



# Rejoicing in Hope

9TH WEEK OF PRAYER  
FOR HOSPITALLER VOCATIONS  
April 15-21, 2024

Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God





## Introduction

---

Dear Hospitaller Family,

We are celebrating the Easter season, where the mystery of the Resurrection fills our whole lives with joy and hope. Christ is risen, LIFE has conquered death.

From the General Commission for Vocation Ministry and Formation of the Sisters Hospitallers and Brothers of St. John of God we send you the material of the 9th Hospitaller Week of Prayer for Vocations that this year will take place from April 15 to 21, 2024.

The motto that will animate us during the week is taken from the message that Pope Francis made last November on the occasion of the 38th World Youth Day 2023: **Rejoicing in hope**. The presence of the Risen Christ fills us with joy and gives us strength to respond to the hospitaller mission that he entrusts to us and, even if we have to face difficulties, we know that he is there to encourage us and raise our gaze to a horizon of hope.

We wanted to continue to incorporate for our reflection the testimony of some of our Hospitaller saints. This year we will approach the lives of the two co-founders of the Sisters Hospitallers: Maria Josefa Recio and Maria Angustias Giménez, through a biography prepared for the occasion by Delia Caires of the Lay Hospitaller Movement of Portugal. These two women, together with St. Benedict Menni, knew how to listen to the voice of God and are for all of us an example of vocation and hope because they were not discouraged by the vicissitudes that were presented to them on their way. The lives of these two women show us a true vocational response and their example stirs others up to respond faithfully to the Call of Jesus.

We thank all those who have participated in the preparation of this vocational material, which is full of life experiences and hope, and we invite the entire Hospitaller Family to unite in prayer to ask the Lord of the Harvest to raise up vocations for the Church and especially for Hospitality.

Vocatio Promotion and Formation  
Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God



**Monday, April 15, 2024**

## Everything has a beginning

### **Introduction:** What is the origin of this joy?

---

“Rejoice in hope” was Saint Paul’s encouragement to the community of Rome at a time when it was undergoing harsh persecution. The “joy in hope” proclaimed by the Apostle is the fruit of Christ’s paschal mystery and the power of his resurrection. It is not a product of our human efforts, plans or skills, but of the energy born of an encounter with Christ. Christian joy comes from God himself, from our knowledge of his love for us.

Pope Benedict XVI, reflecting on his experience of the 2011 World Youth Day in Madrid, asked: “Where does joy come from? How is it to be explained? Certainly, there are many factors at work here. But the crucial one is this certainty based on faith: I am wanted. I have a task in history. I am accepted, I am loved”. He went on to say: “Ultimately we need a sense of being accepted unconditionally. Only if God accepts me and I become convinced of this, do I know definitively: it is good that I exist... It is good to be a human being, even in hard times. Faith makes one happy from deep within”

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

### **Hospitaller Text**

---

My name is María Angustias Giménez and I was born in Granada on August 21, 1849. No one would have imagined that I, this little girl, daughter of Paul and Mary Dolores, would become a co-founder of the Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I grew up in a privileged middle-class family and I am aware that I had more opportunities to educate myself than other young people my age. At home we prayed and talked about God, but at a certain point I put God last, giving preference to: having fun, going to the theater, dressing up. I was drawn to other things and I put God and maybe myself aside. In 1871, when I was 22 years old, I met a friend, who would undertake with me the future of hospitality: María Josefa Recio. I can’t talk about myself without talking about her. We lived very close to each other and soon became good friends. Many times she would invite me to her house and I admit my rudeness in not accepting her invitations. I was busy with many things that gave me quick but empty happiness. But God, who always anticipates, did not want to leave me in the dark for long and knocked loudly at the door of my heart.

Delia Caires

## Reflection

---

Maria Angustias did what all of us try to do: seek love and happiness through earthly means, but it turned out to be useless. However, after reflecting on the blessings that God offered her: family, wealth, and education. Maria Angustias, cooperates with God's grace, cultivates her friendship with Maria Josefa Recio, and she goes from being an unlikely candidate to having the most fruitful apostolate. *What God can accomplish when His people cooperate with His will is extraordinary!* Maria Angustias teaches us that we should not leave God aside in our lives. He must be our top priority in order to be happy and establish His Kingdom on earth.

(Nicolas Korolewski – England – hospitable young man)

## Petition of the Day

---

Lord, we ask You for the grace to abandon us in Your hands, so that by placing all our trust in You, we may let You do wonders in our lives. **Let us pray to the Lord.**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen





**Tuesday, April 16, 2024**

## Look inside yourself and listen to your heart

### **Introduction:** Where is my hope?

---

Youth is a time full of hopes and dreams, stirred by the many beautiful things that enrich our lives: the splendour of God's creation, our relationships with friends and loved ones, our encounter with art and culture, science and technology, our efforts to work for peace, justice and fraternity, and so many other things. We are living at a time, though, when for many people, including the young, hope seems absent. Sadly, many of your contemporaries who experience wars, violent conflict, bullying and other kinds of hardship, are gripped by despair, fear and depression. They feel as if they are in a dark prison, where the light of the sun cannot enter. A dramatic sign of this is the high rate of suicide among young people in different countries. In such situations, how can we experience the joy and hope of which Saint Paul speaks? There is a risk that instead we will fall prey to despair, thinking that it is useless to do good, since it would not be appreciated or acknowledged by anyone. We may say to ourselves, with Job: "Where then is my hope? Who will see my hope?" (Job 17:15).

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

### **Hospitaller Text**

---

Since my friend Maria Josefa was a very committed Christian, I was afraid that she would find out what was happening to me and avoided her. But, by not putting any obstacles in the way that God had prepared for me, my friendship with her gradually grew more and more. With total authenticity, we shared with each other our inner life, our dreams and challenges. There was a defining moment that changed the course of my life. Having suffered from a heart attack since I was a child, I had a serious heart attack again and I was very ill. I thought I was going to die. I felt my life slipping through my fingers. It was a deep shock. I began to realize that life would only make sense if I did something meaningful. I found myself. I was tested in my finitude. I asked Jesus to let me live a little longer, the time necessary to give myself completely to Him. It was my frailty that made me realize that God could be my strength. He called me to great heights. Aware of the opportunity to live, his voice captivated me and gave birth to a dream in me: to found a Congregation. That's crazy, isn't it? But I couldn't share this secret with my friend because she was married and had her future defined.

Delia Cairés

## Reflection

---

For me, Hope is in the **Gaze**, that is, in the way of looking at the situations that life puts next to me and that makes me change my perspective and sometimes my direction. In times of Covid, when everything was suffering, deep anguish and often death (in a year and a half I lost a dear young friend, my brother-in-law suffered a heart attack and my mother underwent several operations that led me to come and live in my house to be able to take care of her; my gaze led me to wonder and look at where I come from, Understand where I come from and stay firm in where I want to go. From there I understood that Hope is a **Desire**. In the silence of my soul, I stopped and listened. There I felt my heart still beating, vibrating, throbbing. Hope is a desire that we have to hold on to, sometimes against all human limits. For me this wish has come true, it is real and lives in the One who has never abandoned me and has never stopped loving me.

(Franca Colla – Italy – Collaborator of the Brothers of St. John of God)

## Request of the Day

---

Lord, give me a gaze capable of always looking upwards so that I never forget my origins and where I want to go. May all the choices of my life be directed towards You. Help me to always make the chords of my heart vibrate so that I will never stop fighting for love towards those who have lost all hope. **Let us pray to the Lord.**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen



Wednesday, April 17, 2024

## What is impossible for me, is possible for God

### Introduction: Hope, the "little" virtue

---

When we think of human tragedies, especially the suffering of the innocent, we too can echo some of the Psalms and ask the Lord, "Why?" At the same time, however, we can also be part of God's answer to the problem. Created by him in his image and likeness, we can be signs of his love, which gives rise to joy and hope even in situations that appear hopeless. I think of the film "Life is Beautiful", where a young father, with great sensitivity and creativity, manages to transform harsh realities into a kind of adventure and game. He enables his young son to see things with "eyes of hope", protecting him from the horrors of the concentration camp, preserving his innocence and preventing human malice from robbing him of a future. Stories like these are not just fiction! We see them played out in the lives of so many saints who were witnesses of hope even amid the most horrid examples of human evil. We can think of Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe, Saint Josephine Bakhita, and Blessed Józef and Wiktoria Ulma and their seven children.

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

### Hospitaller text

---

Con Dios siempre puede suceder lo increíble. Después de estar tan enferma, me sentí llena de energía y emocionada de ser fiel a lo que le había prometido a Jesús. El sueño de fundar una Congregación seguía invadiéndome, pero sentía algo que no lograba comprender. Por un lado sólo pensaba en ello, por otro no quería hablar con nadie, y mucho menos con mi amiga María Josefa, que vivía con su marido.

Para calmar mis preocupaciones, un día le dije que esperaba ser admitida en una Congregación Religiosa. ¿Sabes lo que ella me dijo? No, no puede ser, si no vamos juntas no te admitirán. Quedé muy triste: ¿pero por qué me decía cosas tan imposibles? Después me di cuenta de que era yo la que tenía muy poca fe. Para Dios nada es imposible, Incluso lo más difícil. Él todo lo puede hacer posible.

Pasé mucho tiempo imaginando fundar algo grandioso que fuera admirado por el universo. Dios ya no cabía dentro de mí. No sé cómo no me volví loca pensando en ello.

Delia Cairés

## Reflection

---

People like María Josefa Recio and María Angustias Giménez, with great mission, vision and dreams, at the service of others, are called to live great personal, family and social challenges. Sometimes these challenges are seen as unfair and we may ask ourselves why me, but over time we realize that God's love guides us to discover new paths until dreams come true.

That's when hope is reborn, and that's where everything begins to become possible. Obstacles and difficulties become opportunities to grow, create and generate something new, making us better to provide the best to others. This is how the Congregation of the Sisters Hospitallers was born, a Hospitaller adventure where the legacy of our Foundresses continues to live in us.

José Mauricio Chaucanes Rosero – Colombia – Movimiento Crecer Hospitalario)

## Request of the Day

---

We ask You, Lord, to continue to sow the small seed of hope in our hearts, knowing that we can do all things in You. May the Holy Spirit keep us steadfast and confident in the pursuit of our dreams. **Let us pray to the Lord.**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen







Thursday, April 18, 2024

## Make your life a dream and your dream a reality

### **Introduction:** Hope, a light shining in the night

---

In the Christian tradition of the Paschal Triduum, Holy Saturday is the day of hope. Situated between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, it is a kind of no man's land between the despair of the disciples and their joy on Easter morn. It is the place where hope is born. On Holy Saturday, the Church commemorates in silence Christ's descent into hell. We see this portrayed in the many icons that show us the Lord, radiant with light, who descends to the darkest depths and crosses over them. God does not simply look with compassion on our experiences of death, or call to us from afar; he enters into our moments of hell like a light that shines in the darkness and overcomes it (cf. Jn 1:5).

Si lo pensamos bien, esta era la esperanza de la Virgen María, que se mantuvo fuerte junto a la cruz de Jesús, segura de que la "victoria" estaba cerca. María es la mujer de la esperanza, la Madre de la esperanza. En el Calvario, «esperando contra toda esperanza» (Rm 4,18), no dejó que se desvaneciera en su corazón la certeza de la Resurrección anunciada por su Hijo. Fue Ella quien llenó el silencio del Sábado Santo con una espera amorosa y llena de esperanza, infundiendo en los discípulos la convicción de que Jesús vencería a la muerte y que el mal no tendría la última palabra.

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

### **Hospitaller Text**

---

One day our father confessor fell ill and told us that a Brother of the Order of St. John of God would come to replace him. This is how we met Father Benito Menni, who would later become our Founder. I confided my secret to him. He listened to me attentively. He asked me questions to test my convictions. Soon after, Maria Josefa's husband fell ill and died. Then my mother passed away too. Now we both found ourselves without any impediment to move towards the horizon of a very unknown future. Father Benito Menni became our point of reference and God's intermediary and also the potter who kneaded and undid our desires. I don't even know how to explain to you how a man who barely knew us had the same devotion as we do, to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! Fearless and defiant, I told him again about my desire to found. I felt that he liked my dream, but he didn't dare to believe me at the time. He invented a thousand and one ways to dissuade me, even going so far as to say that he had already had offers from other young women of greater qualities and beauty... Again and again I felt like a boat stranded on the beach of discouragement, but very soon I saw the beacon of God's voice and threw myself back into the sea.

Delia Caires

## Reflection:

---

Often, in our day-to-day lives, we are presented with situations where all our foundations are shaken. Fears, fears, and insecurities spring from the depths of our hearts as we desperately search for an immediate solution that will serve as an escape route from all our problems. Faced with these situations in which we wander aimlessly along an unknown path, let us turn our gaze to our Mother, the Virgin Mary. It is in her that we find the greatest witness of hope in God, because in the hardest moment of her life, at the foot of the cross, she was able to put her pain and fear before the Lord, knowing with hope that, no matter the magnitude of our problems, God can always do more.

(Ivan Ramos – Spain – volunteer Hospitaller Order of St. John of God)

## Petition of the Day

---

Lord, we pray for all the people who accompany us on our journey of faith. That they may be a light in our lives and always bear witness with their lives to a loving hope in you. **Let us pray to the Lord.**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen





Friday, April 19, 2024

## Would you give up everything to follow Jesus?

### Introduction: Nurturing hope

---

Christian hope is no facile optimism, no placebo for the credulous: it is the certainty, rooted in love and faith, that God never abandons us and remains faithful to his promise: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me" (Ps 23:4). Christian hope is not a denial of sorrow and death; it is the celebration of the love of the risen Christ, who is always at our side, even when he seems far from us. "Christ himself is our great light of hope and our guide in the night, because he is 'the bright morning star'" (Christus Vivit, 33).

After the flame of hope is kindled in us, there can be times when it risks being extinguished by the worries, fears and pressures of daily life. A flame needs oxygen to keep burning, in order to grow into a great bonfire of hope. The gentle breeze of the Holy Spirit nurtures our hope, and there are several ways that we cooperate in this.

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

### Hospitaller Text

---

And one day we received the long-awaited letter: "Daughters, if you want, you can come. I already have a house where you will live in the company of a good lady." Ambiguous feelings came over me. And now? How can I break the ties that bind me to my family? Would this be an inhumane decision? Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was our strength and protection. On June 21, 1880, in the early hours of the morning, Maria Josefa and I left the house, carrying the packages of emotion. It was the day of St. Louis of Gonzaga, who filled us with courage and audacity. I left a few written letters to be delivered to my family, explaining why I had to leave. God's call was stronger than everything else.

On the train we lived very happy moments. We were on our way to an unknown land where we could find our happiness. But when we arrived in Ciempozuelos, sadness again filled our hearts and the joy of departure was soon extinguished. Being away from our families led us to have a great feeling of loneliness and anguish for having been so cruel in abandoning them.

Delia Caires

## Reflection

---

Pope Francis challenges us to reflect on our experience of how we live out hope in God. God's Word tells us that hope is not an idea, but something that springs from our hearts as we care for and deepen our daily relationship with God. Hope is the way that strengthens our trust in God. God's call appears in surprising ways in our lives and provokes a confident response that shines like fire within us. The "yes" sets our love and faith in motion so that we can feel God's presence in every situation.

Our first sisters, Maria Angustias and Maria Josefa, by saying a resolute yes to God, overcame their doubts and set out into the unknown with great hope, to embrace a new life at the service of their suffering brothers and sisters. Today, they teach us and motivate us to live our faith, trusting in Mary's maternal protection.

(Gracia Makayabu Sindani – Democratic Republic of Congo – Novice Sisters Hospitallers)

## Request of the Day

---

Lord Jesus, compassionate and merciful, who chose and called the disciples, we ask you for the grace to respond generously to the seed of vocation that the Father has planted in our hearts so that we may serve you in our brothers and sisters with joy and hope, as Mary, our Mother, did. **Let us pray to the Lord.**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fonts of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen





**Saturday, April 20, 2024**

## Following Jesus sometimes leads you to choose an uncomfortable path

**Introduction:** Hope is nurtured by prayer.

---

Prayer preserves and renews hope. It helps fan the spark of hope into flame. "Prayer is the first strength of hope. You pray, and hope grows and moves forward" (Catechesis, 20 May 2020). Praying is like climbing to a mountaintop: from the ground, the sun can be hidden by clouds, but once we climb beyond them, its light and warmth envelop us. We see once more that the sun is always there, even when everything around us seems dark and dreary. Let us take some time each day to rest in God, especially when we feel overwhelmed by our problems: "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him" (Ps 62:5).

Hope is nurtured by our daily decisions. Saint Paul's invitation to rejoice in hope (cf. Rom 12:12) calls for concrete choices in our everyday lives. I urge all of you to choose a style of life grounded in hope. Let me give just one example. On social media, it always seems easier to share negative things than things that inspire hope. So my concrete suggestion is this: each day, try to share a word of hope with others. Try to sow seeds of hope in the lives of your friends and everyone around you. For "hope is humble, it is a virtue that is built up day by day... We need to remember each day that we possess the first fruits of the Spirit, who works in us through the little things" (Morning Meditation, 29 October 2019).

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

### Hospitaller text

---

It was time to visit the house that Father Menni had told us about. Everything was very poor and uncomfortable. Humidity covered the walls. There was no furniture in the rooms. We had the feeling that Father Benito Menni was not waiting for us; Probably because I thought we wouldn't have the courage to break family ties. The mistress of the house at first treated us with a certain harshness and distrust. I was the least condescending to her quirks and whims. Father Menni, during those first days, did not talk to us about creating any foundation either. And doubts appeared. Would it have been better to stay quietly in our house in Granada?

Once again we were overwhelmed by doubt, poverty, discouragement... Empty of material goods, physical comforts and concrete answers, the only certainty was the voice of God asking us for a little patience. To our astonishment, some young women showed interest in joining us. They, too, sought God. Father Benito Menni wanted to be sure that God was behind all this. And in the end, he ended up believing us. Delia Caires

## Reflection

---

Inspired by the loving image of Jesus Christ, always attentive to our needs, I echo the certainty of our founder "God first and above all things of the world". This phrase sums up the most essential part of our Christian life and the firm conviction that "Jesus" is the only beacon that illuminates our path and opens us to a horizon of greater possibilities. Only through trust in the Lord can we be able to overcome any fear, anguish, sadness, desolation, and sense of abandonment. We can be faithful to this path of following by cultivating three fundamental attitudes that St. Paul points out to us in the Letter to the Romans: "Remain joyful in hope, steadfast in tribulation, and persevering in prayer."

We are invited to live like Mary, the faithful woman who did not allow herself to be defeated by anything and remained faithful to the message received, attentive to God's call to us, listening with openness to those who need it and thus being able to bring all their needs before the altar of God.

(Juan Pablo Salas – Mexico – Brother of St. John of God)

## Petition of the Day.

---

For all consecrated men and women, so that they may discover in God's love the living source that restores health, be always ready to help those who need it most, and transmit with simplicity and joy the Gospel of Jesus who is salvation and hope. **Let us pray to the Lord**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fonts of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen





**Sunday, April 21, 2024**

God's dreams are woven with open eyes,  
without haste, without pause.

**Introduction:** Lighting the torch of hope

---

We are told that when people would come to Saint John Paul II to speak with him about a problem, the first question he asked was: "How do you see this in the light of faith?" When we see things in the light of hope, they appear different. I encourage you, then, to start seeing things this way. Thanks to God's gift of hope, Christians are filled with a new joy that comes from within. The challenges and difficulties will always be there, but if we possess a hope "full of faith", we can confront them in the knowledge that they do not have the final word. And we ourselves can become a small beacon of hope for others.

Each of you can be such a beacon, to the extent that your faith becomes concrete, rooted in reality and sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters. Let us think of those disciples of Jesus who one day, on a high mountain, saw him transfigured in glorious light. Had they stayed there, it would have remained a beautiful experience for them, but the others would not have shared it. They had to come down from the mountain. So it is with us. We must not flee from the world, but love the times in which God has placed us, and not without reason. We can only find happiness by sharing the grace we have received with the brothers and sisters that the Lord gives us each day.

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVIII World Youth Day 2023

**Hospitaller text**

---

Almost a year after running away from home, on May 31, 1881, the 10 new postulants, including Maria Josefa and me, began the novitiate. What a joy! On that unforgettable day when the new congregation of the Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was born, the 10 young women were also born for the religious life of the Hospitallers. I will never forget the day we received the first sick woman. It was so exciting that I suggested we all kiss her feet. It was such an extraordinary gesture of hospitality that I still remember it today.

Incredibly, after so many struggles and achievements, a year later, I didn't profess in the same group. I got scared. I hesitated. I began to think that if something happened to Father Menni, it could all end... And our dream would die. But a few months later, I made my religious profession and I can say that I was very happy!

Another event that marked my life and my vocation was the day Maria Josefa went to heaven, after the aggression of a patient. I tell them that the journey of a lifetime was brief but fruitful. The seed of hospitality took root deep in her heart.

Father Menni asked me to write about the origins of the Congregation. Now that I am addressing you, I have had to reread that wonderful work and it has been so moving to feel how God has always given me the courage to dream and to believe that He would always be my strength. I smile as I contemplate the 143 years of my founding dream... and I still feel very happy! And you, what dreams move your heart?

Delia Caires

## Reflection

---

The joy of a true encounter with the Lord leads us to live our lives with hope and faith. So it was with the disciples, so it was with Mary Josefa and Mary Angustias, and today, with each one of us. The Foundresses lived in an overflowing joy that flowed from the true encounter with the Lord. Hence the transformation that led them to leave their home, to leave their families to follow Jesus, "like the disciples, they came down into the reality of the world" to be there the presence of his merciful love. María Angustias, with a grateful heart, recognizes the wonders that God has worked in her, but she also recognizes the difficulties, the "dark night" in which she feels that she is not worthy to profess with the rest of the group of sisters. However, she does not give up and gives her life to God. The God of life and love does not abandon her, she is always present. After the loss of Maria Josefa, she experienced how the testimony she left was enough for hospitality to bear fruit in her heart and in that of the new postulants.

(Fernanda Gaetano – Portugal - Sister Hospitaller)

## Petition of the Day

---

Lord Jesus, I thank you for the lives of the first sisters, because they made their lives "little lanterns in the lives of their suffering brothers and sisters." May we know how to live the joy of a true encounter with you, being sowers of peace, joy and hospitality. **Let us pray to the Lord.**

## Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

---

Father of mercy,  
who gave your Son for our salvation  
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,  
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,  
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young  
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment  
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis  
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.  
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,  
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,  
intercede for each Hospitaller community,  
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,  
it may be a source of true vocations  
for the service of the holy People of God. Amen.