WYD 2023

Sisters Hospitallers

WYD LISBON 2023

Pre-WYD

The Pre-WYD days were organised by the Sisters Hospitallers and the Brothers of St. John of God.
During these days, participants from all over the world have enjoyed moments of joy, emotion, prayer and sharing
They also discovered new places with visits to Fatima, Leiria and Idanha.
Undoubtedly an unforgettable experience that prepared the path for WYD.

#CSTJMJ
LISBON
2023

YD

Instagram
Jóvenes Hospitalarios

JMJ Lisboa 2023
Me gusta

Idanha

The visit to Idanha was a very complete day. In the morning after breakfast two buses picked up the groups from their respective centres and took us to Idanha. There we greeted each other. Then in the assembly hall the superior and the manager welcomed us.
Then a group of sick people acted out the motto of the youth day. It was very exciting.
Then at 12 o'clock the Eucharist. After Mass we had lunch in the big patio. Then there was a lot of flamenco and other dances from different places. The activities continued and at the end of the day there was a prayer vigil and the handing out of the backpacks.

Instagram
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35.365 Me gusta
¡Somos la Revolución! #JóvenesHospitalarios #JMJ
#Lisboa2023 #HermanosSanJuandeDios
#HermanosHospitalarios #Hospitalidad #Revolución

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ACOLHE-TE

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Telhal

We spent the day in Telhal, a huge property of more than 100 hectares bought by Saint Benito Menni in 1893, where they have 450 sick people, all men. They did many activities with the residents. The property has many pavilions very well cared for and equipped.

We had the Eucharist in the afternoon with 10 brother priests from many countries and the general.

The staff is very motivated and they are the ones who run everything because there are only 7 brothers and 3 applicants here. We love this place. Still retains the first pavilion open by the father. The museum is impressive. Everything about the life of St. John of God and a lot about Father Menni, as well as everything about the instruments that have been used over the years in psychiatric care in this country. They also have a large library.

The gardens with water ponds and a great variety of plants and trees are very helpful for the patients. Many of them are from the father's time. He wanted there to be a lot of greenery as a way of rehabilitation for the mentally ill as there were no appropriate medical facilities.

It was a very full day. We were all very impressed to see the patients, many of them quite deep and very young, mingling with all of us during the meal, dancing, etc.

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HOSPITALA
France
Charite
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Puedo contar contigo?
¿Puedo contar contigo?
Posso contare tu di te?
Je peux compter sur toi ?
Can I count on you?

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Leira and Fátima

In the morning, we celebrated the Eucharist in Leiria with about 20,000 young people, quite a few bishops and a large number of priests. The bishop of Leiria stressed in his homily the importance of listening to God who calls us like Samuel and to whom we must know how to answer as he did: speak, Lord, your servant is listening. She also commented on the importance of leaving behind differences of race, language and culture in order to see and treat each other as sisters. The Church, he said, is called to be a mother to all, especially the most vulnerable. And finally he commented on today's Gospel: if you do not become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. We must become children, we are there to serve others, especially the most needy.

After the Eucharist we were given food parcels in the stadium and we ate in the parks where we found space.

In the afternoon in Fatima we prayed the rosary in the chapel of the Virgin and had time to visit the different places around the basilicas. All very interesting.

CIA RELIGIOSA
TRO APOSTOLO
ASTORALE
E GIOVANILE
ELLI - ITALIA
Sisters Hospitallers
WYD
LISBON
2023
#SAN
JUAN
DEDIOS

Montemor -o- Novo

Montemor-o-novo, the village where St. John of God was born. It was the London group's turn to prepare the Mass. As there are a lot of people who know English, they helped us with the singing and guitars and it went very well.

A good number of brother priests of the Order celebrated the Mass with the Father General. In the homily, the first reading from Solomon, who asked God for wisdom and discernment, stood out. The General asked the young people: "**What do you ask God for yourself?** The second point he made was the gospel about the hidden treasure. And he also asked them: **what is your treasure?**

He developed these two points in great depth and ended by commenting on how St. John of God and St. Benedict Menni found that great treasure in their lives, the precious pearl that changed their lives and they gave themselves entirely to the following of Jesus in the service of the sick.

After the Eucharist, we gathered in 20 groups to ask two questions, each group, to the General of the Brothers and the General of the Sisters. It was an important moment to discover, through their answers, many aspects of how they live their vocation and how they see and perceive the present and the future of the order and the congregation.

We then went for lunch in an open-air restaurant under a huge awning. During the meal a folk group sang typical Portuguese songs. This was a very enjoyable moment. After lunch we were shown around the city in language groups. We visited some very interesting historical sites, ending at the church and crypt where St. John of God is believed to have been born. This was a very moving moment for the whole group. There we prayed for everyone.

At the end of the day, the sisters who had come from various countries accompanying the young people, we went to our house in Idanha where we had a dinner with sisters from all the communities in the Lisbon area to share and get to know each other. We were about 70 sisters and young novices and postulants with the general superior. It was a very fraternal meeting.

We thank God for the great experiences we lived.

Lisbon

After mass and breakfast, as it was a free day, we had time to visit the most interesting places in Lisbon. Undoubtedly, a wonderful city where every corner has its charm.

In general, these days leading up to WYD were incredible. Love, fraternity and faith were the basis of each of the activities, which made us feel so happy and excited to be able to live such an amazing experience.

World Youth Day 2023

Day 1

On the opening day of WYD we had a ceremony in the chapel on the theme: Christ the Light of the world. It was very well prepared and moving.
This was followed by a time for the different groups to ask questions prepared in advance to the two provincials of brothers and sisters. It was good.
From there we went to have something to eat and rest for a while before leaving for the inaugural Mass in a huge park in Lisbon.
It was impressive. More than a million young people filled the streets of Lisbon. The Mass was beautiful and the singing was impressive with wonderful music.
We arrived home almost midnight, it was a tiring day but it was definitely worth it.
Thank God for everything.

Day 2

We got up early and, after praying the E.S. Lectio Divina, reading Father Menni's thoughts and praying a decade of the Rosary together, we went downstairs for breakfast and went to a nearby park where they were giving catechesis and various testimonies of young people about their conversion process. Then we went to a place near the president's house where the Pope had to pass after being received by the authorities. It was very exciting to see so many young people meeting and greeting the Pope along the road leading to the nunciature.

From there we went to the City of Joy where a large number of young people were gathered. The religious congregations had set up a vocational exhibition. There were also many open-air confessionals and a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament where the Eucharist was celebrated and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed all day.

Day 3

After Lectio Divina and breakfast we had the Eucharist and a summary of the Pope's message to the bishops, priests and religious in the monastery of St. Jerome yesterday afternoon.
The Pope spoke to them that it is time to make serious decisions and he proposed three:
- pray, adore, spend a lot of time in adoration. Only from this can come enthusiasm and fidelity in love.
- solidarity, living together, within the Church, being one, unity, etc.
- rowing out into the deep, casting the nets, bringing people to Jesus. The harvest is plentiful...
In the afternoon after lunch we left for the park where the young people were going to welcome the Pope at 5.45. It was very moving. It was very exciting. They drove the Pope around the park in an open car. We could see him very close. It was a very well prepared welcome. A bishop opened the meeting. There were songs, the young people read messages to the Pope written by them.
After the reading of the Gospel of the sending of the 72 disciples, the Pope spoke about the fact that we are loved as individuals.
Pope spoke about the fact that we are individually loved by God. That for God we are unique, that we are not a number and that he loves us as we are, not as we would like to be. And that there is room for all of us in the Church, and so on.
The Pope gave the blessing and the meeting ended at 7.20 pm.
Then we had some supper and, on the way home, we took part in a Marian prayer, including the Rosary in the church near the house where we are staying.

Day 4

Day 4

On Friday the 4th, the last day of catechesis, we went to the Franciscan church near the house where we were staying. The meeting was led by an archbishop from South Africa. He spoke about the prodigal son. At the end of his talk, we gathered in groups to discuss where I feel I am in this parable and what it says to me.

The sharing focused mainly on forgiveness, asking and offering forgiveness. It was a rich sharing in the groups. Each group spokesperson made a summary and shared it with the assembly. At the end there were some testimonies.

Fatima, from our group, shared her family's third testimony of forgiveness. It was very moving.

From there, we went to pick up our food and, after lunch, we went to the park where, at 6 p.m., the Stations of the Cross would take place in the presence of the Pope.

The staging of each step of the Stations of the Cross was very impressive. There were testimonies of young people, of a life of deep suffering and of profound conversions to the Lord.

By 10.30 p.m. we were back home. We all had dinner together and then we shared our experience of these days which took us until 1 am.

It was a rich meeting where we shared in depth. We concluded the day with a Marian prayer.

Days 5 and 6

Day 5

After the prayer to the Holy Spirit and Lectio Divina, we had breakfast. At 10 o'clock we had the Eucharist in the brothers' chapel and at noon we left for the vigil.

We arrived at 5 pm. It was hard, as there were not enough trains and we had to do most of the way on foot, under a suffocating sun.

Before we arrived there were trucks on the road offering us water and a bag of food for the night and breakfast the next day.

The prayer service began at 8.45pm with Pope Francis. It is said that there were about one and a half million young people. When we arrived at the huge park we were directed to our assigned place. There we laid out our sleeping bags and prepared to spend the night in the open air. The crowd was immense.

While we were waiting for the arrival of the pope, songs were played to prepare the atmosphere. At 8.45 a.m. it began, with messages of greeting and welcome, followed by prayers and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Several young people made prayers/thanksgiving/requests to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The choir sang several hymns of adoration. There was a long period of absolute and impressive silence before the huge Consecrated Host.

After a while of adoration, a priest removed the Blessed Sacrament. Then a documentary on Pope Francis' letter/cyclical Laudato Si was shown on the big screens.

Then a conversation between Pope Francis and several atheists on the same topic was shown on the screen. By 12 o'clock at night, the screens were being turned off and we prepared to sleep under the stars with the light of a bright moon looking down on us from above. A great silence filled the immense field, called: City of Joy. The deep silence was impressive.

CLÍNICA DO PÉLO

Day 6

On the 6th of August, we were getting up very early with a song to Mary that was played on the screens. The sun was beginning to rise on the horizon, so majestic and full of light that it was dissipating the darkness of the night. What a wonderful spectacle.
At 8 o'clock in the morning they announced the arrival of the Pope in the open car, greeting the pilgrims. At 9 o'clock the Eucharist began as scheduled, with the Gospel of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The Pope commented in his homily how the face of Christ was transfigured and the words of the Father were heard: this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to him. And when the disciples were filled with fear, Jesus touched them and said: do not be afraid.

The Pope commented that our faces are also filled with splendour when we pray, when we spend time with Jesus who is the true light that illuminates our lives. The Father invites us to listen to Jesus. He alone has the words of eternal life. And Jesus comforts us and encourages us on our journey by telling us: do not be afraid. These three points were developed by the Pope at length.
The Pope reminded the young people that they should take joy, hope and the proclamation of peace with them from this meeting. You are, you are called to be, builders of peace in a world so torn by so many wars. A better future is possible, said the Pope, and you are the builders of that future. Proclaim Christ in your milieus, bring his message of love to all people.
At the end of the Mass the Pope gave five crosses to five young people from five continents and announced that a Jubilee Year would be celebrated in Rome in 2025, and a World Youth Day would be celebrated in South Korea in 2027.

After Mass, we all left the camp to go home. It was a great day, full of emotions that left us with a great desire to give ourselves to what really matters.
In the evening we gathered for Lectio Divina, to share our experience and to share supper. We gave the brothers and sisters some gifts of thanks for their welcome and good accommodation and we retired to rest, thanking God and the Virgin Mary for so many graces received.

Experiences

Beyond the moments of intimate encounter with God, two experiences come to my mind. I have enjoyed these times of communion with crowds from all continents, countries and nations. There was something of a very special poetry in their smiles, songs, in the colors of their flags… These 1.5M people made God's figure more familiar, more incarnated. I prayed so that we can all make His Name known around the World.

One other moment of grace was in Fatima where Mary's heart is represented with a mirror inside where everyone can see themselves loved as they are by the Mother of God. Watching you, Sister, looking at your reflection in this mirror was a simple and moving memory! I have felt the same when I saw one of the patients accompanying us adoring the Holy Sacrament with such a beautiful fervour: in the night, I could see the lit Eucharist mirrored in his eyes. Weren't these days the living proof that we can all irradiate God's love on Earth for His greatest glory?

I really enjoyed the last days. It was cool sleeping out on the floor. I like the adventure and it felt like we were doing something tough for Christ. It made me think of the homeless who sleep on the floor every night and when we were in the big crowds of people and camping out it made me think of the refugees. It was fun to see the priest this morning doing the dj set. I love what a fountain of joy you were this whole pilgrimage always adding positivity and virtues to the group. I am going to try and replicate the same.

Experiences

My favourite moments of the WYD:
- Beautiful English mass at vocations festival
- Good sermons and lessons learned. Yesterday I spoke with a priest from Czech Slovakia and we spoke about adoration. I said I enjoyed it but sometimes I don't feel the prayer and sometimes I do. He compared it to a relationship with a friend or spouse, sometimes you are up sometimes you are down but fidelity is important. I thought this was beautiful description
- I have received lots of blessings from priests
- I have learned lot from my friends on the pilgrimage
- I have met many wonderful young people
- The brothers have been very generous and hospitable.
- I have learned a lot from the other people in my group.
- It has been amazing to see so many young Catholics
- the rosary has been great this pilgrimage
- I have strengthened my friendships with those in the group
- I have been inspired by sister Isabelle good attitude and holiness
- I have learnt a lot about st Anthony and feel closer to him
- I have enjoyed spending time with mentally sick people and seeing the good work of the brothers
- Morning prayers have been really good for starting my day
- My prayer life has deepened and I feel spiritually uplifted
- Another thing I like is we prayed for the conversion of England and I felt it was hopeless cause but we hanged up England flag and a girl randomly gave us a flag of Mary and we put it up beside England flag and I think that was God answering our prayers

Experiences

I think overall it was a great experience. I feel like I learned from different people over time even the patients. They were so involved and in good spirits for all activities and events. I enjoyed having mass with millions of people and it was encouraging to see that there were so many young people who were willing to spend time to come to this pilgrimage.
I also really enjoyed getting to know our group through praying together, (esp. lectio divina and rosary) eating together, and traveling among the crowds together for each event. I admire qualities from each one: perseverance and positivity even in uncomfortable or difficult situations (Sr Isabel), patience and seeing good in everything (Pierre and Thomas), self-confidence, care for others, and deep devotion to our faith (Karolina, Laura, and Lily), enthusiasm and eagerness to learn and share our faith and prayer with others (Susan, Nicolas, and Samuel), being strong as a person and in faith (Fatima), leading with patience and confidence and hospitality (Miguel)
I would love to keep our group going so we can continue to learn from each other in faith and action.

I had the good fortune to go with a group I didn't know, as I live in Paris and everyone else in London. Before travelling, I didn't know what to expect, I just knew that God wanted me to be right there with that group in Lisbon.
Every day during this pre WYD and WYD God surprised me in different ways and was answering my questions through the conversations I had, the activities, the prayers and the walks.
I leave recharged with love, the desire to continue going to mass and to be in communion with God, to pray the rosary every day and above all to put my gifts at the service of others.
I confirm that everything is grace and that God is good and acts in a coherent way, He only wants us to give Him a real YES, to surprise us and let us love Him.
Now after the trip, I can say that I have a family in London, people who opened their hearts and with whom I felt safe and that is only God's and the Virgin's work.

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Experiences

WYD was an authentic encounter with the Lord, hand in hand with Our Mother the Virgin Mary. I would like to share a little bit of this personal journey: Before WYD began I asked myself if there was something I wanted to bring to the Lord, a question. More than a question, I wanted to discover and let myself be deeply embraced by his mercy, because sometimes it is difficult for me. The day before I left for Lisbon, a friend sent me a song called "La Misericordia" (Coincidence?). In the chorus of the song it says "Get up and walk", when I heard these two words I was very moved, tears came out of my eyes and I didn't understand why. Then at WYD I discovered that one of the central messages of the meeting was "Get up"....

Well, the Mercy of God was present and alive in this meeting through those who took us in Lisbon, through the brothers and sisters who took care of us, through the sacrament of reconciliation available every day, in the Eucharist, through those who serve the sick and especially through the sick themselves.... Yes, every time that man called Jose Pablo, one of the sick who came in the group, gave me his hand, smiled and hugged me, I saw how Jesus loved him... I saw that smallness of which St Therese speaks that brings us closer to God and allows us to know that we are loved by Him. That smallness that allows us to experience the Mercy of the Lord and to enjoy the road to Heaven. I want this littleness, Lord! To be small and grateful and now I have a living experience that reminds me of it... the face of Jose Pablo de Madeira, engraved in my heart that reflects the sweetness of the Father in the life of his son. Thank you Jose Pablo for having looked at me and embraced me.
Filled with the Lord's mercy, we can rise up with our eyes fixed on Him whenever we feel downcast by the difficulties of life. His love, mercy, is that fuel we need to get us going and build His kingdom.
He constantly reaches out to lift us up as parents do when their children are tired. The Lord tells us Get up and walk, go and speak this love and this good news to your brothers, walk being merciful as the father is merciful. We were surrounded by more than 1 million people, with whom we share the same Father and the same Mother ... that is to say with 1 million brothers and sisters, 1 million potential Saints! Thank you Lord! May this experience be reflected from now on in our lives, may we not be the same but more yours!

Experiences

Attending Worth Youth Day was for all of us a big dream as non of us has been there before. We traveled to Lisbon with open hearts to see what Gad has prepared for us. The hospitality of brothers and sisters was overwhelming. Everywhere we went, each house we visited we felt we are not a strangers, we are part of the family.

The most beautiful part of our pilgrimage was the accompany of the disable young adult who were part of our group. I don't have disable people in my family so I was a bit concerned how to talk to them. When during one of our meals I saw next to me a young boy with mental disabilities I asked God to help me to start nice conversation with him. I turned to say Hi and in his eyes I saw Jesus himself. My heart was fulfilled with overwhelm loved to this young boy. That was enough to comunícate with him. I didn't need experience, speaking Portuguese or have any special skills. All I needed was the love to this person who was next to me. Through kindness, gentleness, true smile we created beautiful relationships. Every morning when he saw me in the crowd, he run towards me just to give me a hug.

I realised during this trip that we don't have to speak the same language to create beautiful relationships wirh other. We created the bonds between us but loving and serving each other. Leaving the brothers house was so difficult for us because within one week we become a family, family focused on God and love towards others.

We also learn as a group how to live in the community as we spent 10'days together. We started every day with morning prayers offering our day to God and service to others. God spoke to us through others. We have lots of deep conversations and testimonies. We also had to face our weaknesses, learn how to be humble and ask for forgiveness as well as to forgive others. Praying divine Mercy Chaplet in the most dificulte situations help us to understand God Mercy and His divine providence.

We are back to our houses as a different people. We realised that what really matter in life is not the career, prestige or monies but loving God through serving other people, even when the others are difficult, God always gives us grace and strength to love each other wirh all their weaknesses.

God really helped us to see beauty and dignity in our brothers and sisters.

He planted lots of seeds in our hearts which I believe will grow in our daily life through love and service to others.

Experiences

I have had an amazing time on the JMJ Lisbon 2023 trip/pilgrimage thanks to Sr isabel & the brothers of St John of God. It has vastly exceeded my expectations and I am grateful to her, and ultimately God in His Providence, for the opportunity and experiences provided.

I initially had pre-conceived notions in my mind that I'd get irritated with members of my group and that I'd feel a bit suffocated not having any personal space for a prolonged period of time, however I was proved wrong, and the trip has been a breeze and I have greatly enjoyed spending time with everyone, and also very moved at the hospitality provided by the brothers of St John of God. They and Miguel looked after us extremely well, as if it were effortless, but with much love and attention to the smallest details, never having to ask twice for small requests, despite the busy and tiring schedule for them. The love and charity in the house is evident and clear as manifested by the character of the Brothers and the patients who they care for.

Personally, I benefited enormously, growing spiritually, being humbled and especially with improvements with my main vices of anger and lack of patience, so I am immensley grateful for the circumstances encountered on this trip.

This trip shows the clear results of what happens when you build upon Christ, the sure Foundation.
I shall pray for all those who looked after me and the patients.

Experiences

The journey was full of learning and answers to so many questions that I brought with me.
It was a WYD full of excitement because it was going to be celebrated in Portugal, where my grandparents were born, grew up and gave life to our whole family,
From the beginning of the day, God was undoubtedly present in my life. In the park of forgiveness, I saw many young people queuing for confession, I was very surprised and I said to myself: Fatima, don't miss this beautiful opportunity to reconcile yourself and make amends for those things that keep you away from God. Jesus reminded me through the sacrament of reconciliation that humility pleases God and closes all doors to the devil. Many times we hurt the hearts of those we love the most and we must ask for forgiveness.

That same day a Venezuelan priest approached me while I was walking, I was surprised because he was dressed like St. John Bosco. He asked me if I was clear about my vocation and I told him that at first I wanted to be a cloistered nun but then I felt that I could serve God by having a family to leave a mark. However, I was ready to accept God's will because it has been difficult for me to find a St. Joseph in my life. And the priest told me: if you want a family, God wants that for you too. I will pray for you, he gave me a blessing and left.

During WYD 2023 Portugal, we were sharing with the group of sisters and the patients. I learned to value people with mental problems, to go at the pace that they could go, to enjoy their joy every morning at breakfast when they greeted you, and also their tiredness because of the long road that we travelled every day. I didn't know that people with these limitations existed and that many of their families abandoned them because of this condition, that broke my soul and made me see life from another point of view. Thanks to the great work that the hospitaller sisters and brothers do, many of these people have a regular life and are treated as people. They are valued for their essence and that was the great mission of this journey with them, to make them feel included in this world and to bring the blessing of the Holy Pope.

Experiences

From this journey I took away that during the Via Sacra with the testimonies of three people, the times that Jesus fell carrying the cross reminded me of the times that I have fallen and that he has always been there to pick me up, because he wants us to get up, not to stay down.
Another special moment at WYD was during the catechesis. That day the theme was Mercy and forgiveness. The group was English speaking, I felt that it was going to be difficult for me to understand and I was not convinced to be there because I wanted to share and talk. And it is definitely the fears and insecurities that do not allow us to be happy or to move forward, but without a doubt Jesus was there to give me the strength not only to understand but to give testimony to the young people when I forgave my father for having abandoned us and not being there when we needed him. That moment of forgiveness came about because Jesus was always by my side and made me feel loved by him. So I understood that I had the best Father in the world, Jesus.

I end by thanking God and the Blessed Mother for giving me the opportunity to be at another WYD. And especially to Sister Isabel for making it possible for me to participate, for being by our side, for making us happy, for understanding and accepting each one of us with our faults and virtues. For giving us her smile and her strength on those long walks under the sun. For praying together every morning. I will never forget those were beautiful days!

Experiences

Thank you sisters and brothers hospitallers and everyone else involved in making all the arrangements for our group. You were always ready to offer help, answer any questions or even translate it to us with a cheerful attitude. It not only met, but exceeded all of our expectations. And Sister Isabel is an exceptional person with endless amount of energy and love, she helped us all to a much greater experience through prayers and conversations with her.

My goal for this trip was a simple one, to go with an open mind and that we as a group experience our Catholic faith. We not only experienced it, but we grew in it, and some walked away stronger in their Catholic identity. It was beautiful to see the change in some.

Also, It was wonderful to see the Pope almost everyday in the last few days and the amount of love the youth have for him. His message to us was always so beautiful, teaching us something about Jesus and Mary that we never thought of before.

I'm so glad I was a part of this little group, I love each one of them, every one is such a unique and beautiful person full of love and strong in faith. It was beautiful to see how everyone was looking out for each other.

We all had an amazing time, great experience, made some good friends, little mischief, laughed a ton, and received many graces!

I truly hope we all continue to grow in our faith and help each other do the same.

Experiences

Sister, thank you so much for all that you have helped me during this trip, it has been a wonderful experience, full of moments in which God has taught me many things.

I also believe that He has answered certain prayers. I couldn't have had a better group, even the other groups and people from the Hospitaller Order have been wonderful. I remember the first day when we were playing music for the sick how moving it was, to think that they are people who have also had a life full of experiences and to see them there... It's hard, but at least you can see that they are in good hands and I pray for all those who take care of them, it's something really admirable.

I am truly grateful for the things that have happened on this trip, it has been unforgettable.
I pray to God to change my heart to be someone who is much more patient and who really wants his will to be done in my life. Thank you truly for all the wisdom you have passed on to me and for caring about us.

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