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TOPIC:

***HOSPITALITY OF THE BROTHERS OF SAINT JOHN OF GOD AS A
VALUE OF EVANGELIZATION, IN TANGUIETA COMMUNITY- BENIN***

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Diploma
in Religious Formation

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this particular work to my congregation, the Hospitaller Brothers of Saint John of God, especially Rev Brother Leopold GNAMI, OH the superior and Rev Brother Raphael Ngong Njia, THE, OH formators of the Scholasticate and also to Rev Brother Cyrille GNONHOUE, OH who helped me a lot to realize this beginning of my dream. This goes far to my family member specially my Dad Emile Dakamou and my Mother Nambieni.

EPIGRAPH

“Bear one another’s burden and so you will fulfil the Law of Christ. ...Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith”. (Galatians 6:2; 9-10a)

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the diploma in Religious Formation. This particular long essay has never been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit. All the sources that were used in this research have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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Date.....

This research project has been submitted for examination under my approval as University supervisor.

Signed.....

Name of Supervisor: **Dr FLORENCE GITHUTHU**

Date.....

ABBREVIATIONS

BRO	Brother
CCL	Code of Canon Law (1983)
CUEA	Catholic University Eastern Africa
COL	Colossians
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
EPH	Ephesians
GSHO	General Status of the Hospitaller Order
GAL	Galatians
INSAE	Institut National de la Statistique et L'Analyse Economique
JN	John
MT	Matthew
MSP	Ministre de la Sante Publique
NO	Number
OH	Order of the Hospitaller
REV	Reverend
SJOG	Saint John of God

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The researcher explores on hospitality as a value of evangelization among the Brothers of Saint John of God in Tanguieta community- Benin. Known officially as “The Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of Saint John of God”¹ are present in five continents and have effective apostolates in the care of the poor and the sick in the spirit of their founder². This is the case at Tanguieta-Benin. The researcher presents the background of the study, the purpose, the objectives, methodology, problem statement, scope and limitations, study objectives, hypothesis, research questions and justification of the study.

The first chapter concentrates on understanding hospitality as a value of evangelization as per the founder. It incorporates the congregational charism, spirituality, the African context, the Bible, and the Church teachings. The second chapter focuses on the challenges facing the brothers of Saint John of God in the Benin - Tanguieta community. These are the African brothers in mission in Benin. The third chapter brings out the strategies towards the better realization of hospitality as a value of evangelization and how to contextualize this value in Tanguieta community – Benin.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Hospitaller Brothers of Saint John of God, witness their lives through their consecration as the consecrated celibates in the evangelical counsels of poverty, obedience, chastity and the fourth vow of hospitality. It identifies them uniquely in this fourth vow of hospitality as they respond to the needs of others mostly the poor, the sick, and the needy in hospitality. This is through the

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothers_Hospitallers_of_Saint_John_of_God retrieved on 12/08/2019

² <https://www.sjog-na.org/our-founder>. Retrieved 12/08/2019

passion of hospitality for the poor and the sick as per the Gospel of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-30) This is clear in their spirituality and charism.

Tanguieta is a town in the District of Atacora, Natitingou division in the North East of Benin. “The Commune covers an area of 5465 square kilometers and as of “2013 had a population of 74 675 people. The town had an estimated population of 27 094”³. It lies on the RNIE 3 highway which connects it to Natitingou. Tanguiéta was the location for the government during French colonial rule. The headquarters of the Pendjari National Park is based in the town, and the ‘Hôpital Saint Jean de Dieu de Tanguiéta’ is a regionally recognized hospital. The town has internet access. The main languages spoken in the town include French, Dendi, Waama, Nateni, and Biali.”⁴

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The hospitaller brothers are committed to living hospitality as the fourth vow, and their charism. The purpose of the study is to show the value of hospitality in the evangelization of their engagement as consecrated celibates. Therefore, hospitality for them is the best way to discover Jesus Christ in the suffering of sick people and the poor. Tanguieta is an area that has poor hospitals. The population can hardly access good health. In 1967, brothers of Saint John of God saw the sufferings of the population and decided to start the hospital by evangelizing the Gospel through their hospitality.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the understanding of hospitality.

³ INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA STATISTIQUE ET DE L'ANALYSE ECONOMIQUE (INSAE) *RGPH4 : QUE RETENIR DES EFFECTIFS DE POPULATION EN 2013 ?* (République du Benin 2005) p14

⁴ <https://tourismobserver.blogspot.com/2016/06/benin-tourism-in-benin.html>. Retrieved on 12/08/2019

2. To find out the challenges facing the brothers of Saint John of God in exercising hospitality as a value of evangelization.
3. To recommend the strategies towards better realization of hospitality as a value of evangelization among the brothers of Saint John of God of Tanguieta community.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is a relationship between African hospitality and the Christian teaching on hospitality.
2. Those who have embraced hospitality are freer for the things of God.
3. The challenges facing hospitality as a value of evangelization.
4. The congregational spirituality, charism, and rule of life/constitution are the best means of safeguarding hospitality as per Saint John of God brothers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Hospitality is commonly realized especially in offering charitable services through a little bit of collaboration towards achieving a given goal is needed. It has been embraced throughout the history of humanity and in the Church. It is not hard to observe that hospitality is a contentious issue in the modern world of refugees and the Christian divide. It is the same with the brothers of Saint John of God – Tanguieta who find themselves in this context. Hospitality is a way of living a healthy African and Christian tradition the loving neighbour without any difficulty. These brothers have tried their best to live their hospitality as a value of evangelization in their apostolates. The central question is; can a brother remain faithful to this vow of hospitality as a value on his ministry of evangelization?

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

It is realized that hospitality is important and everybody should live it. We know that in African tradition it is seen as an important value which should be missed in each family. Seeing that, the rationale of the current study is premised on the fact that the researcher realizes that many Brothers and other members of the Church face a myriad of challenges regarding hospitality as a value of evangelization with this the researcher, therefore, intends to bridge the gap by conducting this study. The justification of the study is also based on the fact that to the researcher's knowledge, no known study has been carried out on the same topic on the Brothers of Saint John of God Tanguieta community; this, therefore, leads to a research gap which needs to be bridged by the study at hand.

The study is also driven by the fact that the researcher intends to understand the true picture of hospitality as a value of evangelization; on the ground thus the most effective and realistic means is to carry out a study that explores the true African, church and congregational teachings on hospitality as a value of evangelization.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

Hospitality has been a key value to consecrated Life. The research is focused on identifying challenges involved in living it and of these challenges in the affectivity and harmonious Community living among the Brothers of Saint John of God. Although there are different stages of formation, the researchers will only focus on the professed members in the community of Brothers of Tanguieta.

DIFFICULTIES

Since the study is not carried out in an area within the campus, the researcher finds it difficult to travel to the Community and this may lead to the extension of the period of study. The researcher plans to get feedback from the members. This is because transfers delocate the members. With this the members may not comprehend the challenges in a particular community of experience if the period of stay is short. This means there is a lack of consistency in-experience.

REMEDIES

The researcher will support a few representatives financially to travel to the study. The researcher will also send some questionnaires in advance to help the brothers respond to the research. Due to the frequent transfers, the researcher will ask the brothers to evaluate the community experience where they have the longest stay.

POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the understanding of hospitality as a value of evangelization as per the founder, African context, Bible and church teachings?
2. What are the challenges facing the brother of St. John of God – the Tanguieta community?
3. What are the strategies for the realization of hospitality as a value of evangelization among the Brothers of Saint John of God – Tanguieta community?
4. How do we contextualize the of hospitality as a value of evangelization among the brothers of Saint John of God – Tanguieta community?

METHODOLOGY

The research work is limited to print and electronically published works. These are based on the library material: books, dictionaries church documents, articles, electronic sources, and magazines.

These materials are selected based on the understanding of the Catholic teachings, African tradition, the founder, the congregational charism and spirituality. The above-outlined method enriches the researcher's personal experience and reflections as a member of the brothers of St. John of God.

CHAPTER I

The understanding of Hospitality as a value of Evangelization in the light of Saint John of God the African context, the Bible and the Church Teachings

INTRODUCTION

“In our world full of strangers, estranged from their past, culture, and country, from their neighbours, friends, and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where the community can be found”.⁵ Unfortunately, the world fears to welcome people because of insecurity. From there, does it mean we shall not welcome our brothers and sisters in need of hospitality? In fact, inspired by the Holy Spirit, some men and women are chosen from God to welcome Him through the poor, the needy, the marginalized and even among the non-entities. This is the case with Saint John of God. He humbled himself and forgot himself in order to help the suffering. He wished to die with the most favourite of God, and that happened. In this first chapter, I focus my reflection on understanding Hospitality as a value of evangelization as per the Founder, African context, Bible and Church Teachings.

1.1. Definitions of Hospitality, Value, and Evangelization

Traditionally the word hospitality (Latin *hospitium*) is derived from *hospes*, meaning both “*guest* and *host*,”⁶ and also, according to the Oxford and Webster Dictionaries from the Old French word “*hospitalité*” direct to the “friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests,

⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching out, the three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, (NEW YORK 1975) p46

⁶ Michael Downey, *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, (INDIA Bangalore2003), p515.

visitor, or strangers.” “Hospitality speaks to us about the relationships that are established between a guest and the host”. Hospitality is the sharing of blessings⁷. “It is a valuable spiritual asset for community building. It is a sacred ancient art that makes room at the table of consciousness for everyone; stranger and guest alike. In the genuine warmth and welcoming spirit that hospitality is most known for, it spans cultural divides as a nonviolent pathway, transcending background and nationality”⁸. It is the way we expose ourselves to receive and take care of the guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way. It is an attitude of heart that opens us to others and receives them on their own terms. It is to welcome others and to share with them what one has received⁹. Henri Nouwen speaks of hospitality as a move from hostility to friendship. He says, “*Hospitality, therefore, means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. . . Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.*”¹⁰

Afterwards, *values* are described as personal qualities to which we choose to embody to guide our actions; the sort of person we want to be; the manner in which we treat ourselves and others, and our interaction with the world around us¹¹. Moreover, evangelization comes from the Latin word “*Evangelium*; and Greek word euangelion”, meaning good news, the reward for bringing good news,). Pope Paul VI, in its Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* defines evangelization as

⁷ Beatus B.A. Kitururu, *The Spirituality of Hospitality: African and New Testament Perspectives*, (CUEA Nairobi-Kenya 2009) p8.

⁸ <https://www.worldanglican.com/community-forum/the-value-of-hospitality-by-lynn-moffet-207>. Retrieved on 24/05/2019

⁹ Beatus B.A. Kitururu, *The Spirituality of Hospitality*: p8

¹⁰ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *the three Movements of the Spiritual Life Reaching out*, (NEW YORK 1975) p51

¹¹ Steven Mintz, Aka *Ethics Sage*, on August 1, 2018. <https://www.ethicssage.com/2018/08/what-are-values.html>, Retrieved on 25/09/2019

proclaiming Christ to those who do not know Him. For him "Evangelizing means to bring the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new, 'Now I am making the whole of creation new' (Revelation 21:5). But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by baptism(Rom6:4), and by lives lived according to the Gospel"¹²

1.2 Hospitality as per the Order of Saint John of God

1.2.1 The founder

1.2.2 A brief bibliography of St. John of God (1495-1550)

“John Cuidad, who is known today as St. John of God, was born in Portugal in 1495. An only child, he was taken from his family for unknown reasons by the Count of Oropesa at the age of eight. As a young man, John worked as a shepherd and laborer in the Portuguese countryside before moving to Spain and serving as a soldier under the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

1.2.3 John of God¹³ in Africa

After his time in the military, John became restless and decided to travel. While he was in North Africa, a Franciscan Friar advised him to return to Spain. John moved to the city of Granada in southern Spain where he opened a bookstall at the Elvira Gate, outside the entrance of the city.

The recent invention of movable type helped John share the word of God at his bookstand. He made a good living selling religious books about the Catholic faith. Yet despite his comfortable

¹² PAUL VI, *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*, Apostolic Exhortation (December 8, 1975), p14.

¹³ <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-john-of-god/>_retrieved on 28/12/2019

lifestyle, John continued feeling restless. On St. Sebastian's Day (January 20), John followed a crowd of people going to hear renowned preacher, John of Avila, who is known today as St. John of Avila.

1.2.4 The discourse of Saint John of Avila¹⁴

During the sermon, John underwent a major spiritual experience. He approached John of Avila after the sermon, confessed to him and received spiritual counseling. John wanted to atone for his sins, acknowledging that there was no greater sinner than himself. After his conversion, John temporarily went into a state of insanity. He was seen beating himself and "acting like a madman." He was taken to the Royal Hospital, a psychiatric facility, where the warden was instructed to provide him with care and a quiet place to rest. Unfortunately, John's care was cruel and inadequate. Like other psychiatric patients at the time, he was beaten and stripped naked if he did not comply with his caretakers. He underwent harsh treatments such as being hosed with cold water. At the time it was believed that this would shock patients back to reality.

John learned very quickly that it was better not to rebel against his caretakers but to comply with their requests. After a while, he was given special privileges, which allowed him to walk freely throughout the hospital. He took advantage of these privileges by visiting with other patients. By encouraging, supporting and comforting them, John felt he aided the nurses in providing better care. After a few months, he was considered well enough to be discharged. After his release from the hospital, John prayed to God and the Virgin Mother for guidance. He knew one of his first

¹⁴ Franciscan Media, <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-john-of-god/> retrieved on 28/12/2019

needs was finding a place to live. He was fortunate to meet John Miguel Abiz de Venegas, a prominent citizen, who allowed John to stay on the front porch of his house.

1.2.5 The vocation of John of God

Written over the house's entrance was the phrase "the heart commands." John seriously thought about its meaning and decided to adopt the motto for himself. John felt called to help the poor, sick and homeless. He spent his days traveling the streets of Granada helping those in need, and often taking them to live with him. Unfortunately, John Miguel Abiz de Venegas did not agree with this situation. He encouraged John to find other larger and more appropriate accommodations for the people he was helping. John searched the city looking for assistance in obtaining his goal. He slowly drew a dedicated circle of followers who realized his sincerity in caring for others in need. He was able to find a larger place to continue his ministry and over time it became a place of refuge "for the poor, sick and abandoned to stay and receive care. It is believed that this was the beginning of his ministry as St. John of God."

1.2.6 The Passion and the end time of John of God

John went throughout the city daily, seeking funds for the poor and for the sick. While many people assisted him whenever possible, he often would share his resources with the people that he met during his travels. Despite his generosity, the number of poor, sick or abandoned people still seemed to grow. With the help of his benefactors and friends, John was able to buy an old convent that allowed him to provide a safe haven for these individuals. Caring for people that the rest of society had shunned or neglected was both physically and mentally demanding on John. Years of hard work had eventually taken its toll on John whose health began to decline rapidly. Even in

failing health, he still put the needs of others before his own. It was not until the Archbishop of Granada came to see John that things began to change. The Archbishop promised to take care of John's many debts and continue his mission of caring for others. He then blessed John and told him to prepare for his journey to the Lord. Knowing that the poor and sick would be well cared for by his faithful followers, John became bedridden. When he knew his time had come, John died on March 8, 1550, at the age of 55. He died peacefully kneeling beside his bed with a crucifix in his hand"¹⁵

1.2.7 Saint John of God, the sympathy man

Saint John of God was a man of compassion. He gave himself to the poorest in society. He became poor to know the poorness of the World. He was a man of love and fell in love with the suffering World. His love did not end. He practiced what we call self-love and others. His life on the earth was not a hazard; he was really called to do the will of God by giving himself to the poor, the needy, the sick and the marginalized people. He made the best of himself by serving "the most favoured ones of Kingdom"¹⁶. Saint John of God has understood that the only thing to have eternal life, is to love your neighbour as yourself. That is why he trusted the love of God and gave free life to Him. He never ceased to welcome people and create a space with them.

Furthermore, Saint John of God started his work from ex nihilo (from Scratch). He was identified for four phases that we might summarize with the following words: "*emptiness, calling, change,*

¹⁵ Francisco De Castro, "The first biography of St John of God", Granada 1585 and the site web <https://www.sjog-na.org/our-founder/> Retrieved on 28/10/2019

¹⁶ *Constitutions of The Order, Rome 1984, No.13*

and identification."¹⁷He emptied himself to discover the real face of God: "God before and above all the things of this world!"¹⁸ Following its steps, the brothers from the Tanguieta community try to empty themselves and welcome the graces of God coming from the sick, the poor and the needy. They try to live the way their founder lived. The call of God made John the happiest in the world. One-day John responded to his uncle who wanted him to stay with him by saying *"I wish to... go in search of a way to serve Our Lord... I, therefore, put my trust in my Lord Jesus Christ that he may give me the grace to carry out this desire..."*¹⁹ Today, all over the world, the brothers of Saint John of God especially those in Tanguieta hospital express that happiness to witness their call by kissing the feet of the poor and needy.

Hospitality is a difficult value in human life. Who says hospitality says, love. Without love, there is no hospitality. Love is like water given to the child who is crying for thirst and when he receives it, he becomes fertile. To offer hospitality to someone is to bring him out of dryness. This is the man who started the congregation of hospitaller brothers. So what is a congregation?

1.2.8 The congregation

A congregation is a group of people obeying a common religious rule. It is also a group of people who have come together in a religious building for worship and prayer (Cambridge dictionary). The Brothers of Saint John of God are an Institute of Consecrated Life. This is an institute of consecrated life since it "is said to be of pontifical right. And when the Apostolic See has erected it or approved it through a formal decree" (CCL589).

¹⁷ Valentín Riesco Oh - José Cristo Rey García Paredes Cmf *"The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of St John of God" no 9*, <https://www.ohsjd.org/Common/Pagina.asp?ID=720> Retrieved on 28/10/2019

¹⁸ David Toohey *"Thoughts of St John of God"* Dedicated to Rev. Bro. John Gibson O.H. On the occasion of his Silver Jubilee of Profession 02/02/ 1976, p27

¹⁹ Francisco De Castro, *"The first biography of St John of God"*, Granada 1585, p32. And <http://www.ohsjd.org/Resource/TEMA6-ing.pdf>

1.2.9 known as hospitaller order in the church

“Our Hospitaller Order was thus born of the gospel of mercy (Mt 8:17; 25:34-46) as lived in its fullness by Saint John of God, and it is precise because of this characteristic that we justifiably claim him as our Founder. He indeed understood that the clearest sign of the passage from death to life is a love of one's brethren, not only expressed in words but manifested in deeds and truth(1Jn3:14-18). Following the request of our early Brothers, the religious family to which we belong was approved by Pope Saint Pius V on 1st January 1572 and is known in the Church by the name of THE HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF GOD. This name expresses our identity since the reason for our existence in the Church is to live and manifest the charism of hospitality in the spirit of Saint John of God. Consecrated to the Father by the Spirit, we follow more closely the chaste, poor, obedient and merciful Christ. In this way we assist in building up the Church, serving God in suffering mankind”²⁰.

This seed sowed by John of God has born fruits in the continent of Africa. They are in several countries: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cameroon, Mozambique, Senegal, Kenya, Zambia (Province of St Augustine of Africa); Togo, Burkina, and Benin (Province of St Richard- Pampuri of Africa) where the topic is focused. There are also Madagascar in the Province of France and Malawi in the Province of Ireland.

1.2.10 Brief history of the foundation of brothers of Saint John of God in Benin

In 1963, the Parachurch Apostolic Prefect, Robert Chopard-Lallier, of the African Mission in Lyon, was in Rome for the Second Vatican Council. He communicated to the General Curia of the Brothers of Saint John of God that a benefactor offered 80 million lire for the foundation of a social worker in Benin. The proposal was passed to Millan Provincial Superior Moise Bonardi, who welcomed it, pledging to follow up after the inauguration of the Afagnan Hospital in Togo in 1964. In December 1965, Brother Bonardi went to Benin to choose the most suitable place for the construction of a general hospital. He remained deeply touched by the extreme poverty of the

²⁰ Constitutions of the Order, Rome 1984, no.1b

populations of the North, deprived of health assistance. So he decided to build the hospital in Tanguieta. The only existing hospital in the area was Natitingou, with 80 beds where there are poor sanitation conditions. So, on June 29, 1970, the hospital of Saint John of God Tanguieta was inaugurated. It was founded by the Lombardo-Veneta province of Italy. Today the hospital has 216 beds.

Later on, the government of the Republic of Benin recognized the hospital by a convention on April 13, 1989, and the Hospital of St. John of God was erected a zonal hospital by Ministerial Order No. 6022 / MSP / DC / SGM / CADZS, of December 14, 1998. Hospital of Saint John of God of Tanguieta is exempt by decree no. 179 / PR / MFAEP / DD of 1967 from the customs duties and tax for all the goods, articles and materials, materials intended for the construction and the equipment of the hospitaller center²¹. From that encouragement, the brothers are excited to welcome the needy.

1.2.11 Sharing the gift of hospitality among themselves

The hospitaller brothers commit themselves to live a communal life. They share happiness and sorrowful together. They are happy to receive that call from God and from the congregation. They perform their apostolic mission urged on the same community. The brothers are proud to share their lives with a group of persons who love God. They are known for their humility, patience, and charity because “where there is no charity God is not there even though God is everywhere”²². They share everything together and love one another as grace from God. “Following the example of the early church, in which ‘the company of those who believed were of one heart and

²¹ RAPPORT D’ACTIVITES 2016 HOPITAL SAINT JEAN DE DIEU TANGUIETA. (MAI 2017). Accessed on 26/05/2019, <http://benin-amces.org/publications>.

²² John of God, *Letter to Luis Bautista*(LB)No15

mind'(Acts4:32) and place everything they had in common(Acts2:44-45) their life shows the world the viability of living and practicing the value of the kingdom in common.”²³

1.2.11 Self-denial among the brothers

Brothers live a life of self-denial. In this context, “self-denial means that something is good, legitimate but it is given up for something better, for something greater. In this case, it is given up due to a brother who is in need purposely for him to feel at home and for the common good. This does not mean that we should understand it in an anti-Christian way, as a negation of the self, as self-hatred inflicting pain on the self and as a denial of who one is”²⁴. Without denying oneself we cannot live the beautiful life that God has granted us. Saint John of God the founder of this congregation denied himself and found his better part. He served the vulnerable people, and he was assisted and helped by some people. Following that collaboration from him, the brothers are called to collaborate with the co-worker. They are “called to make the church present among the sick and needy, and open to all forms of suffering in the spirit of their founder”.²⁵ They share the charism of Hospitality with their co-workers, the collaborators, and the benefactors. They have also assistance from some congregations in their mission of hospitality (Teatines sisters, providence de saint Paul, les Soeurs de l’Immaculate Conception, Laic consacree et l’aumonerie pour les differents sort de sacrements). All of them are one family and one heart, welcoming and taking care of the needy, the sick and the poor. “That apostolic mission, which is the specific purpose of the Order, is performed with and through the provision of comprehensive care of the

²³ Constitutions of the Order, Rome 1984, no 26

²⁴ Cf class note of Mary GITAU, Anthropology of Christian Vocation,2019-2020

²⁵ Generals Statute of the Hospitaller Order,2009, p18

needy”²⁶. The hospitality they practice is more than merely giving what they have. They go beyond themselves to show empathy, (“the ability to understand how someone feels because one can imagine what it is like to be them.” Macmillan dictionary), feel the suffering of the needy within them, even if that causes them to lose their life. A concrete example of brothers of Saint John of God who died through the Virus of Ebola in Liberia.

In addition, through the vow of hospitality that the brothers of Saint John of God profess, then embrace the face of Christ in the suffering person. They teach this specific value to the benefactors and collaborators so that together they can evangelize the poor and the needy. This vow makes them prophets of hope. They preach hope to those who are in despair by showing them passion and compassion. “Evangelization says Paul VI, includes the preaching of hope in the promises made by God in the New covenant in Jesus Christ; the preaching of God's love for us and of our love for God; the preaching of brotherly love for all men - the capacity of giving and forgiving, of self-denial, of helping one's brother and sister - which, springing from the love of God, is the kernel of the Gospel”²⁷. Following this teaching, they remain prophets without borders. They go and prophesize the Word of God by practicing it to the sick and to the poor out of Tanguieta. Their mission is to preach the Good News to the poor and the needy. They feel that they are brothers of all mankind. They dedicate themselves chiefly for that purpose.

For the brothers, human life is precious and sacred because God has valued it from the beginning and showed us through His Beloved Son. For them, when anyone lacks love for the vulnerable

²⁶ Brothers and co-workers together to serves and promote life, Rome 1991p15.

²⁷ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Apostolic Exhortation (December 8, 1975), p28

poor, they lack existence. The human person is at the center of life for God valued it from the beginning. He breathed with force to bring life. Feeling that precious gift from God, brothers are ready to help these people like attentive parents. They seek to be united to Christ so that they are able to say with Saint Paul: “For me to live is Christ.” (Philippians 1:21). Love is hospitality. Through that love, they help the old persons to their needs. They do all including cleaning the bed sheets of patients with joy.

1.2.12 Prayer as source of hospitality

The hospitaller brothers of Saint John of God of Tanguieta before embracing their services in the hospital, entrust the day to God. Early in the morning, they have morning prayer following the Eucharistic celebration and the midday prayer. For the evening prayer, they all gather around the Grotto to recite the rosary and follow the vespers. During that precious moment of worship, the sick and relatives come to commend themselves into the hands of God. Those who are able to move slowly, come and the brothers give them the opportunity to express themselves to God. Those who are baptized and ready, receive the Holy Communion each day. They end the day with compline prayer where they give thanks to God for being with them during the day and ask forgiveness for the wrong done.

For brothers, prayer comes first and the rest follow. Prayer is the mother of their mission, the center of their lives. They dedicate to the Virgin Mary as the mother of hospitality. They follow the founder who used to go to the hospital to visit the sick before sleeping; this says that “John’s charitable work kept him busy all day long, and in the evening when he returned home, however, exhausted he might be, he never went to bed without first visiting every patient one by one, asking

them how they had spent their day, how they were and what they needed, and in very loving language he would give them spiritual comfort and relief for their body.”²⁸

1.2.13 Non-segregation of religion within the hospital

Seeing how the hospital is sheltered of many religions, the brothers allow everybody to express their religion within the hospital. There are different types of Christians and religious: Methodists, Assemblies of God, Jehovah witness, Muslims, Catholics, and Animists. These are allowed to show their faith. Let also make clear that there are some circumcises we do not allow for instance the blood transfusion that the Jehovah Witnesses do not accept. For this case the Ethical team medical intervenes. The Brothers are light for others through the vow of hospitality. This fourth vow helps them to live in a community and live harmonious lives and transform foreigners to be a brother.

The hospital also welcomes patients from different countries. We have patients from Burkina Faso which borders Benin. After that, the patients from Mali, Togo, Niger, some from Ghana come for medical care. All this work and live in the harmonious life without any segregation. This make people to appreciate the way the brothers and their co-workers welcome and take care of patients. To know who is a brother of Saint John of God, one needs to look at the behavior and our relationship people. As well as how he reacts when forced with an accident victim. The brother strives to do good.

²⁸ Hospitaller Order of St John of God General commission of pastoral, *Pastoral care in the manner of ST John of God, ROME 2012.*

They are also known through their compassion towards everybody especially the sick and the needy. They express their joy everywhere. When it is time to sympathize, they do. They are “like brothers and friends to them rejoicing with those who rejoice and suffering with those who suffer (Mt8:17) helping in any way that will contribute to their recovery and overall wellbeing”.²⁹ In Tanguieta, they are known as men of God and brothers of joy. The hospital is called “hospital without borders”.

The charism of hospitality identifies us through the way they welcome people in hospitals. They create a harmonious space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. The paradox is that they make sure that a strangers feel free in their actions. After being initiated through the vow of Hospitality, they follow the humility of Christ and of their founder who lived a beautiful life serving the poor and the needy. They live total consecration to the Father through these three vows: Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience. Through that beautiful life, the brothers cannot be, chaste, poor and obedient if they do not practice and live the vow of hospitality. For them, to be chaste is to give oneself to save a life. Chastity is to have the full love of Christ. It is to look for the goodness of the poor man/woman who cries all night at the door. You are called to be chaste when you succeed to live your faith in this kind of life and in miserable conditions. Their chastity is to relate to everybody without segregation. The life of celibacy helps them to announce the gospel to the suffering world. Following that, they have been called “to carry out, within the church the mission of announcing the gospel to the sick and the poor (Lk4:18), caring for their sufferings and helping them in every way”³⁰.

²⁹ Constitutions of the Order, Rome 1984, no.46

³⁰ Cf, Constitutions, no45

Talking about poverty, Henri Nouwen states that “poverty makes host.... poverty is the inner disposition that allows us to take away our defenses and convert our enemies into friends...two forms of poverty are very important, the poverty of mind and the poverty of heart. The poverty of mind as a spiritual attitude is a growing willingness to recognize the incomprehensibility of the mystery of life. And poverty of heart is the affection or sweet emotions of the heart we feel towards our neighbour ”³¹. Johannes Metz describes this disposition well when he states that:

“we must forget ourselves in order to let the other person approach us. We must be able to open up to him to let his distinctive personality unfold even though it often frightens and repels us. We often keep the other person down, and only see what we want to see; then we never really encounter the mysterious secret of his being, only ourselves. Failing to risk the poverty of encounter, we indulge in a new form of self-assertion and pay the price for it; loneliness. Because we do not risk the poverty of openness (Mat 10:39), our lives are not graced with the warm fullness of human existence. We are left with only a shadow of our real self.”³²

For them, hospitality is not only to welcome people but also to show passion and compassion towards them; to bring them to be a member of the family and become a community member of the brothers. The expression “you are welcome” has to be perfectly lived. That expression for them means accepting others in our compounds. It is to tell the person you are welcome. You are my brother/sister. You are like me. You are part of my family, feel free, feel at home. Hospitality is not only to give food but to show affection by empathizing feeling and giving total freedom. Hospitality is not to be indifferent to the stranger. Jesus has shown that compassion when He welcomed these people who spent three days and had nothing to eat (Mk 8:2 I). He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd (Mk 6:34).

³¹ HENRI J. M. NOUWEN, *the three movements of the spiritual life reaching out*, New York 1975, p73

³² JOHANNES METZ, *Poverty of Spirit*, (New York: Newman press, 1960) p45.

Segregation is forbidden in their pastoral work because John of God teaches them a real love of God and neighbour. Following that teaching “they received all the poor without exception, with great charity and generosity, and anyone who was a stranger or a native, whether curable or incurable, whether sounds of mind or mad, small children and orphans. And this they do in imitation of John of God, their founder.”³³

1.2.14 Neighbouring as sign of hospitality

For the Brothers of St John of God, it is mercy which defines the neighbor; they do not have other neighbours, but make neighbours through hospitality. They offer to the needy, the aged, the sick, and even the marginalized in society, without counting the cost. When John was in the streets taking care of these people he did not make any distinction. He loved them up to death. Love for the brother’s is to give one’s life to those who are in need, especially the sick and the marginalized. Loving is a natural law that should be taken up to them. Being affected by the beautiful characters of their founder, the brothers never go to bed without going to the hospital to see the sick. They go and listen to their complaints, see how they are progressing and provide for their needs.

1.2.15 Listening as hospitality

Listening to the sick for the brothers, is the other name of hospitality. They realize that most patients are not listened to by their relatives. When the sick are not listened to, the anxiety takes over and they get scared. They lose hope and healing from their pain. That is why the brothers find

³³ Pastoral care in the manner of saint John of God, Rome 2000, p30

it a privilege to serve and listen to them. They give them change to express and feel human love.

To this, Pope Francis calls all the consecrated person to act:

“I also expect from you what I have asked all the members of the Church: to come out of yourselves and go forth to the existential peripheries. “Go into all the world”; these were the last words which Jesus spoke to his followers and which he continues to address to us (cf. Mk 16:15). A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world’s goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine... Don’t be closed in on yourselves, don’t be stifled by petty squabbles, don’t remain a hostage to your own problems. These will be resolved if you go forth and help others to resolve their own problems and proclaim the Good News. You will find life by giving life, hope by giving hope, love by giving love. I ask you to work concretely in welcoming refugees, drawing near to the poor, and finding creative ways to catechize, to proclaim the Gospel and to teach others how to pray. Consequently, I would hope that structures can be streamlined, large religious houses repurposed for works which better respond to the present demands of evangelization and charity, and apostolates adjusted to new needs”.³⁴

This exhortation gives more courage to the brothers to go into all the world and evangelize the suffering world. Knowing that every person needs fraternal affection whether sick or not, the brothers transfer that grace of the love they have received from Christ to them. “Hospitality is measured by the degree of kindness we show others, including strangers. It is our treatment to them. It is the welcome we give to someone - even if it makes us uncomfortable. It is our willingness to listen to others’ stories about their life, hardships, and issues. It is our willingness to refrain from dismissing them for any reason even when their clothes or attitudes point to addictions and problems. Hospitality was modeled for us by the Good Samaritan (Luke) who went out of his way to help the wounded man even though it was socially inappropriate to do so” (The Need for Hospitality - According to Pope Francis).

³⁴ Francis, witnesses of joy, Apostolic letter to all consecrated persons on the occasion of the year of consecrated life (November 21, 2014) no 4.

Hospitality is a personnel carrier. It is inner sacrifice. That is why to be hospitable is to be able to listen to your brother and sister. Henri Nouwen says that “Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you”.³⁵ Because when one listens to a brother (stranger) or a needy one, the person is valorized. It is to tell the person that they are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Listening to the sick or a poor is to tell them they are important. It is to journey and grow with them. Brothers listen “*in order to be human, to learn, to give sympathy, to grow, and to become a better person.*” (Malone, *shepherd Speak*,)³⁶. There is nothing for them to do in this world if not to give their precious time for the favoured of the Kingdom of God. One exists when they are listened to. The sick are the holy temple of God for the brothers. Taking care of them is a privilege. According to them, Christ is anywhere in the sick and the needy. Human life is really sacred to them. Brothers are proud of their vocation because they “are called to carry out, within the Church, the mission of announcing the Gospel to the sick and the poor, caring for their sufferings and helping them in every way.”³⁷ They carry their hospitality everywhere they go.

The brothers of Saint John of God avoid calling people who come to them by the name “stranger”. This naming removes their dignity and their humanity. For them, we are all strangers on this earth. They prefer calling them brother/sister. They dedicate themselves to welcome any person in need. Indeed, they cannot totally satisfy them. However, they try to bring something they have received

³⁵ Henri Nouwen, *Listening as Spiritual Hospitality*, March 11. Retrieved on 26/05/2019, <https://henrinouwen.org/meditation/listening-spiritual-hospitality/>.

³⁶ Daniel P. Maher, *The Bishop and the Future of Catholic Health Care: Challengers and Opportunities*, February 3-7, 1997, p79.

³⁷ Cf Constitution of Hospitaller Order, 1984, no45a

from God. Except for taking care of the sick, the brothers of Saint John of God are open to everybody in need whether the need is spiritual, psychological or physical.

1.2.16 The five important Values for the brothers of Saint John of God.

They reflect themselves by five values which help them to honour well their commitments to God.

The five values are hospitality, quality, respect, responsibility, and spirituality. These five values reinforce the unity of all those who collaborate in the hospitality mission practiced by St. John of God. To go deeper into these values, let us take the main value which is hospitality.

“The value of HOSPITALITY is the value par excellence from which all the others derive and which, in a certain way. It is to be made available to others, guaranteeing everyone equal access to care, a welcome and support adapted to his needs and those of his entourage. The value of RESPECT is to treat the person received and his or her loved ones with humanity, fairness, tolerance, and discretion. The value of QUALITY is realized through the search for excellence, professionalism, the overall care of each patient, attention to new needs. Commitment to quality is shared by all actors and integrated into daily practices. The value of the RESPONSIBILITY translates to the employee in a good knowledge of the individual’s skills, abilities, and Limitations to act best at the service of the person received. It is an individual and collective responsibility. The value of SPIRITUALITY is to allow everyone to question the meaning of life, about trials and death. To try to accompany suffering in its spiritual dimension is to first recognize this need for meaning which is held at the heart of man. It is for the caregiver to assume the spiritual nature of the person he accompanies and his own.”³⁸

1.3 Hospitality in the African Context

How does hospitality manifest itself in the African context? Knowing that “Africans are notoriously religious”,³⁹and they carry their religions wherever they go. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was saying that “*Africans believe in something that is difficult to render in English. We call it ‘ubuntu, botho’.* It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is

³⁸ Sito Ufficiale Fratebenefratelli/<https://www.ohsjd.org/Objects/Home1.asp>. Retrieved on 27/05/2019

³⁹ John Mbiti s., African Religions and Philosophy, London, Heinemann, 1969, p1

*absent. It speaks about humaneness, gentleness, and hospitality, putting yourself on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together”.*⁴⁰

In the African context, the stranger is precious. To welcome him is to welcome God. Welcoming a guest in Africa is to admire the beautiful creation that God has made. The stranger is venerated in Africa because we say that he has been sent by the ancestors. Hospitality in that way is “to appreciate others, friends or enemies, acquaintances or strangers and making a statement about interdependence and interconnectedness.”⁴¹ Welcoming people in the context of Africa is to open the gate of graces. Who does not witness the hospitality of Africa? All over the world know that Africa is the cradle of humanity. People wish to come. Some come and stay forever.

Africans welcome foreigners differently from other continents. Africans show the real face of the love of neighbour. They treat a guest as part of the family. The guest is considered as light dwelt from the heavens and bright over the earth. Africans feel happy in welcoming people. They do not want to live alone because it is not good to live alone. It says that, anyone who lives alone is a sorcerer. Africans say that the stranger never fills the house. (Proverb). When the stranger feels that he exists where he is, you also exist. That is why hospitality is to say to others “without people like you I would not be who I am today.”⁴² It means that only the stranger helps us to know more

⁴⁰ Naomi Tutu, *“The words of Desmond Tutu”*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 71. Retrieved on 15/06/2019, <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/view/17288/the-words-of-desmond-tutu>

⁴¹ Beatus B.A. Kitururu “The spirituality of hospitality: African and New Testament Perspectives”. 2009pvii.

⁴² Beatu Cf class note of Mary GITAU, Anthropology of Christian Vocation,2019-2020 Cf class note of Mary GITAU, Anthropology of Christian Vocation,2019-2020s B.A. Kitururu., vii

about ourselves. In a certain way, the stranger is a blessed person. To get a guest in Africa is a blessing or a chance.

In certain tribes like Berba the stranger is called “*Pwasau*” which means savior. The stranger in this case is seen as redeemer. The one who saves people from evil. The people of Berba, meaning those who speak *Biali* trust the stranger and receives him as if it is the end times. How do we welcome the stranger? First of all, welcoming stranger in Africa is a common strategy. Perhaps, some cultures can do it differently. Otherwise, it is the same manner of welcoming a stranger in Africa. In Benin, especially the northern part, cultures are similar. For instance, in my own culture, the stranger is welcomed first by incantations and praises. After they give a seat followed by water. The water used to give to the stranger is called “*Coniim*” in Biali. The word “*Coniim*” is the sour water from “*la pate*” in French word. We can compare it here in Kenya as “*Ugali*” in Kiswahili. That symbolism means that we have nothing to give the stranger but what our ancestors drank. That is why the stranger is considered an ancestor who is back home. Some tribes give *Kolanut* to chew. For instance, the Mossi. The most important thing, in this case, is that parents scared to make a mistake in welcoming the stranger.

John Mbiti “the father of Theology” in Africa observed that “in the eyes of African people, the visitor heals the sick (African proverb). This means that when a visitor comes to someone’s home, family quarrels stop, the sick cheer up, peace is restored and the home is restored to new strength. Visitors are, therefore, social healers –they are family doctors in a sense.”⁴³ The Berba fears curses. The presence of the stranger symbolizes that gods have visited us. Let us also notice that the presence of guest brings not only peace but wealth for the family. The Kipsigis in Kenya say

⁴³ John Mbiti, “*The forest has Ears*” in *Peace, Happiness and Prosperity*, July 1976, p23.

that “ visitors are like rain”⁴⁴ meaning that in my own way the visitors are Mystical. The ones who fertilize the earth and bring peace where it is not.

In Benin especially in the north, any member of the family can welcome a stranger. The person who welcomes the guest knows already how to handle the visitor in case the elders are absence. The host stays with the guest and listens to him. He will not interrupt the speech of the stranger. He will be careful in what the guest says because they believe that his presence is not for nothing. He has brought the unknown message for the family. During their conversation, the woman is in the kitchen cooking something for all of them. If it is in the evening they slaughter a goat to show that they are happy to welcome him. During supper, they gather as one family and share the food. In that case, I notice the importance of community in Africa. I realize that Africans value living together as one. Africans see hospitality as a living-together but also much more space where humans co-live. Here, everyone adheres to live with others, to live in the community, to a new culture or even to civilization. That is why Jean Daniélou says that "Without hospitality, people are not civilized."⁴⁵

During the period of the guest, there are no farm activities. They stop for at least three days. The fourth day the stranger is supposed to help the family in doing some home activities. Some say that a stranger cannot stay for more than three days. The stranger has to enjoy the manner of welcome and feel at home. Africans say “feel at home.” Which is a good thing. That expression expresses that the strangers should feel like they are in their. It notices the freedom of the stranger

⁴⁴ Del Chinchén, *The Art of Hospitality: African style*, October 1, 2000. Retrieved on August 6, 2019/<https://missionexus.org>, the art –of –hospitality

⁴⁵ Gary SLM, *Afrique: l'hospitalité, la nouvelle culture de l'Universel*". Publié le 27/06/2017 à 11:13. Retrieved on 06/07/2019 <https://www.afrique-sur7.fr/374929-afrique-lhospitalite-nouvelle-culture-de-luniversel>.

and the welcome as a member of the family. The way Africans welcome people shows the true love of God. They have that affection to the stranger. And, when the stranger is ready to go, the family organizes a small meeting wishing him a safe journey and telling him to come back at any time he wishes. The stranger goes with some gifts like chickens and some food. Three days later, the father slaughters the chicken for thanksgiving to the ancestors for visiting them. They ask for forgiveness if they did not succeed to welcome them well because “African hospitality, in the religious domain, includes relating well with the ancestors”⁴⁶and the neighbours. Hospitality does not have borders. Africans live it to the end of times. They do not care to welcome their neighbours and they love them as themselves. Love is more seen in the practice of hospitality in Africa. Love for them is the lesser thing, reserved for the stranger. It is the main point of hospitality in Africa. Besides, respect is seen as the main point of welcoming in Africa tradition. We cannot welcome a person if we do not respect. The respect is thus a natural law that should not be missed in welcoming people.

1.4 Hospitality in the Bible

The Old Testament and the New Testament never cease to give us teaching about hospitality as a value. The teaching relates that guests carry graces and precious gifts. Hospitality is rooted in the Bible. In the Bible context, hospitality is seen as a power of love. Hospitality comes from the Greek term φιλόξενος often translated into the English term “hospitality”. The word φιλόξενος is divided into two words: The word: “φιλό” (pronounced Philao) is one of the several words for “love” in Greek. It means “brotherly love” or “to love like a brother.” From where the name

⁴⁶Julius Mutugi Gathogo. Some Expressions of African Hospitality Today.
<http://scriptura.journals.ac.za/pub/article/viewFile/669/666>. Retrieved on 23/06/2019

Philadelphia. The City of Brotherly Love. The word “ξένος” (Xenos) which makes up the second half of the word we render “hospitality” actually means “stranger” or “immigrant,” and is where we get the word xenophobia which is the fear of strangers/immigrants.⁴⁷ So in that case, hospitality is seen as the love of the neighbour. How is it expressed in the Old and New Testament?

1.4.1 Old Testament

Concretely, what does hospitality mean? It is the love of neighbour. In the Bible, it expresses a fundamental source of life. As we focus on how hospitality was lived in the biblical time our first person in the Bible is Abraham (Gn18:1-8). Abraham welcomed three visitors who were passing by. He asked them to rest in his house and have a supper before continuing their journey. Before that, Abraham showed them his full love by washing their feet. That example of Abraham shows us the power and the importance of service. He humbles himself to show how he loves God. To show them his passion and compassion. He slaughtered the best animals and asked his wife to cook for them. This refers to the way, African welcome strangers. African hospitality knows its roots from Abraham. In this life only love triumphs over evil. Abraham never knew that he welcomed Angels. He serves as an exemplary person of biblical hospitality.

In the Old Testament hospitality is sometimes characterized by kindness offered to the 'stranger'⁴⁸. The function of hospitality is to transform an unknown person (who may pose a threat) into a guest, thus removing the threat (cf. 2 Sm 12:4; Job 31:3). Our father “Abraham says to his potential

⁴⁷ Benjamin Corey, “True biblical hospitality: loving immigrants, strangers, and enemies”, 23/07/ 2013, accessed on 09/07/2019, <https://sojo.net/articles/true-biblical-hospitality-loving-immigrants-strangers-and-enemies>.

⁴⁸ Lee Roy Martin, Old Testament foundations for Christian hospitality, 26/02/2014 retrieved on 9/07/2019. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263671846_Old_Testament_foundations_for_Christian_hospitality

guests, 'Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourself' (18:4-5). He offers only 'a little water' and 'a little bread' so that the guests will not feel like they are imposing upon their host. According to Vogel (2002): 'The visitor has the right to refuse, but this would really be considered an insult to the host, and it could be enough to create hostility and violence. Once the guest accepts the invitation of the host both have then to follow the rules'''.⁴⁹

Showing our gratitude by welcoming strangers has a reward. The expression of gratitude may be in the form of a blessing, as it was in the case of Abraham's visitors, who promised that Abraham's wife Sarah would have a son (Gn18:10-14). Through Abraham's generosity and risk, God blesses the host by granting Sarah a child. In the passage of Leviticus, hospitality is seen as a strong love for the neighbour. The stranger is the most important person that the host should take care of. That is why "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."⁵⁰ Leviticus 19:33–34 (*English Standard Version. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*). Hospitality is an act of doing good to others. Through hospitality, we find ourselves in the love of God. In the time of Moses, the stranger was the most respected. The law of Moses protected the foreigner: "You shall not oppress a stranger . . . for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (*Ex. 23:9 English Standard Version (ESV)*).

⁴⁹ Lee Roy Martin, *Old Testament foundations for Christian hospitality*, p03

⁵⁰ <https://biblehub.com/hebrews/13-2.htm>

1.4.2 New Testament

In the New Testament, hospitality is expressed through Jesus Christ. He has shown us how we must love one another to inherit the Kingdom of God. He is always identified as a guest and host. Welcoming the needy and the poor is the best way to reach perfection. To be hospitable is to be generous. That is why Jesus never ceases to remind us that share with the LORD's people who are in need. Practice hospitality (Romans 12:13). The main value of hospitality is love. Saint Paul in his letters exhorts us to "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2). Hospitality is the way we handle people. It is also how we show our mutual love. Alexander Strauch explains by saying, "Hospitality is a concrete expression of Christian love and family life. It is an important biblical virtue. ... Giving oneself to the care of God's people means sharing one's life and home with others. An open home is a sign of an open heart and a loving, sacrificial, serving spirit. Lack of hospitality is a sure sign of selfish, lifeless, loveless Christianity."⁵¹ Hospitality is love in action. Hospitality is the flesh and muscle on the bones of love. Through caring acts of hospitality, the reality of our love is tested.

Hospitality is a service. It is also a humility because without humility we might not be servable. Jesus taught his disciples at the Last Supper, a lesson of humility and service to one another. He said to them "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you

⁵¹ Tim Challies, *The Character of the Christian: Hospitable*, February 11, 2016, Retrieved on 17/07/2019 on <https://www.challies.com/articles/the-character-of-the-christian-hospitable/>

also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:12-15).

Hospitality is to give justice to the poor and needy. The psalmist will say "I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy."⁵² (Psalms 140:12). Jesus also ties hospitality to his description of who will inherit heaven: Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.; For "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me"⁵³.... And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:34–36, 40, the New African Bible).

The teaching of Jesus makes us aware that we will be judged based on our hospitality, for when we love and welcome others we, in fact, love and welcome him. "Peter writes to all Christians when he says 'Show hospitality to one another without grumbling (1 Peter 4:9)' and Paul tells the whole congregation in Rome that they must 'seek to show hospitality (Romans 12:13)'. The author of Hebrews says, 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2).' Paul instructed Timothy to extend the church's benevolence to a widow if she 'has shown hospitality (1Tim 5:9–10).'"⁵⁴ Jesus invites people to "touch him" (Jn 1:39) and He allows Himself to be touched by the sufferings of humanity by

⁵² Valentín Riesco Oh - José Cristo Rey García Paredes Cmf "The Path of Hospitality in the Manner of St John of God <https://www.ohsid.org/Common/Pagina.asp?ID=720>

⁵³ **PAUL VI**, *Populorum Progressio*, Encyclical on the Development of Peoples (MARCH 26, 1967), no74

⁵⁴Tim Challies, The Character of the Christian: Hospitable, <https://www.challies.com/articles/the-character-of-the-christian-hospitable/> retrieved on December 5, 2019

suffering individuals (Mt8:3, He touches the Leper. He allows Himself to be touched by the woman “who had suffered from a hemorrhage”, thereby transmitting love and strength (Lk8:44-48) He healed the woman⁵⁵.

1.5 -Hospitality as per the Church Teachings

1.5.1 Vatican II Documents.

During the Homily of John Paul II, for the Jubilee of Migrants and Itinerant Workers, 02/06/2000 said that “Welcoming Christ in our needy brothers and sisters is the condition of being able to meet him face to face and perfectly at the end of our earthly journey”. That sentence means that we cannot find Christ anywhere else except in the person of the poor and the needy. So being hospitable is to be a Christian. Hospitality is not something to think about but to grasp without excitation. Pope Francis reflects on the importance of hospitality during his Angelus address to pilgrims in St Peter's Square on Sunday *“Receiving a guest into our home does not require so much, but one thing is necessary, to listen to guests so that they feel truly among family”*. *With listening, a guest is welcomed as "a person, with his history, his heart rich in sentiments and thoughts, so that he might feel true that he is among family.”*⁵⁶

Hospitality is a duty for everybody especially for Christians. “It is a duty imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity... Young people, in particular, must be given a warm reception; more and more families and hostels must open their doors to them. This must be done, first of all, that they may be shielded from feelings of loneliness, distress, and despair that would sap their

⁵⁵ Pastoral care in the manner of saint John of God, Rome 2000, p19

⁵⁶ Pope Francis *reflects on true hospitality*, Jul 17th, 2016, Retrieved on 17/07/2019
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/30527>

strength. It is also necessary so that they may be guarded against the corrupting influence of their new surroundings, where the contrast between the dire poverty of their homeland and the lavish luxury of their present surroundings is, as it were, forced upon them. And finally, it must be done so that they may be protected from subversive notions and temptations to violence, which gain headway in their minds when they ponder their "wretched plight." (58) In short, they should be welcomed in the spirit of brotherly love, so that the concrete example of wholesome living may give them a high opinion of authentic Christian charity and of spiritual values."⁵⁷

Conclusion

To end this chapter, we understand that there is no choice in welcoming people. This is because hospitality is within us. We are sons of God and Jesus asks us to do good to others. Welcoming the poor and the needy is a grace we gain every day. Saint John of God knew it first and gave himself to God by welcoming Him in the persons of the poor and the needy persons. That is why before his death he asked his disciples to do good all over the world and not tire to take care of the sick. He finished by exhorting his brothers to do good among themselves. And during the 69th General Chapter of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God, Holy Father addressed to the brothers to "take Jesus compassion and mercy to the sick, and to those most in need. Come out of yourselves, of your limitations, of your problems and difficulties, to unite yourselves to others in a caravan of solidarity"⁵⁸

⁵⁷ PAUL VI, *Populorum Progressio*, Encyclical Letter (March 26, 1967) p67.

⁵⁸ FRANCIS on February 1, 2019, received in audience — in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Vatican Palace, the participants in the 69th General Chapter of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God (*Fatebenefratelli*) on the theme "Building the Future of Hospitality," underway at Rome from January 14 to February 6, 2019. <https://zenit.org/articles/holy-fathers-address-to-69th-general-chapter-of-the-hospitaller-order-of-saint-john-of-god/>. Retrieved on December 5, 2019.

CHAPTER II

The Challenges facing the Brothers of St. John of God-Tanguieta Community

Introduction

The Hospitaller Order of St John of God, known also as “*Fatebenefratelli*”⁵⁹, live a grace life. Therefore, they face some difficulties in their pastoral work. This second chapter will focus on the challenges that brothers are facing today in general.

2.1 Brothers of Saint John of God- Tanguieta Community

2.1.1 In Mission Tanguieta Community

Falling in love with these most favoured people of God, the hospitaller brothers of Saint John of God do not escape some challenges. The first one is that the brothers do not make the vow of stability. Meaning that they experience the instability in their pastoral work of taking care of the sick, the poor and the needy. The brothers aware that they called to move everywhere there is a need. Let us also notice the poverty rate in that area whereby the population suffers. That miserable life pushes today a young people to be addicted to the alcohol. Some poor ladies lead themselves into prostitution. Many of them come forward to the brothers looking for help. Some do not even finish schooling. Most of them stop from secondary school. This incapacity to provide their own needs lead boys to travel outside of the country and look for a job. Most of the time they go to Nigeria and farm. This kind of life does not make brothers indifferent.

⁵⁹ Francisco De Castro, *the first bibliography of St John of God*, Granada 1585, p 67

We mention also the high illiteracy of the population. Few people are instructed. Because of lack of school means. Parents cannot provide books, school fees, school uniforms and so on. The another issue is that they focus more on their cultures. To help them to come out from darkness to light will be difficult. they are really attached to their cultures even though they can die by incurable sickness for the sake of the culture. They practice more traditional treatment than modern. It is what lead certain person to trust the traditional priest than to go to the hospital.

The brothers encounter the sick who do not want to come to the hospital because of the culture. Some decide to the traditional priest. The dangerous thing is that when things become serious that they come to the hospital. That is why the mortality rate is higher, especially the children. Malaria is another issue at Tanguieta. Many people lost lives because of malaria. The innocent children die easily because of a lack of money to provide their care. Young people surrender themselves to worldly pleasures. They despair of life. Some commit suicide because of lack of employ. The brothers face also the problem of forced marriage whereby the young ladies are forced to marry the unbeloved persons.

2.1.2 Problems within the Hospital

The brothers encounter the insufficiency of buildings for hospitalization. As the suffering increases the brothers need also more taking materials. They need more funds. They need more equipment for the wellbeing of the sick: beds, ambulances, surgical instruments, anesthetic machine, oxygen concentrator, few big autoclaves for sterilizing theatre equipment, drugs cupboard. Added to this, they lack funds for taking care of the hospitals and the employees. Consider as the biggest hospital in that area some of the doctors are generalists. We notice there

the instability of some doctors. The hospital encounters few general practitioners and Surgeons. They use to work for many hospitals so that they can get more money. Materialism is more observed than taking care of human life. Afterward, the brothers experience disappointment towards some doctors. When they send them for specialization after the studies they disappear.

In 2014, the hospital of Saint John of God of Tanguieta experienced a tough disease called VIRUS OF LASSA (it is a disease especially of Africa that is caused by an arenavirus “species Lassa virus of the genus Arenavirus” and is characterized by a high fever, headaches, mouth ulcers, muscle aches, small hemorrhages under the skin, heart and kidney failure, and a high mortality rate)⁶⁰ from Nigeria. Many patients died included doctors and nurses. That time was really injured to the hospital and the victim’s families.

2.1.3 Among the personnel of the hospital

As we have noticed the importance of listening in the first chapter, we continue facing that problem. Generally speaking, a human being has a problem to listen to. In the pastoral care of brothers of Saint John of God, many patients complain about lack of listening. The sick complain due to lack of listening by the staff of the hospital. There is a lack of love towards them. The staff does not express love in the manner of Saint John of God. John was a man of compassion before he died he commanded the brothers and the co-worker to show love to the needy. Some of the staff use hospital property to become rich.

⁶⁰ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Lassa%20fever> retrieved on 12/12/2019

Moreover, the delay of staff at the service is observed. A lack of respect towards themselves is also observed. Most of the staff are not Christians. They do not have the values of Christ, incarnate in them. So the school of compassion of Christ through saint John of God will not express well within the hospital of Saint John of God of Tanguieta. The brothers experience the lack of free will of the personnel at the service of the sick and needy. They just run only behind the money.

2.1.4 Benin brothers in Tanguieta community

The hospitaller Order of Saint John of God, brothers from Benin are few in the Order. They do not have more hospitaller vocation. The young people are more interested in priesthood more than religious life. Some of them say, to be a brother is a curse because of owning personal property. They want to have personal cars, houses and so on. So, the brothers are so worried about the future of hospitality in Benin. Another issue which is capital is the incomprehension of brothers' parents. Once a brother consecrates or vow himself to God, the parents expect him to have a wife. Even though you explain them well, one day he will still ask your wife.

Moreover, some of our parents do not well understand the meaning of being brothers. People think that we are priests. They do not understand what we call vow of poverty. For them, you are employed and they expect you to give them something to eat. They are not aware that we vowed ourselves to everybody. We also have few brothers as a doctor in something like a doctor in medicine.

2.2 African Brothers

As it says prior, the common problem in Africa is the lack of more vocation for the future of the Order. On the other side, we lack how to communicate with each other. We do not “get into the world of the other person. Communication demands the participation of both of us.” Listening is another problem with us. Brothers find it difficult to listen to not only themselves but also others. In 2014, African brothers experienced a tough disease called “Ebola”. We notice especially some brothers from Saint Augustine Province where the disease took away some brothers’ lives. This happened really gave themselves by saving life and losing theirs. Despite that, the brothers did not give up. They showed how God intervenes in the difficulties moment. That moment knew sorrowful of the point of world view but a privilege for the Order. It gives us the courage to pursue our mission as a gift of God. After the disaster, we numbered Four of our brothers, women religious from the Missionaries of the Immaculate and 13 of our collaborators. This happened in our various hospitals in Liberia and Sierra Leone. According to the World Health Organization, Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare but severe, often fatal illness in humans. The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission.

The hospitaller Order in Africa experiences the problem of ages. Many brothers are over age and there are few vocation as I have said above to take over the tash. Therefore, they scared the future of the Order in Africa.

2.3 The Brothers of Saint John of God at old age.

This stage of life is a very tough time for the old brothers. It is a time of crisis. At this moment they have nothing much but to await death. It is a moment where they may develop depression.

They question their life. They look for reconciliation with the passing time. Here there is no in-between life. It is to be reborn in another way of life. This moment scares the old brothers. They try at this moment to fix themselves. It is a precious moment for them to reconcile to everyone within the community even outside of the community. It is a time of non-future on earth. Some of them lost their appetite, some fall sick. “They really need and desire security, meaning affection but they are plagued by corresponding fears of death, of meaninglessness, of isolation. So they surround themselves with their security systems – money, investments, insurance, lights and alarms, friends in high places, health – checks – hopeless denials of death”.⁶¹

This time causes a lot of trouble in the community because they just there complaining of nothing. They are not sometimes respected because of the past events. This moment is a time where the young brothers disturb them a lot. The period of old age is sometimes a confusion time. The overage brothers suffer another way of lack of caring, and respect. Most of the time they are not consulted for certain decisions within the community. They feel isolated and experience loneliness and solitude. When Saint Augustine reminds us that our hearts are restless until they rest in God, he wants to tell us that it is a time to be alone. The brothers sense a time of restlessness, isolation even rejection towards his own brothers within the community. From that life, they develop cancer, mental illness, depression and other diseases.

⁶¹ Cf class note of Mary GITAU, Anthropology of Christian Vocation, 2019-2020

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, we must understand that hospitality is not something easy to live. There are always some difficulties which are the obstacles for our pastoral. To overcome them we must be strong in spiritual, psychological, physical and social aspects of our lives.

CHAPTER III

The Strategies for the Realization of Hospitality as a Value of Evangelization among the Brothers of Saint John of God – Tanguieta Community, Benin

INTRODUCTION

This third chapter starts by quoting the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of the Holy Father, FRANCIS: “the Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy. The seventy – two disciples felt it as they returned from their mission(Lk10:17). Jesus felt it when He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and praised the Father for revealing Himself to the poor and the little ones (10:21).....This joy is a sign that the Gospel has been proclaimed and is bearing fruit.”⁶²

3.1 Hospitality life: Retrospect and Prospects

Hospitality as a value and ticket for heaven for the brothers must be their morning prayer. We must go back to the root of hospitality and live it as the end of time. Hospitality must be a real ticket for us. Our founder never ceased to do good where he passed by. He gave his life to save lives. We must imitate fully his steps and live as he lived. John of God humbled himself to come in help to those in need. As brothers of Saint John of God, humility must be a law of looking the holiness. Even Jesus Christ humbled himself to save the entire world. Humility must be a branch of hospitality. The four Vows: Chastity, Obedience, Poverty and Hospitality we commit ourselves must be a real “instrumental values to reach to the Terminal values”⁶³.

⁶² FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation Pauline publication (24 November 2013) p18

⁶³ Cencini, A. and Manenti, A. *Psychology and Formation* (Bombay, Pauline Publications, 1992) p94

In the prospective side, hospitality must live according to the sign of the time. We must open ourselves to go forwards the poor and the needy. The world is full of confusion today. So we must learn to read the signs and do good all over the world. We must come out ourselves as it says in the previous chapter and welcome the poor and the needy. Knowing that our time is limited we must show compassion and passionate love to everybody especially the poor and marginal persons. So the few days remaining for us must be a chance to do at least good once in our life. Hospitality is the most skill of conversion. It can help us to be the children of God if we do what Saint John of God commanded us; “‘*Fate-bene-Fratelli*’ ‘*Do Good Brothers*.’”⁶⁴ It is a must for us to pursue the wonderful foundation that our founder left.

3.2 Strategies Towards Better Realization of Hospitality as A Value of Evangelization

3.2.1 Living Hospitality Among the Brothers of Saint John of God-Tanguieta Community

A. Forging Solidarity among themselves as Hospitallers

“Called by Jesus to live with Him as friends (Jn15:14-15), [...] we encourage one another to fulfill the Lord’s command to love one another as He loves us (Jn 13:34-35; 15:12-13) and strive to maintain the unity which the Spirit creates in the bond of peace (cf. Eph 4:1-6). The Hospitality

⁶⁴ “Do well for yourselves”, or “Do well, Brothers”, was adopted by John of God’s companions when they, in turn, went out to beg alms. When Brothers Pedro Soriano and Sebastian Arias left Spain for Italy to open the Order’s first hospital in that country at Naples in 1572, they continued the catch- cry. In Italian this was “FATE BENE FRATELLI” and it soon became an endearing sobriquet applied to the John of God brothers. Today, the St. John of God Brothers are still called FATEBENEFRAPELLI (do well Brothers) in Italy. Cf the first bibliography of St John of God by master Francisco De Castro, the chaplain of St John of God Hospital published at Granada 1585, p 67

which we have received as a gift means that we must live our brotherhood with simplicity: we, therefore, help one another and forgive each other's weaknesses (Col 3: 12-13); we live with one another in mutual respect and gratitude to one another."⁶⁵ The fraternal correction must be done with sincere love. Community life and commitment must be a duty to all brothers. Forgiveness must be done spontaneously. Never sleep angry. Sharing emotions must be done fraternally. We must be aware that we are all brothers. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28). We read in *Gaudium Et Spes* that the "Solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and Christ their Brother"⁶⁶

The young brothers must carry the old ones. They must show love towards the elders. Helping them to come to their needs. In 2012 brother Donatus Forkan general superior in that time wrote a document on "Pastoral care in the manner of Saint John of God" by saying:

"We should not view the stay of an old person in a House managed by the Order as a solution to a housing problem alone, but it must be fully imbued with its charismatic meaning and sense. This means that we must appreciate the 'third age' which must not be masked by the illusion of some eternal youth, but experienced as a specific and different age in life, with all its riches and problems, the same as every other stage in life. Naturally in this particular stage the individuals suffer from a loss (of physical strength, social role, affection, work, a home, etc.) which they must internalize and compensate for by other forms of enrichment (experience, memories, the good they have done in the past, etc.). Lastly, looking at it from the point of view of the faith, this time can also be seen as a long vigil in preparation to encounter eternity".⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Cf Constitution of Hospitaller Order, 1984no36.

⁶⁶ PAUL VI, Pastoral Constitution On the Church in The Modern World *GAUDIUM ET SPES* (December 7, 1965) no 32,5. And <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p55t6dn/This-solidarity-must-be-constantly-increase> retrieved on 02/01/2020

⁶⁷ Pastoral care in the manner of Saint John of God (Hospitaller Order of St John of God General Commission of Pastoral Care Rome 2012) pg. 95 no 7.4.1.1.

Our constitutions state that: “Based on the above- mentioned attitudes, and notwithstanding the diversity of the persons of which it is composed, our community: accepts and respects the young people who have only recently embraced our hospitaller life, enriching us by their enthusiasm and creativity; cares for and loves our sick and elderly Brothers who, with their experience, sacrifice and prayer, are fruitful members of both the church and the Order.”⁶⁸ The respect must be observed to both sides. Counselling, spiritual direction and accompaniment must be lived and be part of the community project. Practicing charity everywhere. As our founder says “Always have charity, for where there is no charity God is not there-even though God is everywhere.”⁶⁹

b. The harmonious relationship between the Brothers, Co-Workers and the Local Clergy

“A community is a body of persons with or having a common organization and/or common interest and living under the same norms. They interact with each other and are dependent also on each other.”⁷⁰ The brothers and co-workers should live a fraternal life. The co-workers must learn and put into practice the values of our charism. The brothers must show the co-workers the agape love. They must see Jesus in the suffering person. Brothers, co-workers must witness the Gospel in the work and come in help to the needy. “We must make visible the kindness and love of Jesus Christ in our work. We must make our works places where we feel the merciful love of God and thus contribute to the expansion of his kingdom.”⁷¹ Formation of brothers and co-workers should be

⁶⁸ Cf Constitutions O.H, no37

⁶⁹ Letters of St John of God to Luis Bautista and <http://www.ohsjd.org/Resource/TEMA6-ing.pdf> retrieved on January 5, 2020

⁷⁰ Communication, Culture, and Community for Pastoral Formation, V2 Daughters of St Paul (publication1999), p119

⁷¹ Valentín Riesco, Oh - José Cristo Rey García Paredes Cmf, The Path of Hospitality In The Manner of St John of God <https://www.ohsjd.org/Common/Pagina.asp?ID=720>

the main aspect of our mission. We must foster better collaboration between brothers and collaborators according to the needs of each center. The relationship between brothers and Local Clergy must work in harmonious way. Actually, in the diocese that the brothers belong a good relationship with the bishop is observed. For the administration of different sacraments, the diocese of Natitingou provides us a priest. The priest with the conformity of our charism does his pastoral charity. This should be a must for us to participate in the activities of the diocese. Our constitutions say “to Brothers who are priests must work with the local church by following per under their identity as Hospitaller Brothers.”⁷²

c. Forming Eucharistic Community and living Eucharistic lifestyle in Hospitality

“The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's sacrifice through the Eucharist.”⁷³ “The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴ From that perspective, the Eucharist remains an important point in the life of Hospitaller brother. This becomes a must for us to remains united to Christ so that it can help us to perform well the charity in the manner of John of God. Since it is a mystery, we, brothers of Saint John of God participate it with a total devotion and donation. The sick, the needy and the

⁷² Cf Constitution of Hospitaller Order,1984no52

⁷³ Cf The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Sacrament of the Eucharist, no1322

⁷⁴ Ibid, no1325

poor must be seen as Christ in our vocation journey. Dealing with the sick and the poor for us, it is to deal with Christ who showed passion and compassion. Taking care of the wounds of the sick or the wounded person means you take care of Christ. The bed of the sick must be seen the burning bush land or the Altar whereby Christ dwells. The sick and the poor must experience Christ in our hands. Our presence in front of the sick must be a fully presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament. We must show that human being has a total dignity. We must organize the Eucharist adoration either in community or hospital once per week. Perpetual adoration must be observed and lived among us. The Vatican Council of the second suggests all the religious community a perpetual adoration. It states that the:

“Religious communities and other pious associations who, according to their constitutions or the norms of their institute, practice perpetual adoration or adoration for protracted periods are earnestly recommended to perform this pious practice in the spirit of the sacred liturgy so that when the whole community participates in the adoration it may be carried out with the sacred readings, with hymns and periods of reverential silence. In this way it will be more fruitful for the spiritual life of the community. Thus the spirit of unity and fraternity which the Eucharist signifies and effects will be promoted among the member of the religious community and the due worship of the sacrament will be more fittingly exercised.”⁷⁵

That is why they “celebrate Eucharist and participate actively in it each day. They show “clearly that their life is centered on the place in our dwelling where the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist expresses and sustains their mission as a Hospitaller family.”⁷⁶ So it is a must for us to familiarize ourselves with Christ. And we must encourage each other to cultivate prayer life. Each community must put prayer first and then work in the second part. Encourage brothers to have monthly recollections and retreat once per year.

⁷⁵ **Vatican Council II**, “*Eucharistiae Sacramentum*” (The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. Ed. By AUSTIN FLANNERY, O.P.1975) No90

⁷⁶Cf Constitution of Hospitaller Order,1984 no30.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, we must understand that only strategies can help us to perform better our hospitaller engagement. We are brothers of Saint John of God and we must show the real face of Christ. In all we do, we must put God first and others followed. The Eucharist as it has been said must be the center of our life. Only the Eucharist unites and fraternizes the people of God.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Living the ideal life of hospitality has made today the Hospitaller Brothers famous for hospitality. The beautiful work they bear fruit every day. Many of the brothers from the beginning of this congregation have become Saints: our father Saint John of God, Saint Richard Pampuri, Saint John Grande, Saint Benedict Menni, the Blessed Martyrs of Africa and Spain, Blessed Olallo Valdes, Blessed Eustace Kugler and many other brothers as models of hospitaller life. This is a sign showing that our charism is moving forward.

This must be an example for us the young brothers to put ourselves and practice hospitality in the manner of Saint John of God. We must be aware that our response to God must bear fruits in the future as our predecessor in the heaven. Hospitality should be seen in us as heritage from God through the intercession of Saint John of God and all Saints of the Order. We must practice charity everywhere as if it was our end time and have courage of practicing it. Our holy father Francis used to state that: “Giving primacy to God means having the courage to say ‘no’ to evil, ‘no’ to violence, ‘no’ to oppression, to live a life in service of others and which fosters lawfulness and the common good. When a person discovers God, the true treasure, he abandons a selfish lifestyle and seeks to share with others the charity which comes from God. He

who becomes a friend of God, loves his brothers and sisters, commits himself to safeguarding their life and their health, and also to respecting the environment and nature.”⁷⁷ Charity is the most offering we can offer to God. this same charity allows us to shine in the darkness. It brings people to discover their real mission on the earth. We, brothers of Saint John of God are brothers of charity. We live and practice charity for one purpose; the Kingdom of God.

⁷⁷Pope Francis, <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/916683> Retrieved on January 17, 2020

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