RECREATE HOSPITALITY
PATHS OF REVITALISATION

DOCUMENT OF THE XX GENERAL CHAPTER

Sisters Hospitallers
of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Rome, may 2012
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PRESENTATION
On the Feast of Pentecost 2012, the Congregation concluded its 20th General Chapter in Rome, which had been a Paschal event that had driven us on, led by the Spirit, to recreate Hospitality.

The path we, as the Hospitaller Community, have travelled along during the Sexennium, viewed from the perspective of the Hospitaller Mission as the *good news of God’s healing for contemporary humanity*, marked out in particular by the Restructuring process, has enabled us to perform our mission with creative dynamism, cooperating in building up the Kingdom of God.

Now, a “new Congregational era” is dawning. The Chapter experience, prompted by the biblical text of the sending of the seventy-two disciples which was our source of enlightenment, has become a call to perform the mission as a means of joining us together and of galvanising the existence and the work of the Hospitaller Community. “Go your way; behold, I am sending you out… Heal the sick in it and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you”. Luke 10, 3.9).

This final Chapter document, which we are now committing into your hands, is a record of the discernment that has taken place in our Communities and Provinces, with input from many co-workers, which has been creatively re-elaborated by all of us who attended the 20th General Chapter.

Its purpose is to inspire the life and mission of the Congregation for the next Sexennium. It is based on two texts from the Gospels which, reread from a charismatic perspective terms, “places us on the path” leading towards renewed Hospitality: the sending of the seventy-two disciples (Lk 10, 1-11; 16-20) and the Visitation of Our Lady to her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1, 39-45).

The path that we are being called to take, in order to give Hospitality of fresh face, can be viewed in terms of five paths of re-
vitalisation, considering our canonical reorganisation as an element crosscutting the whole restructuring process.

These five paths of revitalisation are:

1. To renew our choice of Jesus in the Hospitaller consecrated life
2. To drive the union of hearts and our apostolic commitment in our community life
3. To call together and incorporate new generations
4. To creatively take on the mission as a common project
5. To make the Good News visible in the world of mental suffering.

In methodological terms, each path comprises an inspirational part which takes up convictions and challenges which are intended to “provoke” our creativity, and another more practical, operational, part, whose lines of action will help us to set the pace of our Hospitaller work in the contemporary world and in the different cultural contexts in which the Congregation exists. This way of becoming tangibly present will be performed at general, provincial and local levels, following appropriate guidelines.

The sisters of the General Council, and myself, wish to offer this document to all the members of the Hospitaller Community, to be welcomed in the same spirit which inspired it, so that we can put it into practice wisely, allowing ourselves to be driven by the urge to recreate Hospitality at this stage in our history.

Anabela Carneiro
Superior General
In 2007 the Congregation embarked on a process of restructuring with the aim of “Living the following of Jesus with creative fidelity, fixing our gaze on the experience of our origins and renewing our structures in order to respond to present-day challenges of the Hospitaller mission”. The inspiration driving this process is the mission, and the ultimate objective is a renewed Congregation.

This 20th General Chapter, under the theme “Led by the Spirit to recreate Hospitality” has reaffirmed the priority of revitalisation as a Congregational commitment, and defined in a Paschal perspective, the spiritual, charismatic and apostolic paths along which we have to move ahead to give Hospitality a new face.

Our Founders have taught us to fashion a new Congregational era, boldly and creatively, by creating new forms of expressing spirituality, of experiencing communion, of governance, and of commitment to the Hospitaller project of serving suffering humanity. Following their example we intend to open up a more inculturated and prophetic mission pathways, to take Hospitality beyond anything we can imagine, because “this love knows no bounds”.

Restructuring entails reorganising structures by drawing up a new map for the Congregation. But restructuring not only means introducing organisational or legal changes or being present in new places or introducing new services, but is more of a spiritual and apostolic process, leading us to recreate and to communicate the new life which flows from the Hospitaller Charism. We are reorganising ourselves for a greater good, to better serve our fellow brothers and sisters. And this takes time and requires properly planned and managed resources, with each and every one playing their due part. Restructuring entails downsizing in some places and expanding in others, innovation, shifting the emphasis at times, and new priorities.
We will continue pursuing this pathway, trusting fully in God who has given us the gift of the Charism, and in the young women who are continuing to embrace the Consecrated life, and the co-workers who identify with the Hospitality project. Like the seventy-two disciples who was sent by Jesus to go ahead of him, today he is sending us as a Religious community and as a Hospitaller Community with the one single mission: to take peace, to heal the sick, and to call others together to join us in this project of service to those who suffer, and to proclaim the presence of the Kingdom.
After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

[…] The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

(Luke 10, 1-11.16-20)
The account of the “sending of the seventy-two disciples” stands as a model to enlighten our progress towards a recreated hospitality, since from it we can read and interpret the five pathways of revitalisation approved by the 20th General Chapter. Being sent to the mission is the centrepiece around which our Religious consecration and all our human and professional work revolve; this is the golden thread linking all the challenges that were identified in the course of our reflections at Chapter, and gives substance to the responses that have been chosen to build up the future.

The Lord APPOINTED seventy-two others

Luke tells us that, in addition to the Twelve, a number of women also followed Jesus as disciples and missionaries: “Mary Magdalen, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means” (Lk 8, 1-3). And the text adds that Jesus “appointed seventy-two others” to send them out to continue His own mission.

The close bonds that the seventy-two shared with Jesus gave substance to their evangelising work. And that is still the case today: Jesus is asking us to be faithful to him. In order to root our lives in, and centre them around Jesus, we must enhance our identity as women consecrated to God, establish an intimate relationship with the Master, act according to his criteria for living, choose to help the most vulnerable and marginalised, and take on the mission to marshal our joint efforts to build up his Kingdom. We are being called personally, and freely, and every day Christ invites us to renew our commitment to Him and to bear witness by our consecrated life to the transforming power of the Beatitudes.

He sent them on ahead of him, TWO BY TWO

Jesus called them together and sent them out, two by two, for the mission entrusted to them was not the prerogative of just a few, but of all, and he spoke to them of the values which the community must put into practice: to receive and offer Hospitality with an attitude of poverty, willingness and simplicity; to be close to people, working together; to express communion around the same table, discerning, and taking up the same project; to include those from outside, encouraging integration, quality of life and health for all. Only by so doing can we proclaim that the Kingdom of God has come near.

The origins of our Congregation set the example for us for the union of hearts that we wish to establish today with all those who have been convened for the mission. The multicultural face of the Religious Community and the Hospitaller Community requires us to create an alternative model of relationships, which expresses mutual respect and appreciation, the wealth of unity in diversity, and the joy of going out together to the places where the Hospitaller mission is calling us today.

GO AND SAY TO THEM, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”

Jesus, who had just previously spoken about the ploughing and sowing, now speaks of the harvest. The harvest is immense, but the harvesters are few. Today, as at the time of Jesus, the mission is urgent, and the field is boundless; it is harvest time, and there are no people to gather in the harvest. The certainty that it is God who is calling does not remove from us the responsibility to pray to Him to get other people to take to the road and to give themselves totally to the service of Hospitality. It also requires us to work
Go your way; behold, I am sending you

creatively, to make dynamic proposals, to help to dispose people’s hearts, to spread knowledge about charisms, and to announce Jesus’ invitation to “come and see”.

Just as the seventy-two spread the joy of the apostolic experience, we also have to bear witness to convincing and provocative vocational joy by gradually opening up the doors of our community and mission, to enable others who feel called, to see and to experience fraternal life and Hospitality. The challenge posed to each one of us is to discover how to communicate the beauty of the religious vocation and the greatness of the Hospitaller service in which Jesus reveals Himself.

Remain in THE SAME HOUSE and say, ‘Peace be to this house!’

Jesus’ mission hinges around peace and the announcing the Kingdom. Remaining in the same house and exchanging the gift of peace between each one of us, sisters and co-workers together, means: sitting around the same table, which is the mission; eating the same bread, which is the history of our Congregation; drinking at the same source, which is our Charism; recreating Hospitality, which is the project of all of us, to which each and every one of us can make a contribution with our own identities and professional commitment. It means sharing courage and inspiration, knowledge and spirituality.

The certitude that we have all been called to perform a shared mission enables us to share the same experience as the seventy-two who “returned with joy” because their action had been confirmed by the miracles they had performed. And Jesus says to us, as he did to them, that the joy is true when the mission is performed in His name and when the outcome is entrusted into God’s hand; it teaches us that generous and freely-given service is liberating and inclusive; it ensures us that we can face difficulties, day by day, because our names are written in the Father’s heart.

Go… and HEAL the sick

Jesus trained his disciples; he taught them with his words and deeds, he enthused them with his style and infused his spirit in them, so that they could leave on the mission full of compassion and mercy. He sent them ahead of him to all the places where he had to go, that is to say “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1, 8). “Go… Heal the sick… I have given you authority”. These are the signs of the presence of the kingdom: “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Mt 11, 5).

The Master sends us out “as lambs in the midst of wolves”: this is the classical image of weakness when faced with violence, limitations when confronted by demands, the smallness of the individual when faced with the awesomeness of the task to be done. It will not be an easy task and we shall not always be greeted with the welcome we would like, and we shall not always gather the fruits of what we do. We need to be skilful and effective, acting with quality and wisdom, faith and perseverance, humility and readiness to serve. Joy at seeing the expansion of the Hospitaller mission is a sign of the Spirit and a challenge to our apostolic creativity at this moment in the history of our Congregation.

The time has come to fix our gaze on the Charism, to broaden our horizons, and to move forward towards new goals. It is time to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit to recreate Hospitality.
1.

RENEWING OUR FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE OF JESUS IN THE HOSPITALLER CONSECRATED LIFE

«The Lord appointed seventy-two others»
(Lk 10,1)
1. Through the gift of baptism which made us daughters of God we have been called to the faith and, through our religious consecration, to follow Jesus Christ in the Hospitaller life according to the evangelical counsels practised in community. Faithful to this calling, through the gift of the Holy Spirit and following the example of Mary “Our Mother”, we wish to rediscover our state as consecrated women in the cause of Hospitality, and in a more radical manner in order to live with unconditional love, a simplicity of life and immediate readiness to pursue God’s plan.

2. Fidelity to our vocation is only possible if we live our lives focused on and rooted in Christ, in a personal loving relationship with Him, which leads us to gradually identify with his sentiments. Creative fidelity to our calling also requires us to boldly address the new model of the Religious Life, confronting the whole of our Hospitaller life. Listening to and welcoming in the Word of God, prayerfully experiencing the Eucharist and practising charity, experiencing the Cross and the service of Hospitality all strengthen the choice we have made individually and as a community.

3. By vocation, we have been sent to perform the ministry of Hospitality in a Samaritan Church whose preference is to be with the sick and excluded. We go out on the Mission in the name of the community and in harmony with our Founders, and we forge ahead “even though the wind may be against us”, seeking new pathways to tread, and reliving the experience of the first group of Sisters. The Hospitaller service is the special place for discovering the face of Jesus in his “living images” and for bearing witness to God’s compassion for those who are suffering.

4. We perceive and accept formation as a demand of fidelity, and we have chosen to be women with a passion for Jesus Christ, configured to His way of being and doing, with a living faith, ca-
pable of transmitting hope and joy. Sisters who generate communi-
cation, with human maturity, welcoming individuals and cultures;
Hospitallers showing compassion to humanity; who heed the cries
of those who are suffering and are ready and willing to serve the
Kingdom.

5. **Formation pathways**, particularly in the initial phases
of the Hospitaller life, must be tailor-made for each individual,
fostering comprehensive maturity, enabling us to live a meaningful
consecrated life with a solid and dynamic charismatic identity;
formation looks to our origins and promotes inculturation. The
formation pathways must guarantee the accompaniment of all the
sisters in their various ministries, create an attitude of discernment,
and encourage creative fidelity in their discipleship of Jesus. It must
also give the sisters appropriate preparation and updated theologi-
cal, spiritual, charismatic and professional knowledge, in order to
train us to engage in dialogue with the world.

6. We must renew our commitment to live in a **permanent
attitude of being in formation** which will help us to mature our
female personality and plunge into the essentials of our consecrated
life and rediscover the richness of our spirituality. We are formation
mediators for one another and we recognise that the community is
the most appropriate place for us to discover and to experience the
formative value of daily life.

**LINES OF ACTION**

1.1. To engage in a process, throughout the whole Congregation,
this will drive us on to revitalise our **vocational identity and
sense of belonging**, and lead us to experience today the first
calling.

1.2. To update our **spirituality** and embody it in the Hospitaller
life and mission, using as our benchmarks the centrality of
God, the spiritual experience of our Founders, our encounter
with the sick and the poor, and the signs of the times.

1.3. To prepare sisters for the **formation of others**, establish
**teams** and reorganise the initial formation structures, being
sure that this is done in a place which offers the best possible
quality guarantees, and is able to hand on meaningful expe-
riences of fraternal life and apostolic mission.

1.4. To design **formation programmes** based on the General
Formation Plan, emphasising the selection criteria and inter-
culturalism, and structuring the period of the early years of
perpetual vows.

1.5. To promote **continuing formation** which will revitalise our
charismatic identity and apostolic commitment, bearing in
mind personal needs, the different paces between and within
communities, with a number of actions performed at the
general level.
ENCOURAGING THE UNION OF HEARTS AND APOSTOLIC COMMITMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY LIFE

«He sent them on ahead of him, two by two»
(Lk 10,1)
7. The religious community is the sign of the **Trinitarian communion**, the theological place where we are called to live together in fraternity, according to the commandment of Jesus to “love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15, 12). This commandment of love expressed in charity was the basis on which the first community of sisters was built up: María Josefa said, “My sisters, sincerely love one another” and María Angustias has challenged us to create the union of hearts.

8. We are living in the world in a **permanent state of flux**, marked by different cultures, faiths and life projects, very often fragmented by conflicts between them. This is the world that is calling out to us to bear witness to our fidelity to the Congregation. We also acknowledge that we can also fall prey to taking things easy, to individualism and consumerism… which blur the practice of the values of the Kingdom. This makes it urgently necessary for us to recover the poor, simple and joyful way of life lived by our first communities.

9. The creative force of the Spirit drives us on to **build up Samaritan communities** based on love and forgiveness, in which communion is experienced, reaching beyond the common life alone; a life in which interpersonal relations are healthy and profound, and where everyone of us welcomes in each other’s with all our riches and frailties, and where co-responsible participation is encouraged in the same life and mission project and in the quest to seek God’s will. In this way we shall strengthen our bonds of membership and become prophetic signs for the world of today. It also requires us to rethink the styles and the structures of community life, making them more outreaching and flexible, and able to make different responses which are appropriate to current needs.

10. The **universal nature** of the Congregation is a challenge to us to create intercultural communities in which interaction is fostered between different cultures, and a harmonious climate of respect and mutual enrichment is generated. The grace received from God
as a result of the merger of the Augustinian Hospitaller Sisters with our Congregation also demands that both groups become better acquainted with the history and spirituality of each other, strengthening the bonds of fraternity and our effective attachment to the Charism.

11. In this restructuring and revitalisation process that we are passing through today, the service of leadership and governance has the mission of accompanying the sisters, communities, provinces and the whole Congregation: stimulating and conveying hope; strengthening charismatic fidelity; promoting the meaningfulness of our communities; identifying the priority functions and areas in which the sisters should be present in our centres.

12. Authority and obedience are grounded on Jesus whose food was to do the will of the Father and to finish his work (Jn 4, 34). Following Jesus’ example we practise obedience out of love, always ready to cooperate in God’s project, with a style of leadership based on faith and humility which fosters dialogue, discernment and co-responsibility, we shall make it easier for the sisters to demonstrate readiness to serve. We have heard the call to deepen and embody the charismatic style of María Josefa, the first superior.

13. The difficulties and the complexities of the service of governance today, together with the reluctance of some to take this service on, also demonstrates the need to foster formation and mentoring of the Superiors so that they can perform their mission with a sense of leadership and with a forward-looking vision.

**LINES OF ACTION**

2.1. To implement community and intercommunity initiatives to revitalise our fraternal life based on sharing the faith, the Word of God, the joy of our vocation and celebration.

2.2. **To restructure our communities** by diversifying their composition according to the real-life situation of the sisters, and interculturalism, the paces of life and apostolic projects, their positioning and economic sustainability.

2.3. To lay down criteria to provide comprehensive care for the elderly sisters, or those with special needs and to care for them in our own residences or those shared with others.

2.4. To revise, update and standardise the criteria for the management of financial resources and assets in the communities and provinces, promoting transparency, solidarity and joint responsibility in the use of our goods.

2.5. To implement formation pathways for the exercise of animation and governance, emphasising discernment and leadership, to encourage the participation and the shared responsibility of all the sisters.

2.6. To update and implement our governance and management model for accompanying the sisters, communities and centres.

2.7. To lay down channels of communication and participation between the general, provincial and local governments, to help to lead, guide and manage the process of change as we move towards the new canonical structures.
3.

CALLING TOGETHER AND INCORPORATING NEW GENERATIONS

«Go and tell them...
“that the Kingdom of God is near at hand”»
(Lk 10,9)
14. The joy of the vocation, the original vigour of the Charism and the needs of the sick pose a challenge to us to call together and incorporate new generations of Hospitallers. The shortage of vocations in the global North and the gradual increase in the South and the East, strengthen us in the certainty that God is continuing to call people today to the Hospitaller Religious Life and this requires us to tend the seed of the vocation so that it can blossom and bear fruits of perseverance.

15. Young people are looking for the meaning of life and are questioning themselves about the truth and authenticity of consecrated life, waiting to hear that they have been called by their own name, and some express the wish to welcome in the dream that God has in mind for them, and to be sent on a mission. We must open the doors to them, pitch the community tent, so that they can have a human encounter and the experience of God, sharing the table of Bread and the Word, discover the beauty of being called, and appreciate the value of free self-giving in the Hospitaller service.

16. Our pastoral proposal is characterised by the proclamation of the Gospel of Hospitality: we show Jesus Christ to young people so that they can hear Him calling to them, and follow Him freely, readily and generously. We foster familiarity with the differing vocations within the Church; we take care of the process of discernment leading to the choice of a vocation. The pedagogical process of accompaniment fosters the continuity and progression of proposals and undertakings, viewing the family as an important nucleus for deciding on a vocation.

17. Every sister, and particularly those who perform the ministry of the pastoral care of youth and vocations, are called to renew their hearts, to proclaim the annunciation of vocations with conviction and hope, to discover new youth Areopagus, and to be creative and proactive whenever they have the opportunity. Social
networks linked to the Congregation’s website are a contemporary and effective means for getting through to young people.

18. The Hospitaller mission is our special pastoral sphere. Those for whom we care are the best transmitters of the words of Jesus, “come and see” (Jn 1, 39); “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25, 40). It is God who calls, and all those who serve the sick cooperate to ensure that God’s voice is heard: welcoming young people, testifying to the satisfaction of giving oneself to others, conveying the Hospitaller style of service and awakening solidarity with those who are sick.

19. The pastoral ministry of youth and vocations forms part of the Church’s mission and for this we have to create an appropriate climate in which it can be performed. It is urgently necessary to encourage an authentic “vocations culture” in our community and apostolic environments. By this is meant a social and relational environment which encourages the necessary conditions that are able to awaken vocations; a way of life, configured by attitudes, beliefs and conduct which express human and vocational values; a fertile ground for a personal encounter with oneself, with others, with God and with the mission. It must be a cross-cutting dimension of our life and mission.

20. In order to drive this we must thoroughly study the theology of vocations to enlighten the charismatic identity of the different forms of Christian life; promote the spirituality of communion based upon our own Charism; involve people taking part in our project, even though they may not share our faith; take a pedagogical approach which configures and accompanies the process of joining in the Hospitaller mission; providing pathways for the evangelisation and spiritual accompaniment of those who desire it.

21. Reaching out to different ways of life enriches our own human and spiritual self-fulfilment, broadens our view of the consecrated life and stimulates us to recreate the Hospitaller Charism.

We must accept the requests of those who wish to practise our spirituality in the form of the lay consecrated life, by trying out ways of accompanying this way of life.

LINES OF ACTION

3.1. To strengthen the pastoral dimension of every sister and community by bearing witness of life that will awaken in young people the value of an existence driven by passion for God and for needy people.

3.2. To recreate our pastoral proposal by impressing on it a pro-vocational educational approach, providing meaningful experiences of prayer and Hospitaller service, structuring the accompaniment process and implementing pastoral projects in conjunction with other institutions.

3.3. To study and reflect on the theme of “vocational culture” in the Congregation, in order to create appropriate conditions for people to question themselves about their vocation.

3.4. In frontier areas, to establish a few communities/groups made up of Sisters and young people who are sensitive to the demands of Hospitality, bound by a commitment based on solidarity.

3.5. To encourage particular pathways for those who express the desire to live the consecrated life as laity, according to our Charism.
4.

CREATIVELY TAKING ON THE MISSION AS A COMMON PROJECT

«Remain in the same house and say, “Peace be to this house”»
(Lk 10, 7)
22. The Hospitaller Charism is a gift of the Spirit to the Church and for the benefit of the world, through which we continue the healing mission of Jesus. Since our beginnings and throughout history we have always given this mission tangible form in the Hospitaller project, placing it at the service of evangelisation, and keeping our guests as the centrepiece at all times, as the raison d’être of our Institution and the unifying element of our common project.

23. All of us, sisters and co-workers, each with our own respective vocations, are called and sent to practise hospitality as a universal value. The humanist and Christian roots of our project gives it an inclusive character. To perform it we must encourage a sense of belonging, foster Hospitaller values and ensure that everyone performs the mission with dedication, professional quality, creativity and humanisation.

24. The incorporation of our co-workers into the Hospitaller project requires a process of outreach, formation and accompaniment, motivating the widest possible participation. We also believe that the shared mission is much more than simply cooperating in our work, and requires us to share one and the same project and the sense of mission which it encompasses. This is why we must promote a process of growth in our Hospitaller identity and in a style of establishing relationships based on respect and co-responsibility. Practising hospitality on a shared basis also requires us to make creative responses to the needs of the mission in every different social environment, as our Founders did.

25. The Sisters and many co-workers practise Hospitality following the example of Jesus, the Good Samaritan, who has sent us to take healing and the message of the Kingdom to all peoples. Some co-workers and other people take on their lay vocation in the Church and in the world, and wish to participate in the Hospitaller Charism and Mission through the spirituality of the Congregation.
We are committed to offering them a process for growing in the faith and in Hospitality, based on formation and accompaniment.

**LINES OF ACTION**

4.1. To encourage **continuing and systematic formation** in the Hospitaller identity and culture at every level of the organisation, using as our benchmark the Identity Framework.

4.2. To foster the **evangelising and Hospitaller way of life** practised in our centres, seeking the most appropriate ways of guaranteeing this, consistently with each situation.

4.3. To develop **institutional communication**, within and without, in order to strengthen the sense of belonging to the Hospitaller project and to give it visibility.

4.4. To define the model of the **shared mission and the spirituality of cooperation**, and what this entails for the implementation of the Hospitaller project.

4.5. To promote formation, accompaniment, commitment, and the organisation of “**Lay Hospitallers**”.

4.6. To create **groups** made up of sisters and other persons committed to the Hospitaller mission in order to drive projects in geographic areas which are in greatest need.
26. The reality of human suffering in our age, particularly mental suffering, remains a challenge to us. As in the age of our Founders, the sight of pain and the example of the love of the compassionate and merciful Christ, require us to show a new “creativity” in charity” (NMI No. 50). Responding to this challenge requires us to make a charismatic reading of the signs of the times and places, and to allow ourselves to be prompted into action by new situations of marginalisation, particularly those in which human life is most seriously in peril. This Gospel-based sensitivity entails a greater institutional commitment to defend human dignity and social justice.

27. Our Founder, Fr Menni, told us that “there was no-one dedicated specifically to these sick people”; this was a call to him, which helped him to discern God’s will that we should devote ourselves to caring for people suffering from mental illness, as the expression of His goodness to them.

28. Concern for life, and making the person our centrepiece, requires us to make progress in the frontline of mental health care. At the same time, the dedication and specialisation of our Institution in this area enriches the Church and society, ensuring a better understanding of people with mental problems that affect the essential areas of their health, consciousness, freedom and autonomy. Hospitality as a human and personal encounter forms the essential basis of the service of quality.

29. The centre, and the fundamental rationale of the Hospitaller mission, is the person for whom we care, all their needs and dimensions are our concern. We recognise their inalienable dignity, defend their lives in all circumstances as well as their personal role in the healing process, and we combat any stigmatisation and exclusion from which they may suffer in society. Our commitment to Hospitality drives us on to be sentinels and artisans of a
To make the good news visible in the world of mental suffering

renewed, dynamic and creative mission, combining the fostering of human and technical with highest quality of care, taking a holistic approach to the person, working with ethical criteria and integrating science and charity.

30. Our Hospitaller Model requires us to enhance the fundamental features of our mission such as: establishing quality benchmarks, networking and deploying synergies inside and outside our Institution, accrediting care projects, working in the field of prevention, rehabilitation and ensuring the continuity of care, promoting teaching, research and innovation, encouraging the Pastoral Care of the Sick, volunteering and ethics, adjusting our structures, raising the funds we need to perform the mission, and taking on the administrative demands which add value to our project.

31. Bringing the Good News of God in the world of health care also drives us on to expand the Congregation, taking us out to the social, geographic and cultural frontiers of the mission. We therefore commit ourselves to show readiness to respond to the apostolic calling to be sent out and to share human and technical resources in order to respond to new needs. To promote the Hospitaller mission in the poorest countries, the Congregation works through the Development Cooperation service which encourages solidarity and social transformation, the search for human resources, and fundraising.

LINES OF ACTION

5.1. To interpret our founding criteria in terms of our preferential choice of the world of mental suffering, which steer our response to new forms of suffering and the implementation of new projects.

5.2. To analyse our centres and facilities on the basis of charismatic and care criteria, defining the strategic positioning of the Institution and studying new legal forms in order to be able to guarantee their continuity.

5.3. To establish strategic and operational agreements and alliances with other institutions, for the good of the mission.

5.4. To implement the Hospitaller Model in plans and programmes, according to our Identity Framework, with a special reference to the Pastoral Care of the Sick, volunteerism and ethics, so that the action will be all the more significant in the process of providing care.

5.5. To manage the economic and financial dimension, seeking to ensure that our centres are sustainable and viable, and diversifying the sources of finance.

5.6. To promote international cooperation by seeking resources within and outside the Institution, and encouraging the participation of the sisters, co-workers, volunteers and Service Users.

5.7. To encourage mission responses in simple ways, incorporated into society, steered by a special sensitivity towards the poor who are outside our structures, marked by free-giving and on an intercongregational basis.
THE HOSPITALLER VISITATION
The icon which inspired and accompanied the restructuring process still sheds light on the pathways we have to tread over the coming Sexennium. The scene of the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1, 39-56) encourages us to herald in a new age of revitalisation, putting into practice the theme of this Chapter: “Led by the Spirit to recreate Hospitality”.

**Mary went with haste – Driven by the Spirit**

Mary welcomed the Word of God into her heart, cooperating in the project to save humanity; by so doing she gave God the most central place in human being. Urged on by the joy of seeing the promise fulfilled, Mary “went with haste into the hill country”, carrying Christ to Elizabeth.

As a Hospitaller Community, driven by the Spirit, we are also setting out along the path to take to all humanity the witness of faithful, generous and revitalised consecrated life, and the grace of the shared mission on the basis of a common Hospitaller project. The vitality of the Charism, the urgent needs of the poor and the sick, spur us on, and our response must be immediate and bold.

**He who is mighty has done great things for me – we have been sent**

Mary could not contain her joy at the wholly unexpected way in which God had burst into her life “she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth”. The joy of that meeting, the happiness of being called, and the beauty of communion generated dynamism, life and hope. Mary sang the *Magnificat*, not when she received the Annunciation from the Angel that she would be the
Mother of the Saviour, but when she met Elizabeth, as a Hospitaller. She teaches us that service is what confirms the authenticity of the vocation and mission.

We also, when we serve the sick and needy, see that the Lord works wonders through simple, humble acts, and we can therefore glorify God who “wants to work wonders of mercy with us” (Letter 434). With the joy that springs from the Charism of Hospitality, we feel that we have been sent to carry out, all together, the mission of a Samaritan Church which has opted to stand by the most vulnerable, excluded and needy people.

**His mercy extends from generation to generation – recreating hospitality**

God’s project consists of liberating, treating, healing, bringing justice and fraternity through mercy. He hastens to the aid of the poor and the weak because his love is showered on the most dis-inherited and the defenceless. The faithfulness of the Lord runs from generation to generation, from the beginning and for ever. In the *Magnificat*, Mary proclaimed that all who suffer and are marginalised can always be hopeful, because the Lord will treat them mercifully.

Urged on by the Spirit, let us commit ourselves to recreating Hospitality, making Mary’s prophecy come true: “He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.” Those who seek our services must feel welcomed, acknowledged, healed ... they have to experience, day by day, the Hospitaller Visitation.