



ORDINE OSPEDALIERO | di
SAN GIOVANNI DI DIO

Canonical

General Visitation of the Province of the Good Shepherd in North America
May 9, 2016 to June 24, 2016

**Official Opening Remarks for the Visitation of the
Local Community and Ministries in
Momence, Illinois, USA
May 21, 2016**

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Dear Brothers,

For you Brothers this is a new experience that you are having a General Visitation of your community life and various ministries, conducted by me. Naturally, you must be wondering and asking yourselves:

What will this Visitation be about?

How will it affect me and my daily community life?

How will it affect me in my ministry?

What is going to happen and what is going change?

That you may feel like this is completely understandable. At this time in our Order, a Visitation is not to give a sense that the General Curia Visitor will have control, but it is to be viewed and experienced as a fraternal meeting. Brother to Brother.

What will be the situation here? Is the General Curia correct with their knowledge and assessment of us? How can the General Curia and the members of this Province work together better to continue the mission of our ministries? What topics, issues and questions do you brothers have about your lives together in community and ministry?

In the concluding report of this Visitation, I will state what are the priorities desired by this local community, that you all believe will renew and strengthen your community life together, so that the various apostolates will continue to respond to the needs of the poor that we serve.

But before we get into the heart of this Visitation, I wish to convey to you the most cordial greetings and best wishes of our Prior General Jesús, your Brothers at the General Curia, along with all the Co-Workers. Of course we will be remembered in their daily prayers and celebrations of Mass.

Our Prior General Jesús reflected upon a statement from Pope Francis when he wrote his letter to our entire Order about the Visitation¹. The following three core points of a Canonical Visitation are defined as follows:

- The renewal of the life of the Order, in continuity with the previous Sexennium of the Hospitaller Family of St. John of God in accordance with the 2012 General Chapter
- Updating and keeping alive the Charism and the Mission of the Order (Charismatic Management, Pastoral, Bioethics, Schools of Hospitality)
- the renewal of the spiritual and fraternal life of the Brothers, including the merger with the former Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd

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As for the more formal considerations for the General Visitation, our Prior General wrote in his circular letter that we have plenty of material and documents to remind us of the ideal of our religious life and apostolates. We need to also have confidence and hope in the Lord of the harvest and be bold in Vocations Ministry, adopting new forms and methods, particularly by visibly demonstrating our joyful witness to our vocation and our Hospitaller life.

Now, I extend a warm invitation to each of you to have an open mind and heart during this Visitation. It is not for me, at this time, to give answers, especially what you think you want to hear. I am here to listen, in total openness, with compassion, Brother to Brother, about your daily lives, struggles and joys and what you believe the future holds for you individually and communally.

We ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and inspiration during this Visitation.

We ask our Holy Father of our Order, St John of God for his accompanying intercession.

And we keep the word of Brother Mathias Barrett before our eyes: "Brother, keep it simple"

¹ Prior General Jesús Etayo, Circular Letter, February 2, 2013