



44 Moore Avenue • Worcester • MA 01602 • USA
phone: 1•508•234•6540
web: www.fcs-bilotta.com
email: formation@fcs-bilotta.com

Hospitality Story

We offer and accept genuine hospitality to the degree that we have experienced such in our own lives. For this reason, everyone has a hospitality story. At birth, we hopefully were truly welcomed into this world—a welcome comprised of warm embraces, reassuring eye contact, and smiles, all signaling recognition and full acceptance. Again hopefully, the power of that primal extension of hospitality continued and was reinforced as others helped us make ourselves at home in the space and time given to us.

Our first experiences of hospitality arrived in the form of nourishment, nurturing, and joyful reception, all of which led to a profound sense of safety and security. That profound welcoming provided us with space in which to play, express ourselves spontaneously, find rest, and in short, be ourselves.

In time, our experience of hospitality matured, gradually leading us to an awareness of ourselves as the precious, fragile, and vulnerable beings we are. Our hospitality stories share a common narrative about being welcomed by others (our hosts), who encouraged us to make ourselves at home, be ourselves, and find rest.

The process of arriving at our hospitality stories as guests emphasize both the formative and deformative dimensions of:

- the nature and quality of being welcomed by others throughout our lives,
- the quality as a guest of our ability to receive and respond to the other's invitation,
- the quality of making ourselves at home wherever we find ourselves,
- the quality of our capacity to be our true and real selves, and
- the quality of our capacity to find rest wherever we may be.

These five dimensions will also be explored from the other side of hospitality—from the viewpoint of the host extending welcome. We can all agree that hospitality is a disposition fundamental to our faith and formation traditions. Although many religious Congregations, Institutes, Apostolic Societies, and Dioceses point to hospitality as key to their charism and foundational values of living, this disposition has all too often been taken for granted. Too often, the result is that in both initial and ongoing formation, this profound sense of hospitality can be wanting in our day-to-day living.

Our faith and formation traditions are grounded in the disposition of hospitality. All religious traditions perceive hospitality as the means by which the guest is welcomed as Deity.

Our culture, our church, our clergy, and our religious, need to become specialists in giving life to the disposition of hospitality. To do so is to realize our abilities to offer genuine transformation. Through exercising true hospitality, we personally deepen our experience of religious presence. That is to say, through the power of hospitality, we come to an appreciation of our moment-to-moment capacity to be welcoming to ourselves, to others, and to God.