



Santiago de Compostela, 6 January 2025

Dear members of the Archconfraternity:

Last December 30th, we celebrated the Translation of the Apostle Santiago from Jerusalem to these western lands of the known world. Coinciding with the proper solemnities, it is the tradition of the Archconfraternity to award the medals to the newly incorporated members (*cofrades*) as well as to those appointed as *Hermanos Mayores*, by virtue of the work they do in relation to the diffusion of the cult and devotion to the Apostle. The Christian welcome along the Camino brings God closer to many people, pilgrims looking for an existential experience, without knowing that who they are truly looking for is God. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors we formally welcome you and thank the generous and selfless dedication of those we recognize as *Hermanos Mayores*.

We are living with joy this season of Christmas, a time of hope that does not disappoint, but that requires care and commitment on our part to make it visible to our brothers and sisters. In this context, Pope Francis has called for the Jubilee Year of 2025, a call to renew our hope, founded on the love of the Heart of Christ. And it is the Holy Spirit, always present in the journey of the Church, who helps us to keep it alive in our lives<sup>1</sup>.

Hope is the central message of the Jubilee, whose solemn opening took place on December 29 in our Diocese. Hope is born and founded on the love that emanates from the Heart of Jesus, pierced on the cross. The testimony of the Apostle James shows us that tribulation and suffering are an integral part of the journey of those who proclaim the Gospel, especially in times of secularism and confusion like the present, and even of persecution. However, Christians know that, in the darkness, there is always a light that guides us: the strength that comes from the cross and the resurrection of Christ. This experience leads us to cultivate an essential virtue related to hope: patience<sup>2</sup>. A patience like that of the prophetess Anna and Simeon, already old, who, after a long life of fasting and

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<sup>1</sup>FRANCISCO JOSÉ, Arzobispo de Santiago de Compostela. Carta de apertura del Año Jubilar (15/12/2024). <https://archicompostela.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Carta-apertura-Año-Jubilar.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>FRANCISCO. *Spes non confundit*, 2024, n.º 4. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/bulls/documents/20240509\\_spes-non-confundit\\_bolla-giubileo2025.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html)

prayer, were able to recognize in the humility of the newborn child a promise of life and hope<sup>3</sup>.

Last December 2nd, 525 years have passed since the promulgation of the Papal Bull authorizing the construction of the Royal Hospital for pilgrims and the subsequent Confraternity of the Hospital in order to promote pilgrimages and to provide resources for the great building<sup>4</sup>. In accordance with the authority granted by the Pope, the Catholic Monarchs, in a letter granted in Medina del Campo on May 10, 1504, became patrons of the Hospital and officially established the Confraternity of the Apostle Santiago within it<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, a four-year horizon opens up for us to preach and make the Confraternity public - using the language of the moment - making our hope visible on the different Caminos and at their destination, in an ecclesial context defined by:

1. **A synodal Church and on a missionary outreach.** The mission of Evangelizing has been entrusted to the Church and is carried out by all its members, each one according to his vocation, his charism, in his place and in accordance with the sociocultural characteristics of the moment. And we, as members of the Archconfraternity by our own decision, must evangelize with joy and hope following the model of the Apostle James: a joyful and courageous witness of the Gospel.

2. Placing the **first announcement** at the center of our pastoral activity, seeking a personal encounter with Jesus, to move from a pastoral of conservation to one of mission. (...) *the first announcement always resonates: Jesus Christ loves you, he gave his life to save you, and now he is alive at your side every day, to enlighten you, to strengthen you, to free you*<sup>6</sup>. The apostle James, with his life, showed us how discipleship and mission are inseparable<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>Lc 2, 33-38.

<sup>4</sup>LUCAS ALVAREZ, M. (1971): La Cofradía del Apóstol Santiago establecida en el Hospital de Santiago de Compostela. En: Archivos Leoneses: revista de estudios y documentación de los Reinos Hispano-Occidentales, n.º 50, pp. 253-322

<sup>5</sup>GARCÍA GUERRA, D. (1983): El Hospital Real de Santiago (1499-1804). A Coruña, Fundación Barrié de la Maza.

<sup>6</sup>FRANCISCO, Evangelii Gaudium, n.º 164.

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

<sup>7</sup>BENEDICTO XVI. Sesión inaugural de los trabajos de la V Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano y del Caribe. Santuario de Aparecida (9-14 de mayo de 2007), n.º 3.  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/es/speeches/2007/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20070513\\_conference-aparecida.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/es/speeches/2007/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070513_conference-aparecida.html)

3. And when this personal encounter with Jesus takes place, we realize that it is God who bursts into our lives - and not the other way around - and the joy of the encounter moves us to announce and to be committed witnesses of the Kingdom that we want to make present with hope. And it is our response which we call **Christian vocation**, which has its roots in baptism. We will be waiting for the conclusions of the congress on vocation that will be held soon in Madrid, under the motto "*¿Para quién soy? Asamblea de llamados para la misión*" "*Who am I for? Assembly of those called for the mission.*"

4. The Archconfraternity is a secular example of the synodality of the Church, of walking together as the people of God: priests, people of consecrated life and lay people. And it is to lay Christians, the majority in our association, that the Church entrusts the mission of being present in public life, taking care of temporal realities and ordering them according to God<sup>8</sup>. **Public presence** is not a trivial matter. On the contrary, it is a fundamental issue because it forms part of the sacramentality of the Church and is a challenge to which we must respond, since it constitutes a privileged place for the manifestation of God in the world. We cannot forget that in Antioch<sup>9</sup> they began to call us Christians because their presence distinguished them. Following the example of the apostle James, we must begin a path of conversion to become true pilgrims of Jesus, recovering the social dimension of faith, without fear of showing ourselves as believers in the midst of a society that insists on remaining secularist, despite the fact that the paradigm of post-secularity is gaining importance day after day.

5. And as pilgrims of Jesus that we are, we have to prepare ourselves to promote a new way of understanding and living the welcome - especially of those who seek or have the desire to meet God - the accompaniment, being close to them, a passionate love that is not exclusive, walking by their side, respecting individuality and different existential situations, participating and sharing feelings. The transition from tourist to pilgrim, as our counselor<sup>10</sup> reminds us so many times, is more than a convincing proof of the action of God on the roads of Santiago. It is a call to attention to our responsibility and to the awareness of our mission as members of the Archconfraternity wherever we

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<sup>8</sup>CONCILIO VATICANO II. Lumen Gentium, n.º 31.

[https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_sp.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_sp.html)

<sup>9</sup>Hch 11, 26.

<sup>10</sup>FERNÁNDEZ LAGO, J. (2024): Apóstol Santiago: Amigo, discípulo y testigo de Jesús. Santiago de Compostela.



are. This is a propitious space for the evangelizing encounter with the men and women of the 21st century.

The horizon of 2029, when we will celebrate 525 years of our existence, obliges us to work on each of the points that I have just mentioned with a calm and converted spirit, to face that great challenge of opening the Church to a mission in a context of the new evangelization and to keep the flame of hope that has been given to us alight. Let us continue our pilgrimage in hope.<sup>11</sup>

A warm and fraternal greeting,

Francisco R. Durán Villa  
President

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<sup>11</sup>BARRIO BARRIO, J. (2007): Peregrinando en esperanza. Lectura creyente de la realidad actual. Santiago de Compostela.