would be similar to that of a rapporteur in promoting dialogue between European Provinces and exploring possible mergers or forms of collaboration is worth considering.

3) The Future of the Europe Commission in the Order

Appreciation was expressed for the way the Europe Commission had evolved and functioned since 2008.

Looking to the future, it would undoubtedly be necessary to strengthen the structure of the Commission and guarantee constant contact between the Brussels Office and the European sub-commissions.

It was important for information about the Commission's work to reach the communities and centres more directly.

It was also necessary to promote mergers and closer cooperation between Provinces. Similarly, impetus would be given to study the feasibility of a possible European Novitiate. The prospect of creating a single European Province and an international novitiate would entail giving priority to analysing the possibility of mergers between Provinces and the European novitiate.

We also needed to decide whether the Europe Commission should provide guidance to the Provinces to help them adapt to changes in consecrated life.

The Europe Commission would analyse the proposals made by participants in the language groups and discuss them at the future meeting of Major Superiors with a view to finalising possible courses of action at the 2019 General Chapter.

The participants also indicated in a questionnaire the themes to be proposed for the next General Chapter.

4) Stable Patrimony

The participants listened attentively to Father Sebastiano Paciolla, O.Cist., on the subject of the stable patrimony of a canonical public juridical person.

There is no definition of stable patrimony in the Code of Canon Law, but only references to canons 1285 and 1291.

Notwithstanding the lack of case law, each canonical PJP should define its stable patrimony and disclose the respective act of assignment or designation for the purposes of civil law.

The Finance Commission would continue to follow up this matter and would provide the Provinces with all necessary information.

5) Strategies for the Future and New Organisational Models of the Provinces

Each Province illustrated its strategy for the future with regard to Religious Life and the administration of its apostolic works.

Despite the very different contexts, the discussion on this matter was very useful for it allowed an exchange of opinions in view of the upcoming Provincial Chapters.

The Provinces described their respective organisational structures, which guaranteed the centralised and efficient management of their works. These examples were an encouragement to determine the best forms of administrative management under the legislation of each country.

6) The Future of Consecrated Life in Europe

The reflection on the future of consecrated life was led by Father David Kinnear MCCI, Secretary of the Union of Superiors General.

The pontificate of Pope Francis was proposing indications to follow for the renewal of consecrated life.

Every experience of reform and renewal in Religious life and in the Church itself starts with the reading of the Gospel message for in-depth answers to present-day questions and a vision of the future.

The consecrated life of tomorrow would be different from today's, and this change was neither avoidable nor negotiable.

We were therefore obliged to reflect on this change and on the degree to which it may be an opportunity for the life of the Hospitaller Order.

The groups provided the following indications:

- a) the present situation required us to act quickly so as not to “miss the train” that can take us to a renewed style of consecrated life. Only by beginning with the Gospel message would it be possible to reinvigorate the contemplative form of our ministry;
- b) we must not be afraid of change or face it with anxiety. Rather, we should adopt an approach that was bold and patient in the face of initial resistance;
- c) the spiritual life of the community must also be rekindled by actively involving the Co-workers.

7) The Hospitality Europe Office

Mr. Carlo Galasso, the director of the Brussels office, illustrated the work carried out to establish and operate the office from 2012 to the present day.

Brother Rudolf Knopp reported on the results of the evaluation questionnaire filled out by the different Provinces. The Provinces rated the office very positively and the Provincial Superiors of the European Region unanimously voted to keep the office going.

The participants proposed that another person be hired by the office to help handle the growing volume of work and build up a closer relationship with the European Institutions as well as the Provinces themselves.

8) Evaluation of the Hospitaller Vocation Year

Brother Benigno Ramos illustrated the work done in 2015 in the year dedicated to promoting vocations to the Hospitaller Religious Life.

The Provinces had been very active in organising events and opportunities to reflect on the meaning and contemporary value of the Hospitaller vocation.

The work done in 2015 had given a major boost to Vocations Promotion.

The Provinces undertook to ensure that this impetus would be maintained over the coming years.

9) The Order and the migration emergency

The dramatic migration crisis and the flow of refugees and asylum-seekers had affected the different areas of the Order's European Provinces in different ways.

The meeting shared actual examples of the ways the Provinces had provided a welcome and social assistance and health care in recent months. There was a general readiness to exchange information and experiences to enable everyone to provide adequate and compassionate assistance to these people.

10) Conclusions and Acknowledgements

Forty participants attended the conference, including a delegation of the Good Shepherd Province (North America).

The participants expressed their thanks to the Europe Commission for preparing the programme and the Rome Province for their efficient and warm hospitality.

The Europe Commission would continue to work until the end of the sexennium (2018) on the basis of the resolutions contained in this document. It would propose and discuss specific lines of action at the future Assembly of Major Superiors later this year.

Heartfelt thanks were extended to all those who had contributed to the successful outcome of this occasion, namely the interpreters, the moderator, the speakers, the secretarial staff and the volunteers who had given generously of their time and valuable support.

Sorrento, 18 March, 2016