



OPINION PIECE

“We have been touched by the love and support shown by the Hospitaller Community”

María Purificación Goñi, Provincial Superior of France, tells us about the situation in Paris, as well as the Sisters Hospitallers centre in Paris, following the terrible attacks that took place in the city last November.



María Purificación Goñi

A We were all informed of the terrible attacks that occurred on the night of 13 November in Paris, and in the morning of 17 November in the Saint-Denis neighbourhood, also in Paris.

These acts of terrorism have an international impact, they impact us all, no one is untouched and we should all stand united against any situation of suffering and pain. The Sisters and members of the Hospitaller Family from the different parts of the world where the Congregation is present, have expressed their closeness and support in these difficult times, where we know that danger is all around.

The incidents occurred during the Provincial Assembly, a propitious moment to pray for world peace.

The situation in Paris

The city of Paris has been virtually paralysed; during the three days of national mourning the streets were deserted, and public places were closed: the Eiffel Tower, Disneyland, mu-

seums, cinemas, and more. On the metro and other means of transport, you could sense the distrust and fear. The conversations were frightened about what had occurred, and people spoke in solidarity with the victims.

After the attack, the places that were directly affected turned into spontaneous pilgrimage sites. You could see people grieving, prostrated in front of rows of lit candles and a blanket of flowers. On the 16th, at 12am, there was a moment of 5 minutes of silence to remember the victims and their families. Several religious ceremonies were held to pray for them. As a symbol of national unity, the French national anthem, the "Marseillaise", was sung on several occasions.

A positive aspect of the attack was the tremendous solidarity,

fraternity, fortitude and strength shown by the French people.

The Situation in the Saint Germain Centre

The Saint Germain Centre run by the Congregation in Paris is not located near where the attacks took place and we were not directly affected (thanks be to God). We saw some of the aftermaths of the attack, we heard the sound of the ambulances taking the wounded to hospital, and we saw the helicopters flying over the city. The information we received in the media showed us that we were all in danger. We were very shocked to hear, several times, that Paris was at war, which meant we knew that danger was imminent at any moment. The people responsible for the tragedy needed to be found and identified, and it was probable that some of them were in the city.

The day following the attacks, residents of the city talked about how sad they were about the events, and went through emotions of both solidarity and fear. They proposed praying to a rosary of the Virgin Mary for the victims and their families. At the Sunday Eucharist, individual proposals were made in this respect, praying for peace.

After hearing the emergency security measures put in place by the government, the director of the centre told residents not to leave their homes and not to go to public places. Several outside activities were cancelled, and a security plan was put in place

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to monitor all the entrances and exits to the centre, which was carried out calmly and responsibly.

Praise and give thanks for life

Today we felt the need to praise and give thanks for life, to promote life, to build bridges and encourage peace among men, to stand together when faced with all kinds of situations and to not give in when faced with difficulties or terror.

The bonds that join us together as members of the Hospitaller family grow stronger every day, and we feel like we are part of the congregation.

Once again we would have been touched by your love and support, and we will continue to work together for HOSPITALITY and the values of our institution, because love knows no boundaries.

Thank you all!



Paris attacks, November 2015

The attacks that took place last November, in Paris, were terrorist attacks that took the lives of 137 people, and left 415 people wounded.

Responsibility for the attacks was claimed by the jihadist organisation the Islamic State.



INSTITUTIONAL

New Provincial Government in Spain

Our institution is in the midst of a restructuring and revitalising process that began in 2007, and has had a particular impact on Spain since 2012. Over the past three years, steps have been taken and proposals made to turn the three existing Provinces into a single Spanish Province.

One of the main steps was to elect a **governing body in charge of managing and inspiring the new Spanish Province**, which will become a legal entity in 24 April 2016. The main aim will be to **CREATE** and **CONSOLIDATE** the Spanish Province, organising and starting up the structures for governance and management, and providing all the means necessary for the same.



Matilde Porras González, Provincial Superior

Born in Burgos, Spain. Degree in Nursing and Master's in Bioethics from the Universidad Pontificia de Comillas. Studied business management and administration at ESADE business school.

Joined the Congregation in 1966. She belongs to the Madrid Province.

Experience and service carried out with the Hospitallers: in the local area she has worked towards the Hospitaller mission, mainly in the field of nursing. She has worked as head of nursing, Superior and Centre Manager. From 1995 to 2000 she was Provincial Councillor for the centres in the Madrid Province. Between 2000 and 2012 she was a member of the general governing body as a Councillor. In 2012 she was named General Representative for the process of creating a single Province in Spain.

How are you approaching the new task that the Congregation has entrusted you with? The task that has been entrusted to me, which is to oversee and encourage the new Spanish Province, is a big challenge for me which I am undertaking with **hope**, a sense of **collaboration**, and **trust**:

- I trust in Jesus and the Virgin Mary who, together with the Founders of our organisation, will guide our steps forward. We need their light and their strength so that the process of reorganisation allows us to "recreate and share the new sense of life that comes from the charisma of the Hospitallers".
- I trust in the Hospitaller Community and in our governing body, which is made up of Sisters with very different profiles. The Hospitaller project belongs to all of us, and this was shown in the recently held Evaluation Assembly, where there was a strong sense of communion and commitment to the values and mission of the Hospitallers.
- I trust in prayer, especially in the prayers of the older Sisters, who are true testaments to Hospitaller faithfulness, and who enrich us with their wisdom and experience.

We started our journey to coincide with the **"Holy Year of Mercy"**, which we welcome with grace and also commitment; **"Gods work consists in freeing, curing, healing, bringing justice and fellowship through mercy"** (XX General, 5). This is what we try to do every day through Hospitality. We are convinced that, as our founding father said "The Lord would have us do wonders with mercy" (Letter 434).



María Purificación Pardo Sanz **Vicar and first Councillor - Hospitallers**

Born in Navarre, Spain. Joined the Congregation in 1960. Graduate in Nursing and Physiotherapy. She belongs to the Palencia Province..

Her service as a Hospitaller has been carried out in different communities and centres in the Palencia and Rome Provinces. She has worked as a Superior, nurse, head of nursing and Provincial Councillor. She was Provincial Superior for the province of Palencia.



María Rosario Iranzo Avelino **Second Councillor - Institutional Identity**

Born in Navarre, Spain. Joined the Congregation in 1967. She has a degree in Nursing, specialising in Psychiatry. She has also read a degree in Methodology and Education for Religious Vocations. She belongs to the Madrid Province.

Experience and Services carried out with the Hospitallers: she worked in the field of nursing (head of nursing). She was Provincial Superior and worked encouraging vocations and initial training for Sisters in different stages: Teacher for postulants, novices and juniors..



Luz Divina Sánchez Rodríguez **Third Councillor - Communities and training**

Born in Salamanca, Spain. Joined the Congregation in 1963. She has a degree in Basic General Education, specialising in Therapeutic Education. She has read a Masters in Bioethics from the Borja Institute of Bioethics in Barcelona. She belongs to the Barcelona Province.

Experience and Services carried out with the Hospitallers: she has worked in different educational centres for people with intellectual disabilities in the Palencia and Barcelona Provinces. She has worked in various support roles in the Barcelona Province: Provincial secretary, Provincial Superior, Centre Superior and Provincial Treasurer. In 2012 she was designated member of the Commission to create a single Spanish Province.



Rosa María Gutierrez Sánchez
Fourth Councillor - Hospitaller Pastoral Care

Born in Cantabria, Spain. Joined the Congregation in 1983. She has an educational background in Administration, Theology and Pastoral Care. She belongs to the Barcelona Province.

Experience and Services carried out with the Hospitallers: she has worked in head of administration and support services as a Superior and second Provincial Councillor in a number of Communities and Provincial Centres in Barcelona.



Fuencisla Martín Martín, Provincial Treasurer

Born in Segovia, Spain. Joined the Congregation in 1979. She has an educational background in Administration and Pastoral Care. She belongs to the Palencia Province..

Experience and Services carried out with the Hospitallers: she has worked in Hospitality in several Centres and Communities in the Palencia Province. Locally: in administration, pastoral care, as a Community Superior and Centre Manager. On a Provincial Level: Provincial Treasurer and Superior.



Magdalena Goñi Aramendía, Provincial Secretary

Born in Pamplona, Spain. Joined the Congregation in 1966. She graduated in Teaching, passing the Spanish teaching entry exams, and she holds a degree in Therapeutic Education and Speech Therapy. She belongs to the Palencia Province.

Experience and Services carried out with the Hospitallers: Experience and services carried out with the Hospitallers: she worked as a special education teacher in Meres (Asturias, Spain) and as a Provincial Secretary in Palencia from 1994.

With Christmas approaching, we could not have imagined a better gift than the birth of this new Province in Spain. It is a gift not just for the Sisters and the people we work with, but for everyone who is a part of the Hospitaller Community, especially for those who need us and those to whom we offer our care.

“Every Christmas the Sisters will organise for a local acting troupe to perform a Christmas play for the residents and staff”

María Soares



María Soares

María Soares, who works with the St. Teresa's Home run by the Sisters Hospitallers in London, told us about Christmas at the centre.

First of all, what are the main characteristics of the St. Teresa's Residential Home?

The St' Teresa's Residential home is located in central London and was founded in 1926. It currently has capacity for 26 beds, and offers geriatric care services to 25 people from a range of different countries: England, Ireland, Russia, Austria, Romania... aged between 79 and 97 years old.

Our team is made up of 10 Sisters, 29 collaborators and 3 volunteers, and we work together to meet all the needs of the residents.

What does Christmas signify at the centre?

Christmas is special time of year for the residents and staff, not only because it is a break from the normal routine, but also because Christmas creates an almost tangible community spirit in the air.

How do the Sisters, Co-workers and residents prepare for Christmas?

Two weeks before Christmas Day, Staff will decorate the home and start to play Christmas music so the residents get a real sense of there being something different about this time of year.

What activities take place as part of the Christmas Celebrations?

Every Christmas the Sisters will organise for a local acting troupe to perform a Christmas play for the residents and staff. The main activities happen on Christmas day.

The night before, Christmas Eve, the Sisters put gifts from St. Teresa's in each resident's room. On Christmas day, the residents wake up, get changed into their nice clothes (because it is a special day!) and then open their gifts whilst listening to Christmas music.

The Sisters and staff have some

fun getting dressed up as key characters from the Nativity, others wearing Christmas hats and flashy badges! Residents enjoy a traditional Christmas lunch with turkey, stuffing, vegetables, roast potatoes, everyone's Christmas favourites!

During the residents rest time, the Sisters take over the care duties giving the Manager, Head of Care and carers an opportunity to have a Christmas lunch together as a team. Later, the residents who wish to attend a special Christmas Mass can do so with the Sisters and the Christmas activities and games continue well into the evening when the residents have dinner.

How much are service users and their families involved in these celebrations?

Very much so - some residents' families come to see them on the day or just before, but staff always makes sure the Season is enjoyed by all.

What is the message of Christmas for users?

For many of the residents it is a time to see family – some residents go home for a few days, or their families come to see them and take them out for a meal.



XI Mental Health Open Week

The XI Mental Health Open Week, organised by the Câmara Pestana Nursing Home, Portugal, has grown over the years in terms of how well it is organised.

From 5 to 10 October, Mental Health was put in the spotlight and made headlines in the news, was featured on local radio and the RTP Madeira television channel. The event was also part of the celebrations the 90th anniversary of the Sisters Hospitaliers' presence in Madeira (4 May 1925).

The purpose of the **Open Week is to bring mental health issues to the attention of the general public**, so that society can be made more aware and participate. The aim is to help remove the stigma of mental illness, and spread further information about the centre to the community.

A partnership was established Jaime Moniz High School. We invited all the healthcare centres involved in care to participate. We held healthcare workshops in downtown Funchal and in the Farmers market. We made the most of the situation and informed people passing by about the centre.

Physical activity was encouraged through Body Combat, Dance and Zumba classes, with the participation of schools, our patients and even the Centro de Reabilitação Psicopedagógica da Sagrada Família.

A cultural event was held in the Baltazar Dias Municipal Theatre, a cultural symbol of Funchal, featuring an opening ceremony attended by the Provincial and heads of local organisations. Father Alberto Brito, SJ, spoke about Happiness, Interiority, Spirituality and Mental Health.

Next there was a **theatre performance** with a play based on an adaptation of texts by the Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran, titled "The Madman". There were powerful moments of both words and silence, light and shadows, black and white, pretence and doubt, reaching the conclusion that "in the end, you too live on the other side of the wall". The other side is neither here or there, it is suffering from mental illness or not... the mask of normality that hides us from one side or the other.

The play ends with all the actors removing their masks and throwing themselves on the ground, in a gesture of liberation. The play involved both users and monitors from the centre. It was a profound moment of reflection and emotion.

It was followed by a group from the CRPSF, who combined dance and percussion. Both the young people and teachers involved exuded energy and art, and everyone involved were excellent dancers and musicians. The theatre was imbued with their physical energy and music, and it was magical!



"Hospitality beyond our borders"



Paul, Joyce, Promis and Jennifer together with two Hospitaller Sisters, in Villa San Benedetto Menni (Italy)

Villa San Benedetto Menni

Welcoming two refugee families

On the 9th October our Nigerian brothers arrived home. They are two young couples and both are expecting a baby! The community of nuns and many members of the management welcomed them on their arrival. Paul, Joyce, Promis and Jennifer were visibly grateful, apart from being a bit bewildered and embarrassed.

They are staying in the former gardener's houses, next to the VSB structure. The lodgings have been prepared for them and nothing is requested in return. A good deed, undoubtedly. But does it end here? We certainly don't think so. For one, we need to ask ourselves what sense it makes for a medical institution to shelter refugees who have fled their country.

Some may say that it's not our responsibility, that it is not our mission... But we write on all our documents that the central value of our work is Hospitality, don't we? **For us, hospitality means putting others first in medical assistance;** these are people who are not sick, but needy, desperate, who have fled their own country without even knowing where, and above all if, they would arrive. Surely we don't want to limit ourselves and say that if they are not "sick", they are not our business? Certainly not and luckily that is not what happened.

The management and many staff got involved di-

rectly to offer support and solidarity by donating clothes and other useful items to allow them to live with dignity. As Christians, we are called to allow others precisely this: to always feel like a person, worthy of living their own lives, whatever their situation may be.

Two months after their arrival...

...we can say that our brothers are well integrated, as well as being in good company in their new lives. Caritas provides for their day-to-day needs, helping them to become increasingly autonomous in managing their expenses thanks to the support of a dedicated operator.

The sisters of Villa San Benedetto are never short on attention, visits and invitations. Overall, the staff have obtained so many clothes and other useful items that some of them will be given to other people in need. The wife of one of our members of staff, who is an obstetrician, is attending Jennifer and Joyce in their respective pregnancies on a voluntary basis. And the girls themselves are never left alone in the scrupulous care of every step in this delicate path.

Solidarity, which began by simply opening a door, is bearing its fruits a-plenty. An important sign, in sharp contrast with the reigning individualistic and therefore often egotistical view of earthly life.

Prize for the best scientific publication

Madrid Province

With the aim of encouraging publications by the Sisters Hospitaliers in the field of scientific excellence, the Technical - Healthcare Commission of the Madrid Province will award €600 to the best scientific work published in 2014.

The publication must have been written by a collaborator for one of the centres in the Canonical Province.

The winning article, published in "Nurse Investigación" was titled "The role of nursing as a primary intervention in an episode of post-partum psychosis" by Victoria Borrego Espárrago, specialist mental health nurse at the San Miguel Clinic in Madrid.

The prize was awarded on 26 November, during the Mental Health Nursing Conference held in Ciempozuelos (Spain).



Award ceremony

Aragón Gold Seal for Business



Gold Seal award ceremony

Neuropsychiatric Centre Ntra. Sra. del Carmen

The Neuropsychiatric Centre of Nuestra Señora del Carmen, Spain, has been awarded with the Aragón Gold Seal for Business, the highest award for business management in Aragón. The award ceremony was held on 5 November during the 2015 Business Excellence Ceremony, as part of the 12th Aragón Business Forum.

In order to receive the Gold Seal, the Centre had to complete a high-level evaluation process for European business management guidelines. The Centre also had to meet different requirements, such as having received a Seal of Excellence at least twice, and meeting two good practice requirements related to management.

The good practices shown by the Centre were: a table showing the balance in the framework of the Congregation, the EFQM Model and the organisation's Strategic Plan, as well as the optimisation of resources to cope with the difficult economic climate, through the Budget Proportionality Factor, which indicates the operational status of the institution based on availability, efficiency and quality.

"We are very proud to receive the Seal, as it shows we are taking another step on the road to excellence, and it is a reward for the improvement process started by the Centre, in accordance with our idea of change for knowledge", explained Alfonso Cerdán, Centre manager.

The Healthy Workplaces Award

Centre Sagrada Família

In July 2015, the Centre de Reabilitação Psicopedagógica da Sagrada Família, located on the island of Madeira (Portugal), presented themselves as a candidate for the Healthy Workplaces Award, an award started by the Order of Portuguese Psychologists and available on a national level.

This initiative aims to encourage best practices and guidelines put in place in Portugal with regard to health, safety and well-being in the workplace.

The CRPSF ran as medium-sized business, alongside other organisations, having already won 2nd place as a healthy workplace (in Madeira). The award was presented on 09/11/2015 at a ceremony held in Lisbon, and was awarded by Sister Laurinda Faria (1st Provincial Councillor), to Dr. Bruno Freitas (Managing Director) and Dr. Teresa Maia (Psychologist).



Award ceremony

Hospitality without borders...

Benito Menni Hospital

The Hospitallers Sisters arrived in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in 1994 with the aim of providing Mental Health care. Especially for disadvantaged people.

They began their work in a neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city, with the capacity to care for 20 patients staying in the centre, as well as an outpatient service for psychiatry and psychology.

The only hospital with a specialised Mental Health service

It is the only hospital specialising in Mental Health care in eastern Bolivia, which means there is a high demand for services.

For this reason, the Municipal Government donated land to the Congregation in 1996, amounting to almost 2 hectares, in the "Jardín Latino" neighbourhood. The land was used to build a centre with 40 beds.

In 2001 building work was started on a second centre, with capacity for a further 40 beds. This meant the coverage of 80 hospital beds was reached,

which the Centre still has today.

In 2003 a General Services department was built, and in 2004 a department for Administration, Outpatient Clinic and an Auditorium were built. In 2013 a Day Hospital was built called "Sagadro Corazón de Jesús".

Taking on the challenge of extending the healthcare services to one of the more densely populated areas of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in May 2015 the "San Benito Menni" Surgery was opened. The location is very important for the Sisters in the community, as it is the building where their mission first began in Santa Cruz.

Healthcare Activity

■ **Hospitalisation**

There are two healthcare units, one for acute diseases and one for chronic diseases, where patients over 15 years old are treated for psychiatric conditions, which involve severe dysfunctions on a personal level that have an impact on family and social life.



Benito Menni Hospital



Benito Menni Hospital

The work is carried out in multidisciplinary teams, with the aim of helping hospitalised patients towards full or partial recovery, through comprehensive treatment that allows for the stabilisation and recovery of social and cognitive skills that are seriously affected by disease.

The healthcare team is made up of psychiatrists, a neurologist, psychologists, a nutritionist, nurses, an occupational therapist, a social worker and supervisors.

■ Outpatient Consultation

The outpatient unit provides outpatient care to people of all ages, in the field of psychiatry and also neurology, psychology and dentistry.

Psychiatric evaluation and diagnosis is made in order to work out an individualised treatment plan. In the psychology department, both individual and family psychotherapy is offered, as well as clinical and instrumental psychodiagnosis.

Guidance on Mental Health is also provided to the families of patients and to the general population.

■ Day Hospital

It is an outpatient resource, working alongside treatment with medicine. Its objective is to recover and strengthen social skills, to achieve reintegration into the family, social life and workforce

All this is achieved through group and individual therapy, as well as therapy with each individual patient and their family. The department includes a multidisciplinary team, headed by the psychologist.

■ Teaching activities

Since 1994 the centre is a University Hospital offering courses such as:

- Postgraduate studies in Psychiatry (Medical Residence Programme).
- Internships in clinical psychology, nursing, social work and research.

Hospital Management

There are 4 Sisters, 60 collaborators and numerous volunteers working at the hospital, most of whom come from Spain through the Benito Menni Foundation.

The hospital, which is colloquially known as the "HOSPITAL FOR THE POOR", as it treats everyone without distinction, has an agreement with the Government, which offers food grants, cleaning and hygiene products and some personal items.

The hospital assumes 40% of staff costs, maintenance costs, medication for chronic patients without resources, and external costs that patients cannot afford.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2016!



"During the Christmas holidays the Hospitaller family celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. I would like to wish you all a star to light the way and guide you, with an enormous sense of fellowship. I hope the coming year is prosperous and happy for everyone".

Patient at the San Miguel Psychosocial Rehabilitation Residence in Madrid.

Important dates: January, February and March

- Meeting held for the "Hospitallers in Africa" Commission, January 2016
- Evaluation Meeting for the delegation in the Philippines, 2-7 February 2016
- Evaluation Meeting for the delegation in the Vietnam, 2-6 March 2016

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