



Christmas Bells

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



*"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

*And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

*Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

*Then from each black accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

*It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

*And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

We hope that you enjoy this issue of the Hospitaller. As an interactive publication, we welcome any comments or suggestions regarding the newsletter, and would be delighted to include on the Hospitaller mailing list, additional names and addresses of friends, family or colleagues. If at any time your details change or you wish to have your name removed from the Hospitaller mailing list, please do let us know.

We acknowledge sincere appreciation to all those who continue to support our work. We will always be grateful for financial support and voluntary help, which ensures the continuation and extension of the Hospitaller mission.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Brother John Collins, OH & Karen Gilroy

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hospitaller

Newsletter of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God and Saint John of God Care Services

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Let us be Heralds of Goodwill this Christmas

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours."
(Luke 2:14)

The holy season of Christmas is traditionally a time of goodwill. Indeed, in older translations of the New Testament the above scriptural passage reads "peace, goodwill among people." The "Concise Oxford Dictionary" describes goodwill as "kindly feeling" and kindly feeling is the basis of much that is good in human behaviour. Conversely the absence of kindly feeling leads to much that is negative in the human condition. Can we doubt that the Good Samaritan in Saint Luke's Gospel was principally motivated by kindly feeling or that the thousands of aid workers who, in modern times, do so much to relieve suffering in the wake of natural and manmade disasters throughout the world are similarly inspired? Anger, jealousy, resentment, spite, hatred and violence cannot endure in the presence of goodwill.

John of God was undoubtedly a man of goodwill. This virtue is demonstrated in an incident recorded in "The Life of Saint

John of God" (1585) by Francisco De Castro. De Castro tells us that some people who misinterpreted John's motives reported to Archbishop Pedro Guerrero that John's hospital was full of malingering men and scheming woman who were exploiting John's hospitality. When the Archbishop challenged John

about this he replied, "My Father, it is I alone who am the wicked, incorrigible and useless one. I alone deserve to be thrown out of God's house. Those poor people staying at the hospital are good and I know of no vice in them. There is no reason to throw the abandoned and afflicted out of their house, for God lets His sun shine on both good and evil." The Archbishop was persuaded by John's obvious goodwill towards the poor and the sick, and allowed him to continue to run his hospital as he saw fit.

Goodwill is a manifestation of love. The capacity for love is what distinguishes human beings from other creatures. Like love, goodwill is a virtue to be practiced on a daily basis. I will risk stating the obvious when I say that like a puppy, goodwill is not just for Christmas.

I take this opportunity of wishing you, and all who are dear to you, a happy and blessed Christmas.

Brother John Martin, OH,
Provincial and
Chief Executive



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Congress of Young Hospitallers
Brother John Stretton represents the Province in Granada

Appointment of new Assistant Chief Executives
Mike Parr and Anne Rowlands join the Care Services Team

Vocations
Brother Michael Newman looks at the future of the Brothers

Ethics and Philosophy of Emerging Technologies

The European Association of Centres of Medical Ethics held its annual conference in Barcelona in August 2005. It was very well supported and delegates and contributors attended from all over the world. Brother Stanislaus Neild and I represented the Order in Great Britain. Numerous learned papers were presented at the conference, a number of which were of particular interest to those of us concerned with the Church's approach to the moral and ethical issues associated with the rapid development of medical technologies. These are areas in which the Order has for a number of years been taking a very active interest. Ethics and bioethics are important themes of the "Charter of Hospitality" (1999) which affirms the identity of the Order in the 21st century.

Among the distinguished contributors was Professor Ruth Chadwick of the University of Lancaster. In her paper "Therapy, Enhancement and Improvement" she focused on the inevitability of the development of genetic enhancement technologies. By this she meant "any technology that directly alters the expression of genes that are already present in humans, or that involves the addition of genes that have not previously appeared ... for the purpose of human, physical, intellectual, psychological or moral improvement", for example technologies aimed at extending the human life span. She made the distinction between therapy employed to

achieve such improvement, and enhancement which she described as being "beyond therapy" and argued that the important issue is not the distinction between therapy and enhancement but whether enhancement necessarily counts as improvement. For Professor Chadwick this would be dependent on context and purposes. She concluded that enhancement is only morally permissible under certain conditions and that priority should be given to enhancements that reduce rather than increase existing inequalities. While Professor Chadwick's position is clearly a relativist one, she does recognise the importance of moral agency and the need to prioritise the reduction of inequality.

Another important contribution was made by Professor Paul Schotmans of the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium in his paper "Personalism as an Ethical Model for Coping with the Challenges of Medical Technology". For Professor Schotmans "personalism" focuses on each human person as a unique and original entity. He perceives that this focus creates an ethical framework for medical education, medical practice and medical decision-making. The promotion of the humanly desirable provides three challenges for medicine: the creation of the medical profession as a "fully relational commitment"; the creative development of a situation of full responsibility for the patient in all of that person's dimensions, and relationships and creative participation in a good society, where justice reigns. Professor

Schotmans concluded that such an approach aspires to do justice to sick, elderly and dependent people, a position with which no Hospitaller is likely to argue.

For me the most disturbing observation of the conference came in a short paper entitled "Dutch Euthanasia, Palliative Care and Technology" which was presented by a young contributor, Ms R Spoelstra. She reminded us that in 2002 the Netherlands became the first country in the world to legalise the practice of euthanasia, but I was surprised to learn that in the Netherlands, one of Europe's most affluent and developed countries, palliative care "remains comparatively undeveloped." Indeed Ms Spoelstra could find no literature relating to palliative care in the Netherlands prior to 1988. Food for thought!

Brother John Collins, OH



The first international congress of young Hospitallers involving Brothers and co-workers took place at the birthplace of our Order, the City of Granada in Spain, between 7th and 13th November 2005. Several hundred delegates attended from the fifty countries around the world in which the Order is represented. The delegation from Great Britain consisted of Brother John Stretton, who is now based in Hertfordshire, Natasha Murray also from Hertfordshire and Michael Magennis who works in the Order's services in West Yorkshire.

The congress opened with a PowerPoint presentation on the work of all the Provinces around the world. This was no small feat as the apostolate of the Order continues to grow rapidly. Brother Pascal Piles, our Prior General, talked about the challenges that are facing the Order today. He stressed that though within our globalised world there are problems, there is also hope and we are called to look to the future with hope. He went on to say the work the Order carries out in its health, social care and pastoral centres are of God and that we who work in and direct these services are in God's hands at all times. With this in mind we must reflect on the kind of future we want to build in partnership with the people we serve. In doing this we must live a life of transparent integrity in accordance with the challenges inherent in the core values of the Order - compassion, hospitality, justice, respect and trust. Brother Brian O'Donnell from Australia, a former Prior General, presented a paper which looked at Saint John of God and the Order he founded from an historical perspective. From the past we were brought into the present with a stark reminder of the present day and of the work of hospitality being undertaken in Spain and USA with

Congress of Young Hospitallers

people who are suffering from chemical dependency and Aids. This work is undertaken in the manner of Saint John of God, without judgement but with love, seeing Christ in people who suffer. Other areas covered in the course of the congress included Saint John of God as man of action, man of conviction and man of faith, challenges facing young Hospitallers in the third millennium, and Brothers and co-workers united in the cause of our mission of hospitality.

A highlight of the congress was a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saint John of God, which enabled us to visit all of the sites in and around Granada that figured significantly in our holy founder's life and mission. Although tiring, this was a very moving experience for all of us.

I found the whole congress to be inspirational. It really brought home to me the vital link that exists between Brothers and co-workers, a link and a relationship which makes possible the work of the Order throughout the world today. It also brought home to me the reality of what we describe as the Hospitaller family of Saint John of God, and it made me proud to be a member of that family.

Brother John Stretton, OH



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Christmas in terms of Hospitality



CHRISTMAS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MARGINALISATION

The Order has many Centres with a specifically social vocation: the homeless are taken in during the year and also during the Christmas period; people struggling to liberate themselves from different forms of addiction during the year, continue to do so over Christmas; the elderly, AIDS sufferers, and the sick undergoing palliative care, immigrants, etc. are all cared for by our Co-workers and our Brothers.

The Christmas atmosphere, the birth of Jesus as our Saviour, must help us all to plan our lives. Despite the difficulties, I believe it is fairly easy if we realise the difficulties faced by those who are trying to become reintegrated into the society of which they are a marginalised group. It involves competitive effort and it is not easy for anyone wishing to be rehabilitated. We trust that at this Christmastide we shall try to create the conditions that will help us in the future.

CHRISTMAS IN OUR SOCIETY

For everyone, Christmas must be an opportunity to take stock of ourselves. We must ensure that we are able to enhance our humanity with values that dignify it. We may belong to different cultures and practise different faiths: let us view this diversity as a source of wealth. What we cannot do is to foster or permit anything that destroys us as persons, which enslaves us, which makes others suffer because of the differences between us or because a culture of death, rather than of life has become embedded in so many things today.

CHRISTMAS IN OUR CHURCH

I think the Christmas should be an opportunity for the Church to revitalise herself. In our life of faith there are many moments in which to do this, but in the liturgical year this is very special time that is full of feeling and gentleness which should help us all, as Catholics, to review our lives, and then act in consequence.

The birth of Jesus fulfilled the promise made to the people of Israel as the expression of the salvation which God our Father willed for his People and for all humanity. Two thousand years have passed

since that event: how can we continue the saving work of Jesus of Nazareth in our world?

We are passing through a difficult moment in history. Catholics are being urged to love the Church, to bear witness to her in their lives. We are being called to help the Church in a world that is fraught with tension. We must be faithful to the message of Jesus Christ, whose coming we are now celebrating. We have to think a great deal to see which principles to apply, and how to act in order to do it.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

There are two special reasons this year for placing emphasis on this message. The first is the title itself "Christmas in terms of hospitality." For all of us - Brothers, Co-workers, the sick and those in need - hospitality has a major impact on our lives. Because some of us are called to practise it, and others to benefit from it, even though hospitality benefits us all: "Brothers, do good to yourselves", as St John of God used to say. May all of us truly know how to be hospitallers this Christmas, and always.

The second reason is that this is the twelfth occasion I have had to send a Christmas message, and it will be the last in this Sexennium. I thank God that I have been able to provide this service to the Order for almost twelve years as its General. I have not always managed it, but in all I have done, my intention has always been to make John of God present. And it is in a special way, with St John of God and with the General Council, that I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

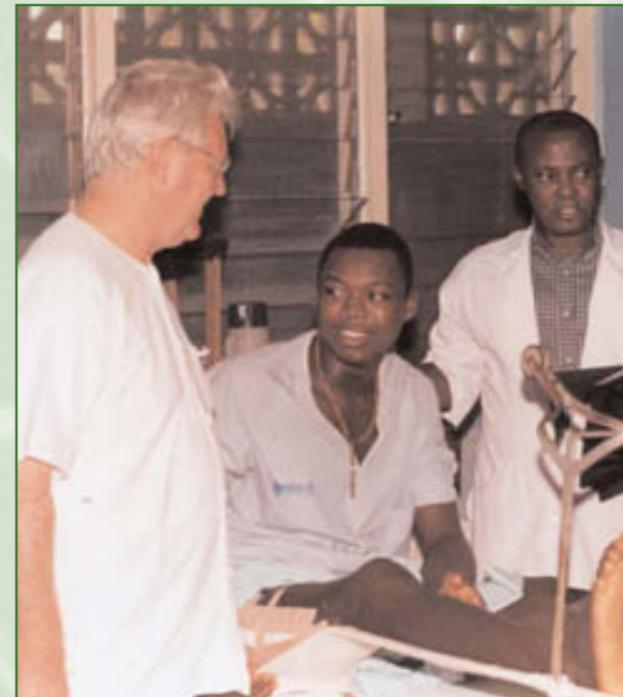
May we all enjoy celebrating the presence of Emmanuel among us.



Brother John O'Neill returns from Africa

After twenty years of working in Africa, Brother John O'Neill has returned to our Province. He is living in the Community of Casa Venegas at Neilston, Scotland.

Brother John worked in Holy Family Centre in Monze in Zambia, in Malawi and then worked at St Joseph's Hospital in Koforidua, Ghana.



Saint John of God Care Services

FOCUS ON ENFIELD

WE HAVE A TOTAL OF 90 PEOPLE WHO USE THE SERVICES IN ENFIELD, WHO ARE SUPPORTED BY 41 MEMBERS OF STAFF.

SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

The Supported Living Services provide people with a home of their own and the support they require to sustain it. The service supports people who have a learning disability or a mental health issue and care is tailored to meet each person's needs. Support provided by the staff teams includes help with housing and money issues, living skills and recreational opportunities.



AUTISM SERVICE

This service provides sessional support people who are experiencing a range of autistic spectrum disabilities and have high care needs. The service offers a comprehensive and structured programme of activities both within the centre and within the local community. The project provides support for people leaving full-time education or other day-care provision.

A workshop-based programme and community activity programme are in place to provide a holistic service tailored to the needs of each person.

SAINT JOHN OF GOD RESOURCE CENTRE

The Centre provides a day service to people with moderate to profound learning disabilities. A wide variety of activities are accessed, facilitated and supported by the staff.

Many of the people who attend the Centre come with a history of care within an institutionalised setting and for many, this is their first experience of being able to, or asked, to undertake tasks that are completely foreign to them. The following are some the activities incorporated into sessions:

- Social and community skills
- Literacy and numeracy
- Personal care
- Music and movement
- Massage and aromatherapy
- Domestic skills



Saint John of God Care Services

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

TWO NEW ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVES JOIN

We are delighted to announce the appointments of Mike Parr as Assistant Chief Executive (Organisational Strategy) and Anne Rowlands as Assistant Chief Executive (Operational Services). Mike and Anne commenced their appointments on 24 October 2005.

These appointments were part of an internal re-structuring within Saint John of God Care Services, which also included restructuring how the services are managed geographically. A move to three regions from the current six areas took effect on 1 December 2005: Northern Region (formerly North East Area and North Yorkshire Area).

Central Region (formerly West Yorkshire Area).

Southern Region (formerly London Area and Hertfordshire Area).



ANNE ROWLANDS

Anne comes with a wealth of experience in housing and support, mostly from within the housing association and voluntary sector. She

has worked for a number of specialist housing providers including Durham Aged Mineworkers Homes (elderly people), New Era Housing (learning disability), Renaissance Housing (learning disability) and most recently was a Regional Manager for Mencap.

From Anne, "I am looking forward to the new role and using my experience to contribute towards the further development of the charity and to improving still more the quality of the service offered to the people who use the services. I have a great affinity with the values of the organisation. This is a challenging and exciting time for organisations working with vulnerable people and I look forward to meeting those challenges."



MIKE PARR

I was born and bred in Wigan, and am a keen supporter of Wigan Rugby League club. Football fans may wonder if I have been tempted to switch allegiance to Wigan Athletic Football Club, who are having a remarkable first season in the Premiership, but despite the once-invincible rugby team having a very poor season I have remained loyal! Other interests currently include outdoor pursuits such as climbing, hill walking, camping, cycling and recently, diving, whilst more sedate hobbies include the theatre, perusing record and hardware shops and curries!

My previous role was as Executive Director of a Groundwork Trust – there are about 50 of these environmental charities across England and Wales – and I worked there for about five years. The Trust works with communities across Lancashire to improve their local environment, with businesses to improve their environmental practices, with children to improve environmental awareness and with various special needs support groups to develop environmental projects for confidence building, improving social skills and promoting healthy lifestyles amongst their service users. We recently planted the largest area of newly created woodland in the North West (90 hectares) resulting in, amongst other things, the protection of rare water vole habitat!

Prior to that, I worked for a Merseyside housing association as an area manager, dealing with homelessness projects, foyer schemes, supported housing and elderly residential schemes. During the late 1980's – early 1990's I was closely involved with the Care in the Community programme, managing the rehousing and support of former patients of two large psychiatric hospitals which closed down as part of the programme.

My new role as Assistant Chief Executive will mean working as part of the newly entitled Chief Executive's Office, lead by Brother John Martin as CEO and alongside Anne Rowlands. I will be responsible for the Finance, Human Resources, ICT, Promotions & Publicity and Property Services departments, as well as assisting Brother John in his work with the Trustees. I am also project managing the move from Blackwellgate and Duke Street into the new Morton Park premises, which we hope to complete some time early in the New Year. Overall, my role will be to ensure that our organisation is structured and equipped to deliver a high level of care and support, and ensuring that our values of hospitality, compassion, trust, justice and respect are properly reflected throughout Saint John of God Care Services.

NEW ADDRESS FOR SAINT JOHN OF GOD CARE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

In the New Year, the Central Administration will relocate to purpose-built office accommodation at Morton Park on the outskirts of Darlington. The Northern Regional Administration will also be located in the same premises.

The office will also accommodate members of the Provincial Administration Team.

The address will be:
Saint Bede's House,
Morton Park, Darlington,
Co Durham,
DL1 4NZ

The telephone numbers remain the same:
Tel: 01325 373700
Fax: 01325 373708
Email: enquiries@sjogcareservices.org.uk

NEW NURSING HOMES IN BRADFORD OFFICIALLY OPENED

On Wednesday 12 October 2005 the official opening took place of Saint John of God Care Services' newly commissioned nursing services at Cuthbert's Close Queensbury, Bradford. The Very Reverend Brother Donatus Forkan, OH, Vicar General of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God, performed the ceremony.

The two new four-bed nursing homes provide 24-hour nursing care and support for people with physical and learning disabilities.

This new development takes the number of Saint John of God Care Services' nursing homes in the Queensbury area to four. In the Thornton and Clayton areas of Bradford there are a further seven nursing homes, all of which are purpose-built to a high specification and offer quality accommodation and a high standard of nursing care. The atmosphere is relaxed and homely, and people living there are, as far as possible, encouraged and enabled to make their own choices in all aspects of their lives.

From Brother John Martin, OH: "The Charity is committed to the continual improvement in the services we provide for disabled people. Together with Bradford District NHS Care Trust we have been able to establish these state-of-the-art services and they are another example of our close and fruitful partnership, which has been established for 15 years."



Canonical Visitation

At the beginning of October, Brother Donatus Forkan, Vicar General of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God visited the Province to carry out the canonical visitation on behalf of Brother Pascual Piles, the Prior General, who was at that time in Columbia, South America. The Prior General is obliged, during his six-year term of office, to make one official visit to each of the Brothers' communities within the Order.

The Order is represented in 50 countries, has Brothers of over 60 nationalities and there are more than 200 communities worldwide, so the Prior General has colleagues like Brother Donatus to help him. There are seven members of the General Government of the Order, which

is based in Rome: the General, six Counsellors and the General Secretary. In the Community in which Brother Donatus lives in Rome there are a total of eighteen Brothers, originating from

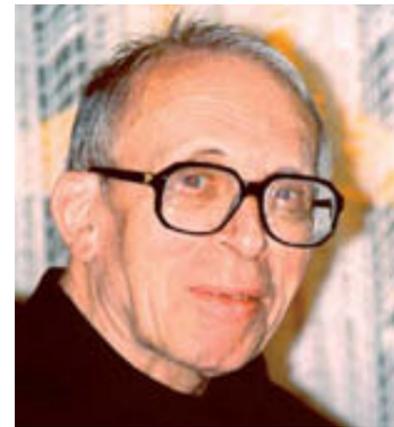


Brother Donatus Forkan, OH

many different countries. Italian is their common language.

During his two week stay, he visited all of the areas and many of the services. In an address to the Central Administration Team, Brother Donatus explained that the mission of the Order is to serve people with particular needs, and the followers of Saint John of God, the Brothers, must be prepared to make personal sacrifices in order to serve these people. Brother Donatus then gave a brief history of Saint John of God and how he set up the movement in just twelve years, from the establishment of his first hospital in Granada, Spain. Now, approximately 60,000 a day, (more than 20 million a year) receive care from approximately 50,000 staff who continue the work of the Saint John of God today.

Brother Fortunatus Thanhäuser



IT IS WITH REGRET THAT WE ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF BROTHER FORTUNATUS THANHÄUSER WHO DIED ON 21 NOVEMBER 2005 IN INDIA. WHAT FOLLOWS IS A REFLECTION ON HIS LIFE BY THE PRIOR GENERAL OF THE ORDER, BROTHER PASCUAL PILES.

Last week we heard that Brother Fortunatus Thanhäuser was critically ill, even though we were later assured that he had improved.

On 21 November, we have received the news of his death. It was the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the temple. It was also the 69th anniversary of his First Profession. Our Lord willed that 69 years after his First Profession as a Brother of Saint John of God, he should make his presentation in heaven, in the presence of the Lord, and to hear from Him the beautiful words of the Bible. "come into home prepared for you from the foundation of the world".

As everyone knows, Brother Fortunatus Thanhäuser belonged to the former Province of Silesia, subsequently Rhineland, and is today incardinated into the Province of India. He was one of the first Brothers who founded our mission at Kattappana in India in 1970, and was also the founder of the Sisters of Charity of Saint John of God, strongly supported by Brother Prakash Massappallil in 1981.

Throughout the whole of his life, and above all during the time that he was a missionary in India, he set us all an example of a great Brother, identifying strongly with our Founder, close to the poor and needy for whom he had a special love and whom he helped as much as he could, with a great sensitivity towards those who suffer, simple in his ways in his manners, and a very prayerful man.

His spirit will remain forever in our Order, in the Province of St Thomas the Apostle in India, and in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint John of God.

We feel his loss. We thank our Lord for the testimony of his life. We shall always remember him, above all those of us who have been given the opportunity to know him and to live with him.

Let us pray for his soul when we celebrate the Eucharist, and in our Community and personal prayers. May Our Lord give us all strength, and above all accompany and support the Brothers in India and the Sisters of Charity of Saint John of God at this particular time.

Brother Fortunatus is now rejoicing in the presence of the Risen Lord!

Brother Pascual Piles, OH
Prior General

RE-DEPLOYMENT OF THE BROTHERS

The Provincial Definitory continually reviews the deployment of Brothers to ensure that the Order's mission of hospitality is served as effectively as possible. The presence of Brothers in each of our administrative regions, working in partnership with our lay co-workers does, we believe, play a central part in the delivery of services in the manner of Saint John of God. We also believe that it is the existence of this partnership that makes the nature and quality of these services unique. Because of the relatively small

number of Brothers available, changes take place rather more frequently than we might otherwise choose. The following changes are part of the continuing process of review:

Brother Michael Newman will transfer to Saint John of God Community, Halifax.

Brother Michael Francis will transfer to Saint Raphael's Community, Welwyn Garden City.

Brother John O'Neill will transfer to Saint John of God Community, Neilston, Scotland.

Brother John Stretton will transfer to our Formation House, Saint Raphael's Community, Welwyn Garden City.

These moves will have taken place by the 1st December 2005, and I would like to express my thanks to each of the Brothers who are moving for their understanding and co-operation in the spirit of their call to hospitality.



Left to right: Brother Michael Newman; Brother Michael Francis; Brother John O'Neill; Brother John Stretton



At the time of going to print, we received the news that Brother John Collins has decided to leave the Order. We share this news with you, as you will have seen his articles and photos frequently in the Hospitaller newsletter and our Annual Review, for which he was Editor. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to John for his dedication to the Order's mission of Hospitality over the last six years and wish him all the very best for the future.

Brother John Martin, OH

Want more information?

If you would like to know more about the Brothers and their work, you can visit our website at:

www.hospitaller.org.uk



VOCATIONS

The future for the Brothers of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God

LIMITING YOUR CHALLENGES IS A GREAT WAY TO ACHIEVE CERTAINTY BUT CHALLENGING YOUR LIMITS IS A CERTAIN WAY TO ACHIEVE GREATNESS



Vocations: every Christian has a vocation. Through our baptism we are called to be kingdom people. The word vocation is from the Latin and it means God's call. Baptism makes each one, priest, prophet and king (queen too), and to do so in our own particular way. I would argue that God has no second class vocation. What is important is that we respond as best we can with the help of God's grace.

I consider my call to be a religious Brother to be as good as the married

calling, or a priestly call or as a single person. Equally it is true that there are those in specialist ministries within the Church. What is important is that the various vocations work together for the good of the kingdom.

Those who support and are interested in the Brothers of Saint John of God will have noticed that there are fewer Brothers and that the age profile is getting higher. We are fortunate that we have one junior professed Brother, but at the

moment we have no postulants or novices in our small Province.

We can take several different approaches to this real problem for the Brothers and other Religious, and those called to be priests. One is to sit back, don't worry and pray for vocations and wait. I prefer to be an active waiter. That is pray for vocations, try to live our lives as best we can, and promote and advertise our life as Brothers, and in particular as Hospitaller Brothers.. then wait!

Right: It is hoped that a reminder of our spiritual well-being beyond this life will spur a few to consider the life of a Brother of Saint John of God.

THE REWARDS OF THIS JOB ARE OUT OF THIS WORLD



THERE IS NO GREATER CHALLENGE THAN TO HAVE SOMEONE RELYING UPON YOU



NO GREATER SATISFACTION THAN TO EXCEED HIS EXPECTATIONS.

Left: A focus on the responsibilities that come with being a Brother of Saint John of God. The work we do is selfless and demanding, but ultimately, knowing that you have helped to make people's lives better is worth the effort.

As a Province we try to work with our staff and volunteers as partners in the mission of hospitality, so that the mission of Saint John of God continues even if there are no Brothers.

The Brothers' role in this mission is important and significant. All would agree with that. And so I turn to you our friends and supporters to help us promote the vocation of a Brother of Saint John of God, and of the Religious Brothers in the church.

I have produced a series of posters which I think should stimulate thoughts of thinking about being a Brother, and matching reply postcards for those who may express an interest in our way of life.

Can you help me? Pray for vocations – for more Brothers of Saint John of God. Promote our way of life by distribution of some posters and reply cards (it is best to ask permission first!)

You can reach me on: michaelnewman@thebrothers.org.uk or at my address: Genil, 27 Savile Road, Halifax, HX1 2BA and I will send you some literature.

Thank you very much!

Br Michael Newman OH
Vocation Director.



WHY GRANADA?

By Brother Brian O Donnell, OH



Everyone who is acquainted with the Order, and visitors to its houses and works, know that the iconography of the Order frequently presents a picture in which a child, whom John of God had befriended and helped, holds out to him a pomegranate and tells him that, "John of God, Granada will be your cross."

However, Francisco de Castro, John of God's first, and most reliable, biographer says nothing about this event.

A later biographer and noted Spanish historian, José María Javierre, says of the story behind the picture that, "The legend had good beginnings, for it figured no less, in the work of Spain's famous poet-playwright, Lope de Vega. Brother Dionisio Celi developed it, incorporating it in his biography of John of God. From then, the legend has occupied a privileged place amongst the amazing episodes in the life of the saint."

The story, echoing as it does the legend of Saint Christopher, owes its privileged place to its being an edifying and charming answer to the question, why did John go to Granada?

Castro gives us the answer to that question when he writes: "It seemed

to him (John) quite burdensome to be constantly going about, pack on back, up hill and down dale, from this place to that. He decided to go to Granada and settle down there".

OROPESA

John's decision to go to Granada seems a logical outcome of a process that began when he was very young and began to hear about this renowned city from the time that he arrived in Spain at the age of eight years. It seems inevitable that during his childhood and adolescence at Oropesa, around hearths and shepherds' fires, he heard frequently the story of one of Oropesa's most famous sons, Hernando de Talavera, the first Archbishop of Granada. John was 12 years old when Hernando de Talavera died and news of his death would certainly have reached a place where everyone remembered with pride their most illustrious fellow Oropesan.

The story of Hernando de Talavera combined enough elements of sex, scandal, the shortcomings of the nobility, worldly success and ecclesiastical honours to make it an irresistible yarn for telling and retelling by the peasants and gentlefolk of Oropesa.

HERNANDO DE TALAVERA

The grandfather of the first Count of Oropesa fathered a number of illegitimate children. Javierre says that: "He had them all baptised and given names that would record their origins. He sent the boys to study at Salamanca, and amongst the natural sons he fathered ... was Hernando de Talavera."

Known for his kindness and intelligence Hernando studied arts and theology in the University of Salamanca where he ended up being professor of moral philosophy. Then he entered the Jeronymites and was elected Prior of the Community at Valladolid. Queen Isabella came to know him and appointed him her personal confessor. The Queen's favour resulted in his being made Bishop of Avila. In 1476 he became a member of the Royal Council and one of most influential people in the Castilian court. He made a positive contribution to peace negotiations with Portugal thus paving the way for the taking of Granada from its Muslim rulers.

Bishop Talavera was in the Royal retinue when the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand, took possession of the keys of the city of Granada. Not surprisingly he was then appointed to set up the new Archdiocese of Granada. As

Archbishop of Granada he allowed religious freedom to the Muslim citizens. He even limited the activity of the Inquisition in his Archdiocese. Even as Bishop of Avila he had opposed the inquisitorial process. In 1492, three years before John of God was born, Talavera acted as go-between for Columbus with the Catholic Monarchs.

FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF GRANADA

Javierre tell us about Hernando de Talavera that, "As first Archbishop of Granada he attempted to harmonise the coexistence of Christians and Moors. He prudently and quietly set out a scheme to permit the Moors who remained in the kingdom to convert to Christianity according to the law imposed by the Catholic Monarchs. He searched for priests who could speak Arabic so they could instruct the Moors. He even made an effort to learn their language himself. His kindness captivated the admiration of one and all. He was a tireless preacher and encouraged the faithful to participate in the divine office translated into the Castilian language. From his own funds the Archbishop started a school to educate 30 young converted Muslim boys to study the Castilian language."

On the wall of the cloister of the Jeronymite Monastery in Granada there is a plaque that commemorates his life and achievements. A rough translation of the Spanish text on the plaque follows:

- + Member and protégé of the Alvarez family of Toledo
- + Boy chorista in the College of Talavera de la Reina
- + Professor of the University of Salamanca
- + Jeronymite monk at San Leonardo de Alba de Tormes
- + Prior of Nuestra Señora de Prado at Valladolid
- + Confessor of Queen Isabella and her Royal Councillor
- + Chief Organiser of Castile at the end of the 15th century
- + Bishop of Avila and Administrator of Salamanca
- + Promoter of the "Spanish Grammar" of Nebrija
- + Examiner of the plans of Columbus and his advocate
- + Reformer of the nobility and religious orders
- + First Archbishop of Granada
- + Holy and Wise Apostle of the converted Muslims
- + Model for the evangelisation of America
- + Opponent and, finally, victim of the Inquisition
- + Integrated man, perfect Castilian and ascetic monk

CONCLUSION

Surely John of God would have been curious to see, and maybe live in, the city that he had heard about since he was a boy. He hardly needed an apparition of a child to make him keen to go and see Granada. Nevertheless, the icon of John and the Pomegranate can represent for us in a vivid way John of God's decision to go to Granada at a particular time in his life.