



ORDINE OSPEDALIERO | di
SAN GIOVANNI DI DIO

General Visitation

***Living Hospitality
Hopefully and Boldly***

**Province of the Good Shepherd in North America
May 9th to June 24th, 2016**

**Momence, USA
May 21st to May 23rd, 2016**

Local Community

1. The Canonical Visitation in Sessenum 2012 – 2018

1.1. The Canonical Visitation Letter from our Prior General Jesús Etayo¹

With his circular of February 2, 2013, our Prior General announced the Canonical Visitation in the Sessenum 2012 – 2018. In his letter he outlines the objectives of the Canonical Visitation - “It is a fraternal visit, whose purpose is to gain first-hand knowledge of the real state of the Order wherever we are present”, serving primarily . . .

- to evaluate the information as objectively as possible, shedding light on the situations as they exist;
- to animate and project the future of the communities and institutions to be consistent with the “Declarations of the last General Chapter”, particularly in the lines of action and priorities for the Sessenum;
- to take the most appropriate decisions with the aim of superseding whatever limitations and constraints that may exist and improve our response in personal, community and apostolic terms;
- to enable the Visitor to inform the whole Order of the Hospitaller Family of St John of God about the lines of action and the projects being promoted by the General Curia and any other information of interest and relevance to the whole Order.

During the first Definitorium Session in Sessenum 2012 to 2018, from January 8th to 10th, 2013, Brother Rudolf Knopp was delegated with the General Visitation.

The Provincial and his Council from the Province of the Good Shepherd of North America assigned the Provincial’s Administrative Assistant, Sister Christina Marie Kazimirek, CSSF of the Felician Franciscan Sisters of North America to accompany Br. Rudolf Knopp on the General Visitation as secretary and translator.

The theme chosen for the Canonical Visitation is:

“Living Hospitality Hopefully and Boldly”

In his circular about the General Visitation, our Prior General Jesús Etayo writes:

“We have chosen this title to send out an appeal to keep faith and trust in the vocation we have received and to place our whole being and all our energies and talents, however poor and weak they may be, at the service of the mission of hospitality to which we have been sent in the manner of St John. Hospitality is at the very heart of our life and the whole of the Hospitaller Family of St John of God. It is a gift and a grace that we have received from the Spirit, it is the spirituality which drives us on day by day to become configured with the compassionate and merciful Christ of the Gospel and it is the mission to which we have been called, following the spirit St John of God our Founder. .

¹ The Circular Letter is Appendix 1

Practicing hospitality today and making it visible demands boldness. This is not the time to cast backward glances, to be paralyzed by the difficulties we encounter at every level or fall into a passive attitude, which is typical of those who live with little hope and without energy. On the contrary, it is a time to devote the whole of our being, and all our energies to fostering hospitality, and to do so boldly. “

1.2. Visitation of the Local Community in Momence

The Visitation began officially on Saturday May 21, 2016 after the celebration of the Mass, in the chapel of the brothers' home. The Visitor briefly gave an outline of what the visitation is all about. The opening remarks are attached as Appendix 2.

With a concluding community meeting held on Monday May 23, 2016, the Visitation came to close. During the concluding community meeting, the Visitor shared with the brothers that the report of the Visitation will be available to them at a later date.

The members of the Momence Local Community are as follows:

Brother Alphonsus Brown	Prior, Member of the Board of Good Shepherd Manor
Brother Charles Pratt	Provides assistance in the kitchen of Good Shepherd Manor
Brother Joseph Daly	Retired

The Visitor conducted a personal interview with each individual brother.

Regarding the Local Community books², it is noted as follows:

- a Book of the Dead according to the General Statues, Article 45 is available in the Provincial Directory. There could be an extension of this information available in the Local Community chapel
- a Book of Chronicles, according to the General Statues 150 is not yet available. It is important to keep a historical record of events for this Local Community

² - book on the members of the local convent (transfer book General Statutes 150, of the General Curia 141)
- book of the dead, Article 45 of the General Statues, " Each province should have on display a Book of the Dead, in which the name, age, years of profession, along with ensuring that the information is sent to the proper offices of the diocese, some significant comments on the Brother, Prior Generals and General Councilor's need to be recorded
- anniversary of death needs to be recorded and referred to
- a collection of the minutes of regular local community meetings and provincial chapters needs to be kept according to General Statutes 150
- the book of Chronicles are to record the significant events of the local community, whether it is a community or apostolic work, according to General Statutes 150
- the financial books of the local home according to General Statutes 161 and 164

Attention needs to be given to the required Masses³ of the Order to be celebrated and an updated record of Masses celebrated by who, when, and why needs to be implemented.

There are various displays of art work displayed throughout the local home of the Brothers. The art works are of significant value. Some can also be of significant value to the history of the Local Home and the Order. These are to be archived, as a requirement of the Holy See. This should be done until the Provincial Chapter of 2018 in a format approved by the Provincial.

The Brothers should not be concerned about the comments made on the prescribed books required in each Local Community. This is something new for all the Brothers. The Province will require central record keeping. The Provincial will need to address this issue after the visitation.

With the Prior, Br. Alphonsus Brown, the Visitator visited the graves of the deceased brothers and residents of Good Shepherd Manor. The cemetery is located on the property of Good Shepherd Manor.

Due to scheduling conflicts it was not possible to arrange a visit and meeting for the Visitator and the Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, Bishop of Joliet or with Most Reverend Joseph M. Siegel, Auxiliary Bishop/Vicar General of the diocese of Joliet, Illinois.

1.3 Ministry of the Province in Momence

The Ministry Center for men who are mentally challenged is Good Shepherd Manor in Momence, Illinois, established by the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd in 1971. In 1990, the membership ratio changed to four lay members to three Brothers. Bylaws were revised in 1996. At that time membership included the Superior General of the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd as ex officio and also stated that the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd could not constitute the majority member. In 1990, the Brothers relinquished majority membership of Good Shepherd Manor, but retained three brother membership seats. Since that time, two additional membership seats have been relinquished. Brother Raphael resigned his position in 1995 and another Brother was not appointed. Brother Justin resigned his position following the fusion. Br. Alphonsus is the only one who is currently a member of the Board. Good Shepherd Manor is not a sponsored ministry of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God and does not receive Catholic identity through the Order. There is no longer any legal connection between

³ - for all deceased Brothers a Mass is to be celebrated according to General Statues 43

- every Monday commemorate, in the local community, where it is possible, during the Eucharistic celebration, the deceased Brothers, parents, staff, benefactors, honorary members, patients and the needy according to General Statues 44

- each year, in November, in all local homes, Masses are to be celebrated in memory of our deceased members, relatives, co-workers, benefactors, honorary members, the sick and the needy according to General Statues 44

Good Shepherd Manor and the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God Province of the Good Shepherd in North America.

The Visitor was invited to visit the Good Shepherd Manor. Currently, there are two brothers working at Good Shepherd Manor.

The name, Hospitaller Order, Brothers of St. John of God, Good Shepherd, and the associated symbols/logos of a pomegranate and shepherd's staff belong solely to the Order, as their official trademark. We must protect our name and trademark and should not leave it in good faith for others to use. Whenever our name or trademark is used, especially in an unapproved manner, this will always reflect back to this Province and our Order. For this reason, we must ensure full protection and copyrights to the names and trademark.

On May 23, 2016 the Visitor had a meeting with the Directors and Board Members of Good Shepherd Manor. The Visitor reminded all present that Good Shepherd Manor is not a sponsored ministry of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, and made it clear that the identity/symbols of the pomegranate, Hospitaller Order and St. John of God Brothers are the rights of the Order. They are not to be used by Good Shepherd Manor in any way, for identity or fund raising purposes. All present declared their full understanding of this but only requested that they would be allowed to keep the formal name of Good Shepherd Manor.

1.4 Finance, Corporate Affairs, Mission Advancement and Stewardship Office

The Visitor, along with Br. Justin Howson, Provincial, spent time at the main operations office of the Province, in Momenca. There was a detailed discussion with Mrs. Judy Brinkmann, Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs. The summary of this meeting will be presented to the Provincial at the concluding meeting of this Visitation.

2. Life of the Order

Regarding the spirit of the Order's Local Community, I wish to recall some statements made by our Prior General, Brother Jesús during our last General Chapter.

Our Prior General placed a significant focus about Visitation of the Order's community life. I would like to recall a few of these significant points:

- the renewal of community life in the Order based on developments from the previous Sessenniums up until the General Chapter of 2012
- the renewal of our religious life (vocation ministry, spiritual life, community life, education and training)
- during the Visitation particular attention should be placed on the renewal of the life of our Brothers as consecrated persons; ". . . we have a lot of material and documents

which may be helpful to us, but first of all it is necessary that we have hope and trust in the Lord of the harvest so that we go with willingness to risk new ways of vocation ministry and that we give witness of our life as Brothers, to be of mercy and joyful and faithful⁴“

Two factors from the theme of “Religious Life“, from the perspective of the past 68th General Chapter in Fatima, are particularly important:

- The renewal process is ongoing and the focus needs to be on the spiritual life of the Brothers⁵
- There should be workshops and meetings organized to help the Brothers understand the latest documents from the Order regarding on-going formation⁶.

The renewal process does not mean for the Brothers to be focused on the daily schedule or the wearing of the Habit. It is to be an ongoing reflection of our lifestyle, whether we are living authentically or not. Reflecting on our lifestyle, we can be reminded of the words of Pope Francis „Being Christian is not just obeying orders but means being in Christ, thinking like him, acting like him, loving like him; it means letting him take possession of our life and change it, transform it and free it from the darkness of evil and sin.⁷“

These considerations should help you to focus your community meetings on our own religious life, but also to see the greater picture on the provincial and general level. These issues should always be part of our life and focus.

2.1. The Local Community

It is a pleasure to see that all the Brothers of this Local Community feel comfortable living together. They show great respect for each other, trying to accept the particular personality of their confrere the best way they can. Whenever there has been a transfer request it is for ministry purposes, not a change in community life. Old age brings about a variety of limitations and changes to a Brother’s health. It is not easily accepted by older Brothers the offer of advice and help from his Local Community. It is essential for older Brothers to accept and realize that recommendations from the Prior are to ensure a better lifestyle and not to take them as being patronizing.

It is a challenge for this Local Community to accept the personality of the priest, Father Wolf VK Werling, Pastoral Care Chaplain for Good Shepherd Manor, who currently lives with them. The Brothers understand how Brother Mathias Barrett always accepted priests with difficulties.

⁴ The Circular Letter is Appendix 1

⁵ Special requirements and priorities of the 68th General Chapter, IV.II basic education and training, 29

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⁷ April 10, 2013, General Audience, Pope Francis

The daily schedule allows for common prayer, common meals and communication. There is a good sense of togetherness of the Brothers here. There is ample time for private time for each Brother. The Brothers strive to have a good spiritual life.

The spiritual life is especially important for us as religious. It should not be neglected due to worries and other distractions in life. Each Brother needs a spiritual director. The annual retreat should not be viewed as a chore to be completed by the Brother, but an opportunity of personal spiritual renewal. It is of benefit to break away from the daily routine and allow time for God to be more present in the life of the brother.

Considering the nature of the daily community life, it is seen that there are some challenges in keeping a routine of regular community meetings. It is then important for the Prior to make a greater effort to ensure that these regular community meetings occur as a time to share information, spend time together in shared prayer and reflection and to make decisions and plans all together as a Local Community.

In light of the separation of Good Shepherd Manor ministry from the Order, it is important to review the living situation of the Local Community. The Visitor, outlining practical reasons of this separation, encourages the Brothers to look into seeking appropriate living arrangements in a house that would be purchased or rented, in Momence but on a property other than that of Good Shepherd Manor. It is important to review the points outlined in 1.2

Through the service provided at Good Shepherd Manor, many vulnerable people are cared for. Full attention must be focused on the safeguarding of these vulnerable people to prevent abuse and assaults. We, as religious must never relax from the sensitivity of this issue. This applies always in our part of the services and in the local community when inviting guests to stay with us. The regulatory requirements as put forth by our Order and the Church of the Association of Religious in the USA on sexuality and abuse must always be strictly observed.

2.2. The Local Home in the structure of the Province

The Brothers feel they are kept well informed by their Provincial about matters in the Province and the Order as a whole. However, it is important to note that there is not only the responsibility of the information being sent to all the Brothers but each Brother must fulfill their personal responsibility and obligation to review all correspondence that they receive.

It is now more of a reality to have smaller local communities in a Province where the community life together is more important. The upcoming Provincial Retreat / Assembly / Hospitality Workshop for two weeks in June is a very welcomed event for the Brothers, since in the past they usually made arrangements for their own annual retreat.

From the perspective of the General Curia, community life is becoming increasingly important at the Provincial level, since the Local Communities are invariably smaller now than in the past. To ensure positive Local Community life is certainly a challenge for the Provincial and his council.

The sense of unity as a Province is certainly one of the supporting elements for the future of the Province. For some Brothers this is difficult to understand and accept because they think in terms of their Local Community and their own ministry. This is a challenge to change as individual Brothers and a Local Community but it will be a challenge for the Provincial and his council.

2.3. Vocations

During our last General Chapter there was a serious focus on our Order's vocation ministry. It was stated: ". . . it shall be brought forcefully to focus specifically on the nature of the vocation of a Brother, mainly, to show others our life of hospitality while being dedicated to serving the poor and sick . . ." ⁸

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life published in 2015 the document on „ Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church“ Reviewing this document individually and in our local community setting, it can provide suggestions and ongoing formation for each Brother.

Vocation ministry is not the task of one individual Brother, but the task of all in the local community to share the credible testimony of the life of the Brothers in community. This is a ministry that is not to be forgotten. One needs to ask if we give witness to the joy of our vocation to others. Even in a Local Community where the Brothers are at the average of maturity, they still need to consider how they can contribute to the promotion of vocations to the Order. There are a few vocations out there but they are worth our effort to recognize and nurture to the possibility of joining our Order.

2.5. Finances of the Local Community

The Provincial Curia operates under a central finance model for all financial matters related to the Order, whether it is the Provincial Curia or the Local Communities.

Stipend compensation is received in a Provincial bank account with the Local Communities submitting annual budgets for local living expenses to be approved by the Provincial Curia. Provincial budgets are approved for Canada, United States, England and Haiti. These budgets include administrative expenses for the Province plus insurance expenses (property, liability, vehicles, and healthcare), property taxes (city/state), property

⁸ Special requirements and priorities of the 68th General Chapter, IV.I Vocation Ministry, 23

maintenance, vehicle purchase and repairs, renovations/repairs to the local community homes.

2.6. The Local Community and its Roots in the Apostolate

Two of the Brothers of the Local Community work full time at Good Shepherd Manor. They feel very connected to the service and life of the residents which is a very positive witness. However, there still needs to be a break from the close connections to ensure that the Local Community is able to step back and look at what is happening objectively.

2.7. The Local Community and its Relationships

World Wide Order

It was a major step for you, the former Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd to join the Hospitaller Order. It is with great admiration to commend your willingness, when it can be witnessed around the Order the challenges some Brothers have when the situation of merging provinces arises. You have openly accepted the change in your future but certainly not without some sacrifices.

In conversations I have learnt how you recognize in one another the charism of the Hospitaller Order, which previously you viewed as the legacy of Brother Matthias Barrett, and how it actually comes from his time with the Hospitaller Order. As time goes on each of the Brothers discover more commonality of the two founders. This is a great testimony to your cooperation and acceptance to be part of our Order.

We know that it is not for all Brothers equally easy to work on the new identity.

Parish

The Local Community maintains a minimal contact with the local parish of St. Patrick's. Some of the Brothers attend the Sunday liturgy occasionally. There are times where the Brothers and the pastor share invitations to spend time together for certain occasions.

Other Religious Communities in Momence

There is really no contact with other religious communities in the Momence area, nor any sort of official meetings or get-togethers due to the fact that there are no other communities in the area.

3. Final Word

First of all, Br. Justin Howson, OH the Provincial deserves my sincerest thanks for the preparation and organization for this General Visitation. This includes the many beneficial discussions we had in advance.

I extend special blessings of thanks and praise to Brother Alphonsus Brown for the warm hospitality. To the Brothers I offer my most appreciative thanks for their cordial and fraternal welcome and for the open discussion atmosphere, which gave me a great glimpse into the life of the Brothers here in Momence and the North American Province of the Order. This was a very rewarding experience for me. I also offer my deepest thanks for the beautiful Historical and Architectural boat cruise on the Sunday of downtown Chicago.

Thank you for the way each of continues to live out your religious vocation, convincingly, in your daily efforts. In today's times of the upheaval in our Church and society, this is not an easy task, but presents many challenges. You choose not only to be responsible in your daily witness of your vows but also to follow the inspiration of our Holy Father Pope Francis.

I offer sincere thanks to Sister Christina Marie Kazimirek in not only providing the necessary secretarial duties for this report but as an interpreter during the Visitation.

I'll close with a big THANK YOU for sharing fraternity with all of you. It has been a great pleasure! I truly felt at home with you.

Momence, May 23, 2016

**Brother Rudolf Knopp, OH
General Councilor**

Appendices:

- 1 Circular Letter of Prior General Jesús Etayo, February 2, 2013, announcement of the General Visitation
- 2 Opening Remarks as given by Br. Rudolf Knopp

Distribution:

1. General Curia
2. Br. Justin Howson, OH - Provincial
3. Good Shepherd Local Community