



## OPINION PIECE

Donaciano Martínez Álvarez, priest at the Diocese of Palencia and Institution collaborator

**"I give thanks for all that I have received,  
which is bountiful and varied"**

For the first time in its history, the Sisters Hospitallers grant the Charter of Brotherhood of the Congregation to Donaciano Martínez Álvarez, a priest at the Diocese of Palencia and Institution collaborator for more than 20 years in the fields of Identity, Hospitaller Values, Ministerial healthcare, education, and spirituality.



Donaciano Martínez Álvarez

Before receiving the Charter of Brotherhood from the Sisters Hospitallers I experienced a mixture of feelings, alongside attempts to interpret its meaning, followed by the realisation of its scope for co-workers. Here is a recount of the phases of my experience.

I was taken by surprise when the news arrived; my feelings mounted and my thoughts froze.

### Recognition

I then began to reflect, to examine its contents from a hermeneutic perspective, and several interpretations emerged. First, I understood it can be treated as an acknowledgement of my work with Sisters Hospitallers.

The various phases of my contributions were revived in my memory. The most relevant were: the moments of close collaboration when undertaking special responsibilities; the initiation of provincial tasks, some with an official title, some without; and the growing progress of institutional and particularly congregational involvement.

I saw a way of linking processes, events, and expressions to the Hospitaller story; as well as the duties, names and faces of people who would be involved.

"But it was not the memory of my contributions that led me to proclaim a Magnificat of gratitude. I gave and I give thanks for all that



Giving Ceremony of the Charter of Brotherhood



I have received, which is bountiful and varied." I won't make this piece too long, by including the details of all of the gifts I have received here.

### Interpellation

This initial interpretation was intense, but gave way to another that occupied my thoughts. Based on the Institution's identity –you all know of my involvement– our belonging to the Hospitaller community and our role in its shared mission is clear.

This being so, the content of the Charter of Brotherhood led me to a new interpellation based on the following questions: What depth does "the unique bond of communion with the charism" require of me? What transformative feature does "being a participant in hospitality" add to my person, my human, baptismal, and ministerial purpose? And consequently, what lifelong effect will my commitment to the hospitaller mission render? Moreover, if they allow me to "benefit from their spiritual blessings," from the "good they do in the world with their toil and prayer," what can I and must I give of my life, my work, my joy? I assure you that these challenges move me more than the recognition.

### Opening the door

I spent several days like that. Finally, after careful assessment, I arrived at my best understanding of

the Charter. I invite you to do the same, to open the door, to open the doors wide so the co-workers, arriving from different paths and backgrounds, understand each other as proactive members of the hospitality community; we are instrumental players in the shared mission; we live and guarantee the hospitaller identity and we are committed to its future.

I will also share with you the moment I received the Charter. At the 3rd interprovincial training meeting at MII, in the picture of beauty that was the celebration, when sister Fuencisla, on behalf of the Province of Palencia, reiterated the proposal, and sister Anabela, Superior General, read the dense text, handed me the scroll, and we embraced. Then, it was no longer about writings and reflections, it was the impact of the moment... I was overcome with emotion; I was speechless, and the stamp of hospitality was etched on my heart.

The granting of this Charter of Brotherhood represents a bond with the Institution, in all that concerns the communion and participation of spirituality, charism, and hospitality.



# INSTITUTIONAL

## A grateful remembrance of 22 Sisters Hospitallers

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." (John 12:24)*

These lines are a tribute, a grateful remembrance of 22 Sisters Hospitallers who gave their lives to assist neglected women suffering from mental illness, and who acted heroically in the face of the cholera epidemic that struck central Spain particularly hard.

June 1885 will be remembered as one of the most painful periods in Hospitaller history.

After spreading through several towns in the province of Madrid,

cholera arrived in Ciempozuelos and its symptoms soon appeared in the two psychiatric clinics founded by St. Benedict Menni. The limited information from the period reveals that 15 patients died at the Brothers of Saint John of God hospital, and that the hospital of the Sisters Hospitallers was the hardest hit, with an elevated number of fatalities (exact figures are unknown).

On 2 June 1885, the epidemic ravaged the community of sisters unable to avoid the scourge. They became victims of their own charitable instincts, sacrificing their lives for other women who were of no consequence in society.

The Medical Director of the two hospitals in Ciempozuelos, Mr.

José Rodrigo González, developed a remedy that reduced the death toll. The brothers and sisters were instructed to administer it and, organised by Father Menni, they visited the homes of families in Ciempozuelos, before traveling to other towns like Getafe and Chinchón.

As good Samaritans, the sisters attended the women infected with cholera, who, at the time, no one dared to assist. It marked the birth of volunteerism at our institution, a defining characteristic in the life of St. Benedict Menni. When cholera appeared, **for the first time the sisters emerged from the clinics as volunteers.**



## “Hospitality is a treasure; it is the best contribution we can make to the construction of Europe”

Andrea Calvo Prieto



Sister Andrea Calvo Prieto

Sister Andrea Calvo speaks to us about **HOSPITALITY EUROPE**, which office represents the hospitals and social/welfare facilities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God and of the Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and liaises with the Institutions of the European Union.

### When and how did the initiative emerge?

Convinced of the need for a representative office in the European Union, the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God created a non-profit organisation on 1 January 2012, known as “HOSPITALITY EUROPE,” which is based in Brussels.

Since its inception, the Order has been open to the possibility of cooperating with other institutions associated with charism.

The Sisters Hospitallers were the first group contacted for this purpose, given the existing fraternity between the two communities. We joined the initiative on 7 August 2013.

This international organisation, which is governed by Belgian law, enables the establishments of the Brothers of St. John of God and the Sisters Hospitallers to access all of the EU project proposals and showcases the work of these two institutions, present in 15 EU countries with more than 300 centres.

### Who are its members and how is it structured?

The association is structured and coordinated through synergistic actions that involve the General Councils of the Order and of the Sisters Hospitallers, the General Assembly of the association itself, and the European provinces of the two institutions. The General Assembly is comprised of religious figures from both institutions. The members from the Sisters Hospitallers are: Andrea Calvo Prieto, fourth General Counsellor, and Maria Begoña Pérez, Provincial Superior of England.

The schedule and coordination of activities on a European level is the responsibility of the Gene-

ral Assembly, which usually meets twice a year in Rome, in Italy. It also approves the budget and the balance sheet of the office in Brussels.

The office in Brussels requires active support and effective collaboration from the Provinces. This involves the payment of an annual fee to operate the organisation and the appointment of a leader in each of the Congregation’s four European Provinces: England, France, Portugal, and Spain (defined considering the process of unification in Spain). The leaders will maintain contact between the Office and the Provinces, and will meet at least once a year. Special work teams will be formed to address specific projects. The official languages are: Italian, French, and English.

### What are its objectives?

To promote Hospitaller values at European Union institutions. To strengthen ties between European institutions in order to better address local realities and propose inter-sector initiatives. To address financial aspects (European funds), and gauge the possibility of collaborating (common office) with other religious institutions associated with charism.



### What projects are in development?

- Fight against new forms of poverty emerging as a result of the economic crisis.
- Psychiatric care for children and adolescents as they transition into adulthood.
- Social and occupational inclusion for people with learning disabilities through new technologies. The provinces of France and Portugal collaborate on behalf of the Sisters Hospitallers.
- Treatment and rehabilitation for children suffering from mental disorders as a result of having witnessed or been the victims of violence (still in the development phase).

### How do you envision the development of activities in the future?

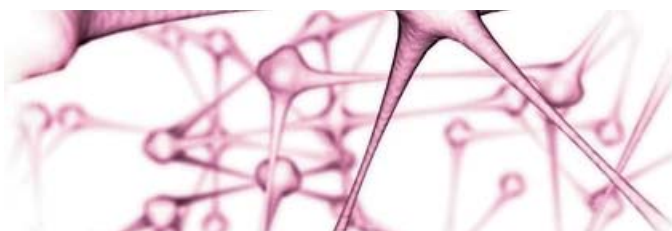
Among the many issues of common interest, particular attention has been paid to the most recent EU regulatory changes regarding the mutual recognition of the qualifications of healthcare professionals. The issue will be addressed in the future in order to facilitate the mobility of human resources between European Provinces.

Moreover, the European Provinces of the two institutions should increase and intensify exchange and cooperation, in addition to implementing a specific "information channel" featuring the activities and programmes sponsored by the community institutions.

May St. John of God and St. Benedict Menni inspire us today to be passionate about hospitality. Hospitality is a treasure; it is the best contribution we can make to the construction of Europe.

[www.hospitality-europe.eu](http://www.hospitality-europe.eu)

## Cognitive rehabilitation therapy not effective in schizophrenia



### Province of Barcelona

Researchers at the Sisters Hospitallers, led by FIDMAG, have conducted a clinical trial to determine if cognitive rehabilitation therapy (CRT) is effective for those suffering from schizophrenia.

Though this therapy has had controversial results in previous studies, some countries, including the United Kingdom, have begun implementing it. The results of the new study reveal that CRT does not improve the neuropsychological deficits of patients with schizophrenia, nor their ability to cope with daily tasks.

The research, funded by the Instituto de Salud Carlos III, was published in the esteemed journal *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. Participating in the study were 130 patients from six Sisters Hospitallers centres throughout Spain.

In the course of the study, patients were divided into three groups, one of which featured neurocognitive exercises, another that included an online typing course, and a third that involved a continuation of the usual treatment. The patients were assessed at the beginning and end of the trial, which lasted six months. The analysis reveals that neither cognitive performance nor daily functioning improved significantly in the three groups, and that patients who underwent CRT showed no discernable benefit over the other two groups.

## Psychiatric Round Table Discussion



Meeting Attendees

On 9 May, there was a Psychiatric Round Table Discussion organised by the Long-Term Psychiatry Section of the *Casa de Saúde Câmara Pestana*, which took place in the centre's auditorium.

This event began the celebrations to mark the 90th anniversary of the Sisters Hospitallers' presence at this Health Centre and in the Autonomous Region of Madeira on 1925.

The Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus assumed control of the health centre, then called "*Manicómió Câmara Pestana*", on 9 May 1925, at the invitation of the Administrative Council of Funchal, a result of the efforts of Dr. João Francisco de Almada, then Clinical Director: "*The Câmara Pestana asylum's services are terrible and there is no one capable of improving them unless the patients are placed in the care of competent, dedicated, and caring nurses. It would be criminal of anybody to oppose this solution*".

### Round table

The round table, moderated by the journalist and health specialist Marina Caldas, tackled a range of subjects, with contributions from a number of participants: Dr. Saturnino Silva, Psychiatrist; Dr. Licínio Santos, Psychiatrist; Agostinho Oliveira, Specialist Psychiatry and Mental Health Nurse; Cláudia Aveiro, Family Member; Nurse Ana Clara

Silva, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of IASAÚDE – IP RAM. **The discussion covered topics such as quality, chronicity in people with mental illness, the myths and truths behind electroconvulsive therapy, how families feel and what answers lie in the community.**

The meeting began with a dance performance entitled "**90 years of hospitality...**", which was choreographed by Edite Silveira and included some of the organisation's users and collaborators. The message delivered by the text, gestures, and words was one of liberating patients, a task undertaken by the Sisters...

Sister Celeste Lima, Superior of the Health Centre, began the discussion by saying: "*Our reason for coming here remains unchanged: to provide quality health care by combining science with a human touch and to create a holistic service for our users. After 90 years, our way of doing this has changed but our sense of purpose remains the same. Our objective continues to be serving people in suffering, with an integral health approach*".

The leitmotif behind hospitable intervention is the provision of scientific and human health care with an integral approach, which over 90 years has undergone processes of change that have their origins in boldness and creativity.



## The San Luis hospital complex changes its name

After 84 years, the San Luis hospital complex in Palencia, Spain, changed its name on 12 June. It is now known as "Centro Socio-sanitario Hermanas Hospitalarias."

At 12pm, in a simple act, the new name was presented on the facade of the Sisters Hospitallers complex in Palencia.

Attending the event were several of the city's social, business, and political figures, in addition to the Deputy Minister of Palencia, Luis Miguel Cárcel; Provincial Su-

perior, Fuencisla Martín; Managing Director, Javier Arellano; Superior General of the Institution, Anabela Carneiro, coinciding with her canonical visit to Palencia; and all of the directors of the Province.

*"We are here to present Palencia with the new name that represents the institution that has managed this complex for 126 years and best symbolises the current activity within these walls,"* said Javier Arellano, Managing Director of the Centro Socio-sanitario Hermanas Hospitalarias in Pa-

lencia.

The name change, which aims to enhance the image of the "Sisters Hospitallers" brand in the 27 countries in which it operates, arrives at a pivotal moment for the institutions because the Sisters Hospitallers centres in Spain are undergoing a restructuring process that will culminate next year with the creation of the Single Canonical Province of Spain.



## "Love is stronger than our ethnic differences"



Marie Stella Kouak

### Province of France

At the invitation of the weekly magazine PÈLERIN, Sister Marie Stella Kouak, a Togolese Sister Hospitaller and Director of the "Vivre dans l'Espérance" ("Live in Hope") Association, spent the whole month of May in France attending the various general meetings of the organisations that support her work, as well as giving numerous lectures and interviews. She was accompanied at all times by Maman Rita, head of the Maison Sainte Monique in Togo, which houses 70 orphans.

They went from Dapaong to Paris, Paris to Angers, Angers to Nîmes, Nîmes to Reims, Reims to Chambéry, Chambéry to Dijon, Dijon to Saint-Amand, and Saint-Amand to Togo... and were incredibly touched by the many encounters and stories they found along the way. *"Wherever we went, we were one of the family".*

Pèlerin readers who know her well and are aware of the importance of her work were extremely generous: more than €25,000 has already been donated to the Association. This will fund the second stage of the work on a new care centre in Dapaong, replacing the Maison Maguy, which is no longer able to accommodate all the patients. Works will begin on 29 June.

*"Thank you to the thousands of familiar and unfa-*

*miliar faces who follow our daily reality from near and afar. The task is never-ending and must continue to be undertaken with simple gestures: not just providing food, caring for injuries and illnesses, comforting, and praying but also smiling, lending a helping hand, and sharing in the little that we have. This is what you bring to our lives every day and for that we thank you again."*

## 2nd Congress for mental health

### Malaga Care Complex

Under the theme, "Bridging the gap," the Sisters Hospitallers mental health team in Malaga (Spain), and its patients, celebrated the second congress for mental health patients, a unique and pioneering event in the field, which took place on 18 and 19 June.

For the last two years, a nurse from the mental health unit, Esperanza Pozo Cambeiro, has taken this innovative idea and worked to organise the previous edition and structure this year's event. *"I wanted to focus the attention so that those with some form of mental illness played an instrumental role as participants and collaborators in the congress,"* says Esperanza.

Under the guidelines of the organising committee, consisting of some patients and a team of professionals from the Complex, the 2nd Congress was designed as a space in which anyone affected by mental illness could express their doubts, raise their concerns, learn, participate, and recount their experiences.

Thanks to the participation and communication of everyone involved, the Congress was a very enriching event.



## Hospitality without borders...



Our Lady of Guadalupe Clinic



Qualified services for the sick and needy, Christian faith, and charitable commitment in every social context. The Clinic of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Quito, Ecuador, was founded under these precepts in 1966. Initially offering only inpatient and outpatient services, the clinic now features a Palliative Care unit.

With four sisters and 113 employees, the centre is based on a humanistic and Christian approach to patient care, considered sacrosanct in its unity and dignity, welcoming everyone without distinction, particularly priority groups.

The services offered by the Our Lady of Guadalupe clinic are based on the benefits currently offered by the Institution and the needs and demands of the local community.

### ■ Hospital services:

Unidad	SUBUNIDADES	HABITACIONES	Nº DE CAMAS	Total Camas
Unidad de Intervención en Crisis	PRIMERA PLANTA	6	6	25
Psiquiatría Mujeres	SEGUNDA PLANTA	6	11	
Psiquiatría Varones	SEGUNDA PLANTA	5	8	
PALIATIVOS I	PRIMERA PLANTA	7	14	43
	SEGUNDA PLANTA	7	14	
	TERCERA PLANTA	7	15	
PALIATIVOS II	SEGUNDA PLANTA	5	11	19
	TERCERA PLANTA	4	8	
LARGA ESTANCIA	SEGUNDA PLANTA	5	11	23
	TERCERA PLANTA	6	12	
TOTAL CAMAS				110

■ **Outpatient services:** provides care in the following specialties, with an overall monthly capacity of 720 consultations.

1.- Psychiatry: there are three psychiatric professionals on staff (two full-time and one part-time) available from 8am to 3pm.

2.- Psychology: one full-time professional on staff.

■ **Emergency services:** available 24 hours/day, with qualified professionals who assess patients and subsequently decide whether to admit them to the clinic, in compliance with the established protocols according to the patients' needs.

■ **Hospital Day services:** these services include admission to the health centre for several hours to conduct diagnosis, clinical trials, scans, etc., as well as those treatments that are not covered by the outpatient clinic but do not justify a complete stay.

All services focus on advocacy, prevention, treatment, and monitoring of each case with the patient, his/her family, and the support of a multidisciplinary team of professionals.

# Social Debate Forum

## “New addictions: the dark side of technology”

On 17 June, the General Communication Committee held a debate forum wherein renowned speakers shared their impressions of “New addictions: the dark side of technology.” If you were unable to attend the live event, visit the following link to watch the proceedings online:  
<http://www.hospitalarias.org/en/index.php/discussion-forum-2015>



The forum, conceived as a venue to exchange dialogue among experts in the field, was moderated by Dr. Francisco del Olmo, Director of the Sisters Hospitaliers mental health unit in Madrid (San Miguel clinic and the Benedict Menni healthcare complex). Participants exchanged insights about addiction to new technologies (symptoms, prevention, treatment) especially among young people.

## Important dates: July, August, and September 2015

- 50th anniversary of England's Constitution as a Province (18.08.2015)
- 50th anniversary of France's Constitution as a Province (18.08.2015)
- Canonical visit of the Superior General to the Province of Madrid, from 1 September to 3 October.

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