



THE HOSPITALLER

The official newsletter of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller
 — HM King Peter II Constitution
 — Grand Master HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ

Dearest Brothers and Sisters in St. John,

Both Brigitta and I very much hope that you are all well and bearing up to the various stresses and strains that the ongoing Corona pandemic has brought to our daily lives in its horrendous wake. We pray that there may be a very quick end to this latest catastrophe, but sadly I am all too aware of the science behind such viruses and I fear that we, as humans, will actually have to continue adapting to various changes in our lifestyles in the long term future as well as for the present.

We can only further hope and pray that these changes will be as mild as possible and not continue to violently encroach upon the freedoms of human interaction that we all took so much for granted until recently.

On this front, it saddens me greatly to hear that more and more Order functions have had to be cancelled due to this latest pandemic, but I take my hat off to those officers who have shown the strict foresight which has led to these decisions of cancellation or postponement. Having said this though, I am deeply encouraged to also hear of the continuing successes in the various branches of our glorious Order on a day to day basis of running vital operations true to our motto. I can also not praise highly enough our brothers and sisters who continue to go out of their way in order to help those in great need through a wide variety of most valuable actions.

Whilst Brigitta and I were in lockdown, I received an email from a gentleman in Greece who wanted to know which version of the story regarding our Holy relics was the correct one. To my knowledge there are four versions to date and at least two of these have been negatively coloured by malevolent sources.

Although I have touched upon this matter a few times I should like to share with you all a few details regarding the version that I have been told by a number of Bishops within the Serbian Orthodox church, one of whom was present at the time the relics arrived in Montenegro as the Second World War began in Yugoslavia in 1941. I think it is only fair to point out that the historical roads along which this Holy relic has traveled through the centuries from Jordan to Constantinople, Rhodes, Malta, St. Petersburg, Sremski



Karlovc, Belgrade, Ostrog, and finally to Cetinje, were more than very rocky and complicated. For that reason all I am about to say may be viewed by some through reading glasses of scrutiny and interpretation!

It is written that The Holy Apostle and Evangelist, Luke, whilst visiting various cities, found himself in the city of Sebastia, a small village in the current Palestinian territories and the place where the beheaded body of our beloved patron saint, St. John the Baptist, is traditionally said to have been buried. Luke was on

his way to Antioch and for fear of the preservation of St. John the Baptist's remains he wanted to take the body of our patron saint with him to Antioch. Apparently the villagers of Sebastia had other ideas and offered Luke only the right lower arm and hand of St. John. Luke took this Holy relic to Antioch and there it stayed until that last Byzantine fortification in Syria fell to the Muslims (Seljuk Turks) in 1085.

There are a number of arguments as to when this Holy relic of St. John was moved from Antioch M, but it is accepted that it was indeed secretly moved to Constantinople at some point, to the church of the Byzantine imperial palace dedicated to Our Lady of Faroe. Sometime between the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and a short while thereafter it is assumed that the arm of St. John the Baptist was taken by the Knights of St. John to Rhodes although the details surrounding this move are very foggy.

What is accepted between all storytellers is that the Knights of St. John believed that there was a real danger in keeping the Holy relic of St. John on Rhodes after the first siege of 1480, and for this reason the knights moved it to Malta in 1484. The Holy relic of St. John the Baptist found a place of secure reverence in Malta for many years until Napoleon invaded in 1798. A few days after capitulation, the Grand Master and many of the knights of St. John left the island and took with them only a few movable possessions, including of course the arm of our beloved patron saint, John the Baptist.

It is also widely accepted that in the same year, 1798, the Holy relic of St. John was taken to Russia where the knights had found



great support and refuge from The Romanov Tsar Paul I. Indeed, Tsar Paul became the Grand Master of the Order of St. John. Then, in 1799, under strict instruction from the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, the newly acquired Holy relics of St. John, which actually included not only the arm of our patron saint but also three pieces of his venerable head, were transferred to St. Petersburg amidst the backdrop of the most holy ceremony. It was believed that this would be the eternal place of reverence for the Holy Relics of St. John, but this was not to be.

After the murder of Tsar Nikolas II and his family in July 1918 the Holy relics were secretly moved to various places of safety and, despite rumours that Herman Goering had personally handed the Holy relics to Adolf Hitler, they eventually found their way to the late Tsar's mother, Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia. Despite the overthrow of the monarchy in 1917, the former Empress Dowager Maria Feodorovna at first refused to leave Russia. Only in 1919, at the urging of her sister, Queen Dowager Alexandra, did she begrudgingly depart, fleeing Crimea over the Black Sea to London.

King George V sent the warship HMS Marlborough to retrieve his aunt. The party of 17 Romanovs included her daughter the Grand Duchess Xenia and five of Xenia's sons plus six dogs, a canary, and the most Holy Relics of our beloved patron saint, John the Baptist. Ironically, after a brief stay in the British base in Malta, they travelled to England on the British ship the Lord Nelson, and she stayed with her sister, Alexandra.

After a while the former Empress Dowager Maria Feodorovna returned to her native Denmark and took the Holy relics with her. It was a short time later that the very revered Metropolitan Anthony (Aleksey Pavlovich Khrapovitsky) suggested that Maria Feodorovna hand the Holy relics of St. John to the Karadjordjevic royal family and this was done when the Empress Dowager sent her private secretary, Timuras Bagration, to Sremski Karlovci to present these Holy relics to my late grandfather, King Aleksandar I of Yugoslavia.

For a few years the Holy relics were kept at the old palace in Belgrade town center but later, after the completion of the Karadjordjevic royal chapel of St. Andrew in the palace grounds of Dedinje, they were moved to the royal chapel for a ceremony of blessing. They would then be stored in the royal treasury in the palace and brought to the chapel for Holy celebrations. Once again it was assumed that the Holy relics would find their last place of reverence here in the palace grounds, but the onslaught of the Second World War in Yugoslavia was to put an end to that dream too.

After a pro-British coup d'état in Belgrade on the 27th of March 1941, which basically turned Adolf Hitler's gun sights against Yugoslavia, it became clear that Germany would strike Yugoslavia with great vengeance – and this they did!

Days before the bombing of Belgrade began, which precipitated a full Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia, my late uncle, King Peter II, decided to pack up the Holy relics and send them to the Serbian Orthodox monastery of Ostrog in Montenegro.

Many people have asked the question since then, "Why on earth did King Peter II not take the Holy relics into exile with him and his government"? There has never been an answer to this question, but I personally believe in my heart of hearts that my

late uncle saw this "protection" of the Holy relics as a fairly short-term matter for as long as it took to defeat Germany and return to the kingdom.

The story I was told indicates that the little icon of Our Lady of Philermos was surrounded by jewels, which were stolen by one of the communist police officers at the time that Tito had become president. Apparently this police officer had taken the Holy relics from the Ostrog monastery and placed them in the secret vault at the museum in the town of Cetinje: ironically the town in which the late King Aleksandar I was born.

The church believed that it had lost the Holy relics for good until that very same police officer, perhaps through remorse, went to the abbot of the monastery in Cetinje in 1968 and confessed to him the whereabouts of the Holy relics. The museum handed the Holy relics to the abbot and they were placed in the church there. They remained there until quite recently. Brigitta and I went to see them a few years ago, which was indeed a most moving experience. A very dangerous situation already existed at the time of our visit to the monastery of St. Peter of Cetinje and this was the development of the wholly illegal church of Montenegro, which was, and still is, being protected by the political elite of Montenegro in an open war against the legitimate Serbian Orthodox church. During the fanning of these flames, the relevant political authorities have apparently once again removed the Holy relics from the monastery and placed them in the same museum as did the police officer in the 60's, but this time they are on display and listed as the property of the Montenegrin church. Whilst we must stand by for now and be witness to this filthy game of politics, it is a comfort to know that in the eyes of any decent legal system these Holy relics are still the property of the Karadjordjevic royal family, which was chosen to be the protectors of these spiritually priceless physical chapters of history, both biblical and also historically bound to our glorious Order.

In fact, this is the absolute treasure within our Order, the King Peter II Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller. We need not chase the very fragile tails of history and waste our efforts in trying to establish if we do in fact have any continuous lineage to the original knights of Jerusalem, Rhodes or Malta. The fact, which cannot be erased, is that King Peter II breathed life into our glorious Order with his Charter of 1963 and his Constitution of 1964 and he did this as the full and legal protector of the very Holy relics of our patron saint, John the Baptist. I cannot tell you just how proud that makes me feel, both as a Karadjordjevic and as a member of our beloved Order.

So, with all that said, Brigitta and I look forward so very much, to be able once again to share more precious moments with all of you. We pray that you and your families stay well and healthy, and hope with all our hearts that our Lord and Saviour will bless the plans being hatched for 2021 and that they will come to be.

May God bless us all and keep us safe from all evils!

Yours ever in the service of St John.



A MESSAGE FROM HE CONVENTUAL BAILIFF ALASTAIR REDPATH-STEVENSON GCSJ CMSJ

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Your Excellencies and Dear Brothers and Sisters in St John,

I write to you at a time when we should be driven, more than ever, to question why we are privileged to enjoy the fellowship of our illustrious Order.

We cannot allow ourselves to be distracted: for, however impressive our temporal qualities and irrespective of our nominal rank, we are all mere servants of our Order.

We have taken monumental steps since 2015; the unassailable truth has finally prevailed. But how easily are those, who might otherwise be credited with good sense, led astray: perhaps by hollow appeals to vanity and vaingloriousness by those who crave internationality because they lack one iota of credibility.

Our glorious Order may well be hierarchical, but let no member think that our structure, or their position, may entitle them to stifle matters.

There is no place within the Order for any member who goes about with crooked speech: no room for discord; no place for the person who devises wicked plans, who sows discord.

There is only one Order: bound by one Charter, by one Constitution. No unit may plead independence without forfeiting its integrity: and, no unit wishing to leave will be restrained: for, the love of money is the root of all evil: and how quickly will all gnawing noisome evil be severed, lest it pollute the body politic.

I remain, yours ever in the service of St John,

Alastair

HE Conv. Bailiff Judge Alastair Redpath-Stevens
GCSJ CMSJ
Grand Commander



PRIORY OF NORWAY

A TRIBUTE TO HE CONV. BAILIFF HARALD LØVHEIM GCSJ CMSJ OMSJ MSSJ

Extracted from memories of Harald prepared by Chev. Øivind Olsen GCSJ MMSJ, HE Bailiff Emeritus Dan Vegard Hansen GCSJ MMSJ MSSJ and HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz GCSJ PUHO CMSJ

On the morning of Good Friday, 10th April 2020, at approximately 5:30am a good and well-loved Knight left us. A former Grand Prior of Dacia and former Grand Councillor and Member of Le Petit Conseil, HE Bailiff Emeritus Harald Løvheim GCSJ CMSJ OMSJ MSSJ, silently passed away in hospital after a short illness. He was aged 77.

Harald was raised and educated in Kristiansand, a town in the southern part of Norway. Having passed the appropriate examinations at the Economic High School in Kristiansand he was accepted as a student at the University of Kiel in Germany, which he anticipated would ultimately lead to him graduating with a degree in Economics.

However, prior to commencing his degree course at Kiel University in September, and having completed his high school education in late May, he signed on as a deckboy on a cargo ship for a three month return trip to the East Coast of the USA, to arrive back just in time to start his studies at university.

However, events did not go to plan and, when his ship was in US waters, one of the shipping lines's other vessels, which had been due to embark on a voyage from the West Coast of the USA to the Far East, was destroyed by fire, and the ship Harald was on was instructed to take over that route, instead of returning to Norway as planned. The ship's Captain refused to release Harald to allow him



to return home, since his contract stipulated that he could only sign off in a Norwegian port.

Harald therefore became a seaman and, after three years as a merchant seaman, he joined the Norwegian navy and was educated as a naval officer. After completing his naval education Harald served as an officer and commander of a motor torpedo boat. Subsequent to his Norwegian naval service, he joined the Norwegian merchant marine, and served as an Officer, and later Captain on various vessels, mainly cruise vessels owned by the Fred Olsen Line, The Norwegian America Line and Royal Viking Line.

At this time Harald was married with two children, a son and a daughter and, for the sake of his family, Harald gave up his career at sea, and started studying law at the University of Oslo. After graduating, he specialised in Marine Law at the Nordic Academy in Oslo, and thereafter at Tullaine Law School in Louisiana, USA. Harald was subsequently appointed to the Norwegian Department of Coast as the Managing Director's secretary and adviser. He was a member of several departmental groups and committees such as the Committee for the evaluation of need, type and automation of all Norwegian lighthouses. He prepared the Group's Reports and had responsibility for officially handling, realising and implementing the Group's findings. He was a member and secretary of the Norwegian Navigation Counsel and its working committee, which had responsibility for Norwegian navigation policy and, on behalf of the Norwegian Authorities was in charge of both military and civil navigational policy.

Harald was then offered a job as a marine lawyer in the P&I (Protection & Indemnity) club SKULD with world wide responsibilities representing both Norwegian and foreign shipping companies. He was later head hunted to be General Manager of Fred Olsen Brokers AS with offices both in Oslo and London with responsibility for all insurances, marine, non marine, off shore, aviation and life and personal insurance world wide, including the Timex or Waterbury Clock Company. Harald was also a member of the Board of SKULD P&I Club (Bermuda), and also a board member of a Swedish Finance Company and a Swiss Management Company. Additionally he was Chairman of the Board of Delta Marine AS, a marine technical company representing international shipyards, taking care of Shipowners need for their vessels' repairs, dockings and equipment etc. He is currently CEO and owner of Løvheim Shipping ANS, which also controls Able Shipping AS in Manila.

Harald was originally invested into the Danish Order of St. John on 19th May 2001, ultimately becoming Prior of Norway and then Grand Prior of Dacia before becoming a member of OSJ in 2008. In 2008, together with a large number of Norwegian and Danish members, Harald chose to move over to the OSJ under the leadership of Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir.

In the years following 2008, Harald contributed in a great many positive ways to the development of the Order and he was elected a member of Le Petit Conseil as Grand Councillor, a position he held until he decided to withdraw at the Sovereign Council Meeting in October 2019. Thereafter, together with HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz GCSJ CMSJ, he was a major force in setting up of a dedicated administration office, which includes facilities for digitizing the Order's archive records, in Drammen in Norway. An office, which began to operate very successfully towards the end of 2019.



For the nearly 20 years Harald shared with us as a Knight of St John, he displayed a strong and committed interest and capacity for developing the Order. Not many people have the energy and drive to give his fellow Brothers and Sisters the support he gave, and no one has introduced as many new Knights and Dames into the Order as he did.

Harald Løvheim was a fearless and frank speaking person. He could be a righteous and impatient individual and he always wanted things dealt with immediately – not tomorrow!

The Grand Master himself once described Harald as "a bull of the Order", something which Harald himself did not particularly like, but which he accepted because, in his eyes, it was a time when the Order needed a "bull" in order to achieve what he believed was necessary.

If anyone asked Harald for help, distance did not matter. He did not think of the miles he had to drive, or the amount of fuel needed to get to his destination, he was sure where he was going and why! He faced problems head on, rather than overlook them, and he showed great care and understanding. If anyone needed help and support Harald was there for them!

One aspect about Harald's life that not many people are aware of, is that he not only loved music - he played the clarinet! Harald started playing with Tveit Musikkorps, Kristiansand, and was an active



Harald at his desk in the office in Drammen, near Oslo



Harald Løvheim being received a Knight of the Danish Order of Saint John, 19 May 2001.

musician over the years, which included playing with the well-known orchestra in Oslo, Kampen Janitsjar. His late wife Inger and he had an active and common interest in music.

Harald Løvheim will be remembered for many things - his well-documented thoroughness, his tenacity, his knowledge, his strategic abilities, his goodness, his generosity and for his cheerfulness.

Men of the sea are normally good storey-tellers because they are often widely travelled and have had many experiences, and Harald was no exception – he was a brilliant storey-teller, always with a spark in his eyes and with a humorous twist to most. Harald had, and often displayed, a great sense of humour and he loved to joke, but he also had a serious and deeply emotional side – he greatly missed his dear wife Inger. As the tears demonstrated, during her prolonged illness. Harald is not among us anymore, but he will forever remain in our memories. Our warmest thoughts and condolences go to his family, Rune, Cathrine and Cecilie, his in-laws and his grandchildren.

There is perhaps some consolation in knowing that Harald is now reunited with his beloved Inger.

Chev. Øivind Olsen GCSJ MMSJ
HE Bailiff Emeritus Dan Vegard Hansen
GCSJ MMSJ MSSJ
HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz
GCSJ PUHO CMSJ

The Priory Welcomed Four New Serving Brothers



Bailiff Øivind Olsen, Rainer Must, Prior Geir Bråten, Bård William Austerheim Johnson and Chev. Frank Johnson



Bailiff Øivind Olsen, Rolf Akeren, Prior Geir Bråten, Jan Petter Husebye and Chev. Frank Johnson

At our Priory meeting held in our home Church Ila in Oslo, Rainer Must (born 1973) and Bård William Austerheim Johnson (born 1983), were admitted as Serving Brothers and, at our Christmas Priory meeting held in the Catholic Church in Sandefjord, Rolf Akeren (born 1949) and Jan Petter Husebye (born 1960), were also admitted as Serving Brothers. Prior Chev. Geir Bråten, KSJ and Chev. Fr Claes Tande, GCSJ conducted both of these ceremonies and we are delighted to welcome such committed and hardworking Serving Brothers into the Priory.



Liberation and Veterans Day 2020

The War Sailor Monument in memory of the brave war sailors' efforts during World War II, was erected and unveiled by King Olav V in 1980. This year however, we were marking 80 years since the occupation and outbreak of war in Norway and 75 years since the war ended. The Priory of Norway and St John Helpers, Norway have always been present at this ceremony at the War Sailors Monument at Bygdønes, Oslo, however, because of the restrictions imposed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, this year the ceremony took place without an audience being in attendance.

The ceremony with a difference was led by the Director at the Norwegian Maritime Museum, Tove Wefald Pedersen and the speakers were historian and Director at the Holocaust Center, Guri Hjeltne and Flag Commander Bjørn-Erik Martinsen.

Despite the lack of an audience, this important celebration, in remembrance of our war heroes who sacrificed so much for the freedom we have today, was a fine and dignified ceremony which ended with the laying of a wreath and flowers, while the Seamen's Choir sang our National Anthem.

Charitable Activities



Bailiff Øivind Olsen, Brother Rainer Must and Prior, Chev. Geir Bråten

Over the Christmas period in 2019 our members distributed a variety of gifts, including advent calendars and a large number of shopping cards which can be used to purchase essentials in a variety of grocery stores. These gifts all went to disadvantaged families, including children and young people – people who were least likely to experience a happy Christmas without some help.

However, Serving Brother Rainer Must, one of our most diligent project managers in St. John Helpers, thought this was all very well, but he felt we should do more than the mere basics in order to create real joy and happiness at Christmas. Rainer is a baker and he wanted to bake a cake for each family in need. We therefore made contact with Stange Mølle in Sandnes, just south of the city of Stavanger, and they agreed to sponsor the ingredients for the cakes. Rainer's bakery and confectionery business in Lier, and the St. John Helpers also contributed funds, but the actual baking job was down to Rainer. During the Christmas season, a baker has a lot to do in any event since it's a busy time for them, but this diligent and good St. John Helper spent a full week baking no less than 250 fine chocolate cakes for distribution through organisations such as Help Us to Help, Together for Buskerud and The Church's City Mission.

There are many who deserve credit for all this, but none more so than our Serving Brother Rainer Must – he really deserves the recognition and credit. To acknowledge this, we presented him with a diploma, which he now has, hanging proudly on the wall of his bakery and confectionery business in Lier.

Even during the current Covid-19 pandemic, Rainer decided that, since the footfall to his premises was much reduced and as a result, he had bread and cakes left over at the end of each day, he would share all the excess goods between several very needy families. Every afternoon therefore, Rainer distributes these excess products to those in need, which is wonderful!

Many thanks Rainer Must – you are a real St. John Helper!

HE Bailiff Øivind Olsen, GCSJ MMSJ
Leader of St. John Helpers, Norway



THE REGISTRAR GENERAL AND THE ADMINISTRATION



HE Bailiff Vesa Viitaniemi GCSJ

At the Sovereign Council Meeting in Sydney in October 2019 it was announced that, after many years of dedicated service to the Order as Registrar General, Grand Dame Elizabeth Carey-Sheill GDSJ MMSJ was stepping down from that office, although she will continue to serve the Order as Prior of England. The Meeting was also advised that former Grand Commander, and currently Lt Grand Commander, HE Conv. Bailiff Anthony (Tony) Sheill GCSJ CMSJ OMSJ MSSJ, was also stepping back from his duties, which currently included production of Diplomas. A fact which may not be widely known is that Anthony's father, the late Charles R. Sheill had the great honour of being invested by, and receiving his Diploma from, His Royal Highness King Peter II on 26th June 1970.

The Sovereign Council Meeting was advised that HE Bailiff Vesa V Viitaniemi GCSJ FWRK, Prior of the Baltic Priory had now been confirmed as the new Registrar General and would take up his responsibilities with immediate effect.

Vesa Viitaniemi was originally invested as a Knight in the Hospitaller Order of St John in 2011, was subsequently elevated to Knight Commander in 2014 and thereafter elected Lt. Grand

Prior in 2017. However, in 2018, he and some 30 Knights and Dames in the Priory of the Baltic decided, for a variety of reasons, that they wished to move from HOSJ to the OSJ and, following subsequent meetings and discussions, the move was ultimately approved by Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ, and thereafter formalised by the signing of an Act of Integration.

In order to ensure a smooth handover of the duties associated with the role of Registrar General, in November 2019, Bailiff Vesa, invited Elizabeth and Tony to meet with both him and the late Grand Councillor HE Conv. Bailiff Harald Løvheim GCSJ CMSJ OMSJ MSSJ at the Order's new administration office based in Drammen, approx. 30 miles southwest of Oslo in Norway. The Drammen office commenced operations in September 2019 with the initial task being to digitize enormous amounts of important OSJ historical documents – a task taken on by HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz GCSJ PUHO CMSJ. Diploma production commenced in February 2020 and, already six months on, the Registrar General and the Drammen Office have prepared and issued approximately 180 Diplomas. The office is operating like a very efficient factory, although it does take time to process the production of a Diploma from the date the request is received until the Diploma is ready to present to the Aspirant or elevated Knight or Dame. Ideally, all Diplomas should be ordered in plenty of time and the relevant fee and donation to the Mother and Child Relief Foundation, remitted to the Grand Treasurer, to ensure that the Diploma is delivered in good time for the Investiture and, if all things go to plan, the Diploma can be presented from the very hand of the Grand Master.

The duties of the Registrar General, are as described in the current Manual of the Order and are: -

- To keep and maintain members records and the archives of the Order;
- To receive the originals of all Sovereign Council and Petit Conseil meetings, decrees and ordinances, which will be kept in the Archives to record the history of the Order;
- With the help of the Administration Office to maintain and issue any necessary updates of the OSJ Manual ;
- To receive reports from all Heads of Units including, Statements of Account and details of charitable works, for safe keeping and distribution, when so called for.
- To maintain the Central Register of all Knights and Dames of the Order (and to ensure the correctness of all, forms for Aspirants, CV's, and recommendations for elevations);



ATION OFFICE IN DRAMMEN



Chev. Geir Bråten, Prior of Norway, with the late HE Bailiff Emeritus Harald Løvheim and HE Bailiff Vesa Viitaniemi



Grand Commander HE Conv. Bailiff Alastair Redpath-Stevens gave a helping hand when he visited the office in Drammen

- To issue, in conjunction with Central Office, the Grand Commander and Petit Conseil, the necessary registration numbers and Diplomas and forward them to the Units concerned;

- To receive from the Heads of all Units of the Order, an annual updated list of their members;

- To copy all lists of members to the Grand Treasurer, in order that both financial and membership records can be kept up to date.

Registrar General HE Bailiff Vesa Viitaniemi is grateful for the assistance he has received from HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz, as the Order's Archivist, and from Lt. Grand Commander HE Bailiff Øivind Olsen and Chevalier Rune Løvheim for dealing with Diploma production.

The archival and Diploma processing activities are now functioning smoothly and Vesa is grateful for the patience of anyone who has experienced delays at times when there has been the odd queue in the Diploma production process and some slowness in Mail delivery. As Registrar General, Vesa allocates a roll number for all new Diplomas after acceptance, ensures that all related payments have been made and signs and sends out all new Diplomas to the relevant Priory by Express Mail with a tracking code. Everyone involved at the office is keen to continue to develop and improve the processes and operational systems in use.



Registrar General HE Bailiff Vesa Viitaniemi and the Order Archivist, HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz



HE Bailiff Emeritus Tony Sheill hard at work in the Drammen Office

HE Bailiff Vesa V Viitaniemi GCSJ
Prior of the Baltic Priory and Registrar General



PRIORY OF FINLAND

This is our second full year of the Priory being integrated within the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, following the signing of the Act of Integration in 2018.

Our Priory has three Commanderies - the Commandery of Pori, the Commandery of Southern Finland and the Commandery of Western Finland - and our first joint event each year is St. Henrik's Remembrance Day, which traditionally we celebrate on January the 19th - a day of Knighthood open to all Spiritual Orders (the former name of our Priory was St Henrik's Priory).

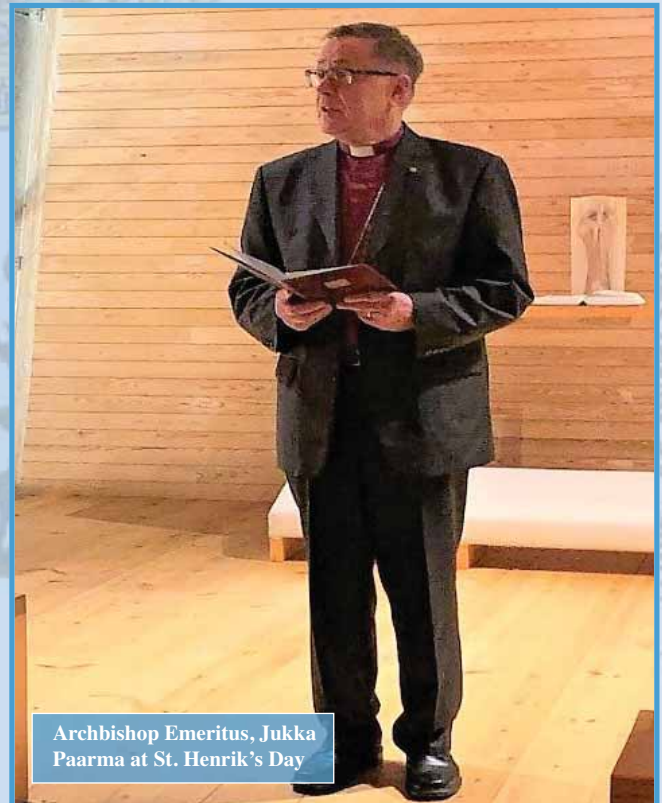
Saint Henrik is the Patron Saint of Finland and, in the 12th century, as Bishop Henrik of Uppsala, he was reputed to have brought Christianity to Finland when he arrived with King Erik of Sweden following a successful crusade. However, Christianity had already existed in Finland for two centuries before then, and it is more likely that he was sent to organize the Church of Finland. According to the story of his life it is believed he was brutally murdered in the year 1156 AD. However, the authenticity of the accounts of his life and ministry are widely disputed and there are no historical records of his birth, existence or death. Despite this, Saint Henrik is an important figure in the early history of Finland and his Feast Day is celebrated by the Lutheran Church of Finland, the Catholic Church of Finland and several Protestant and Anglican churches.

The annual celebration of this day really began when our Prior at that time, Markku Salmenpohja decided to take forward Archbishop John Wikström's desire of developing greater cooperation between Spiritual Orders:

"The interconnectedness of Christian Orders is an ongoing challenge in the same way as the different churches have converged in the spirit of ecumenism. An important step to this direction was Archbishop John Wikström's invitation issued in 1997 to various Orders to meet on St. Henrik's Day (January 19th) in Turku Cathedral for a common vespers".

Taking the idea forward, Prior Emeritus Markku Salmenpohja began to organize a joint meeting in Turku. In the early years, hardly anyone took up his invitation, but nevertheless varying numbers of the Knights and Dames, of St. Henrik's Priory, began to meet in Turku on 19th January each year.

Today, the responsibility for organizing the event revolves around the various Christian Orders and the number of participants tends to be around one hundred. This year, for example, the Knights Templar (Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem) Finnish Grand Priory organized the event. Next year, the responsibility for organizing the event on 19th January 2021, falls to the OSJ Priory of the Baltic.



Archbishop Emeritus, Jukka Paarma at St. Henrik's Day

Here in Finland, in common with the rest of the world, we have been subject to the Corona (Covid 19) regulations although Commanderies have continued to carry out permitted activities, such as donating to charities. The Commandery of Western Finland donated €1,000 (one thousand Euros) towards the pastoral work of the Evangelical Lutheran congregations in Tampere.

Unfortunately, the restrictions did not allow us to hold our usual General Assembly meeting of the Priory members, so we decided to hold an online meeting. The meeting went smoothly, and the attendance was surprisingly high at 62.5% of the membership.

The General Assembly was considered important in many ways. Firstly, our Prior, Timo Lääperi had announced his intention to step down, and a Nominations Board had been appointed to prepare for the election of a new Prior. The Nomination Committee had completed its duties and all members had been issued with the committee's proposal and requests for possible additional candidates.

No other candidates were proposed and Chev Esko Vainio KJSJ was unanimously elected as Prior of the Priory of Finland. The General Assembly also confirmed the Members of Council.



From L-R: Honorary Member Markku Salmenpohja, HE Bailiff Timo Lääperi, Honorary Members Martti Hirvonen and Erkki Rautava being entertained by Dame Raili Rautava in her home



The January 2020 St. Henrik's Day dinner – nearest to the camera, on the left is Prior Emeritus Markku Salmenpohja, and on the right is Dame Hanna Salmenpohja

The General Assembly further approved the appointment of Chevs Markku Salmenpohja, Erkki Rautava and Martti Hirvonen as Honorary Members of the Priory of Finland in special recognition of their extraordinary service to the Priory and to the Order over many years.

At a meeting of members of the Commandery of Western Finland, held on 7th March 2020, Chev. Juhani Tamminen, KGSJ was unanimously elected as the new Commander. Markku Jaakonsaari KGSJ will continue as Commander of the Commandery of Pori and Dame Eija Björkbacka DGSJ will continue as Commander of the Commandery of Southern Finland.

Chev. Esko Vainio KJSJ
Prior of Finland



Bailiff Timo Lääperi and Prior Chev Esko Vainio



PRIORY OF DACIA



Kirsten Andersen dispenses assistance to the villagers of Papoli in Uganda



Obbo Samuel gives out pencils to the schoolchildren in Papoli



Quick and efficient Covid-19 help to Uganda

In the Priory of Dacia and the Commandery St. Knud the Duke, we are privileged and proud to have Kirsten Andersen as one of our helpers. Kirsten spends a great deal of her time in Uganda working for Youth Arise Uganda Network, a life-changing programme of health, leadership and livelihood for young people in Uganda.

For the last couple of years, in the name of the Order and with help from Obbo Samuel, a local enthusiast, Kirsten has been directing a great deal of help to the community in Papoli, which is a village with a population of about 450 families, situated approximately a three hour drive east of the capital city of Kampala. The village has no electricity and receives little attention from the authorities.

Local contact, Obbo, asked Kirsten for help during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The village needed information about the importance of hygiene and handwashing and he asked if the Order could possibly help to provide the villagers with soap, and he would organize obtaining hygiene information and advice from local sources. In these parts, you buy soap in “sticks” of approximately half a meter in length, and you then cut off a piece when needed. In Uganda such a soap-stick costs approximately three US Dollars.

Within two weeks of receiving the request for help, the Priory of Dacia collected one thousand two hundred US Dollars and transferred this sum to Obbo, who purchased and distributed the desperately needed soap and essential information on the necessary handwashing procedures for helping guard against Covid-19. The grateful population of Papoli sent these photographs recording their sincere thanks for the help given to them by our Order.

This is just one example of the importance of being a small but efficient organization, with good connections and the right people in the right place at the right time!

Chev. Michael Gertsen GCSJ
Commander, Commandery of St. Knud the Duke



PRIORY OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Chev. Sascha Mühlbauer KSJ
and Juliane Pisarski



A sporting fundraising challenge during the Covid-19 crisis

Chev. Sascha Mühlbauer (KSJ) and his assistant Juliane Pisarski successfully combined fun activities and raising funds for a charity and took on the challenge of producing a video of their sporting activities to raise funds for a great cause and stay positive, fit and healthy during the Covid-19 crisis. The pair of them posted their video on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok and made many people laugh with 10,000 clicks on TikTok and nearly 2,000 viewers on Instagram.

In the name of our beloved Order Sascha and Juliane decided to support a project dear to both of them called "LICHTBLICKE e.V. a parents' initiative for Children with Cancer" which is based in Augsburg, Germany. Both look forward to many more challenging tasks and to bringing happy smiles to the faces of many people.

Scientific Study

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, two of our Brothers in the Priory of Central Europe Chev. Professor Dr. Greilberger KSJ and Chev. Professor Dr. Herwig KSJ, have been involved in scientific research into the therapy and relief of symptoms of Covid-19 for those individuals who test positive for the virus. They recently published the results of their ethically and clinically controlled study under the auspices of our beloved Order.

This scientific study carefully documented the relief of fever, breathing difficulties and increase of quality of life within 32 hours. These results were achieved by oral supplementation of immune modulators, which on one hand increases the immune system positively, and on the other hand decreases inflammation. Immune modulation has the advantage of not only acting against Covid-19 pathogens and its mutations but also against other bacterial and viral infections. The Ethical Commission has now approved a prospective study in which clinics and hospitals will have the opportunity to be involved.

Chev. Prof. Dr. Greilberger KSJ



Chev. Prof. Dr. Herwig KSJ



Dame Irene Wilhelm DSG
Chancellor, Priory of Central Europe



COMMANDERY OF MONACO-ITALY



Prior of France, HE Bailiff Alain Colorado, Brother Ange Panizzi, Commander, Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich and Grand Councillor, HE Bailiff Martin Marschner von Helmreich setting up the stall at the Kermesse de Sœur Marie in Monaco

These are strange and difficult times and the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have obviously impacted on the work of the Commandery of Monaco-Italy, as indeed this situation has affected everyone around the world. However, although confined to our homes since 16th March, in compliance with the safety regulations decreed by the Government of the Principality of Monaco, we have continued every evening at 6pm to pray in unity for all those affected by sickness or the loss of a loved one, as suggested by our Commander Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich DSJ MMSJ, early in this crisis.

Before the lock down was imposed in March, a number of the Brothers and Sisters of our Commandery were heavily involved in a traditional Monegasque event, one which has been held annually for almost 80 years - Sister Marie's Kermesse. This charity fair, or fête, is held each year to raise funds for the senior citizens of Monaco and neighbouring French communities, by selling various items, ranging from clothing to groceries. Regrettably, a number of volunteers from other Monegasque organisations, declined to participate in the Kermesse during these uncertain times.

However, the Members of the Commandery of Monaco-Italy honoured their commitment to the Kermesse and, together with help of several Brothers from the Priory of France, they worked hard to set up the stalls on 4th and 5th March, in preparation for the opening of the Kermesse to the public, on 6th and 7th March 2020. Our stall of men's clothing was a great success and the entire stock rapidly sold out!

During this period of pandemic restrictions, a number of our members continued in the work of the Order, helping the sick, poor and needy, and these included Knights such as Chev. Jean-Marc Robert who linked up with an organisation in the French city of Menton, which is close to the Italian border, helping those individuals who are destitute and most in need, particularly the younger generation. Jean-Marc drew our attention to the very negative impact this pandemic is having on these young people in the age group of 16-20. It will be very important that a system of help is set up to deal with the post-pandemic psychological effects on this young generation.

Another of our Knights who was actively involved is Chev. Dr Pascal Hébert, who is based at the Princess Grace Hospital Centre in Monaco and specialises in providing



Chev. David Rodriguez



Chev. Dr Pascal Hébert



ITALY



Chev. Philippe Chaber, at his facility in Cap d'Ail



A visit to the Résidence du Cap Fleuri to donate Easter eggs to the staff

palliative care. Pascal has been involved, not only at the Princess Grace Hospital Centre but also at the Résidence du Cap Fleuri retirement home during this period of the coronavirus pandemic, and he has given a great deal of his time supporting the sick, the poor and the elderly, particularly those who live alone and are in much need of help and comfort. In addition, another of our Knights, Chev. David Rodriguez was part of a group of volunteers in his home town in the south of Spain, who set up and organised the collecting of foodstuffs and basic necessities for distribution to the poor and needy in the local region

Unfortunately, due to the social distancing restrictions, we have been unable to provide our usual French language courses to our Christian Syrian and Iraqi refugee students, although we continued to maintain contact with them by telephone and converse with them in French.

At Easter, in collaboration with Chev. Dr Pascal Hébert, who had taken over as honorary charge of the Résidence du Cap Fleuri, we came up with the idea of offering the staff of the retirement home, 60 Easter eggs in dark and milk chocolate, as a thank you for their absolute and total devotion to the



A group of volunteers continued work through the Pandemic

elderly people they look after. The eggs were filled with praline and placed in individual sachets which were specially made for them. Our contact with the management team at the old people's home was very positive and the Commandery plans to actively be involved with them in the future.

Our first Commandery meeting of 2020 was held on 18th May, using the Crovv video conferencing system developed by Chev. Ton van de Ven, who is a member of the Priory of Central Europe, and we warmly thank him for allowing us to use the system free of charge. The meeting was attended by approximately half of the members of the Commandery.

During this year we were delighted that two of our Knights, Chev. Dr Pascal Hébert and Chev. David Rodriguez, were elevated in rank to Knight of Grace, and Commander Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich was greatly honoured to be awarded the Medal of Merit (MMSJ).

Finally, we are delighted that the collecting of clothes for men, women and children is again up and running, mainly thanks to the support of Chev. Philippe Chaber, at his Centrauto facility in Cap d'Ail, a town in France close to the border with Monaco. The number of donors has grown, and continues to grow and, in addition to clothing, the collection of goods also includes glasses, non-perishable food items and toiletries. The depot has been set up with the help of our friends in the Priory of France. The goods which we collect are distributed to the most needy people in our region and, as we are sure you will all understand, the needs of people in these difficult times are very great indeed.

Our mission as Knights and Dames in the Order of St. John is more meaningful than ever, particularly after the months we have just experienced; months during which events have adversely affected some of the families we know, sadly, on occasions, through the loss of a loved one.

Many people have either been, or in the near future, will be, badly affected by a faltering economy and may find themselves destitute and much more dependent on others. We have an obligation to help them. We must remain united in Saint John and we must act to help all those most in need.

Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich, DSJ MMSJ
Commander of Monaco-Italy



PRIORY OF FRANCE

Like most of us, the Priory of France had a rather difficult start to the year due to the health crisis and restrictions linked to Covid-19. However the Priory remained active in the field of helping the needy while complying with the necessary containment measures. Regrettably, the Priory was forced to cancel its normal Chapter Meeting and our long planned for General Assembly in May of this year.

Meantime, our charitable works can best be summed up by our daily involvement with the poor and frail people we helped before the lockdown - collecting and distributing food. Indeed, the frail, the elderly and the poor need us even more during this period of lockdown. Our vehicle for the food collections now bears the coat of arms of the Order and of our Priory as we continue to carry out our charitable works in the name of our Order.



In addition to our actions helping the poor and vulnerable, we are also involved in the restoration of a statue of the Virgin Mary, thanks to the talents of Chev. Alex Géraudie.

However, as always, we continue to maintain our Priory's links with the needy in Africa, and the island of Madagascar, with shipments of essential medical equipment.

HE Bailiff Alain Colorado GCSJ
Prior of France





COMMANDERY OF PORTUGAL

The Commandery of Portugal currently has eleven Members, and we are taking our first tentative steps within the OSJ whilst we wait for legal approval to register as a charity in Portugal. Meantime however, as members of the Order of St John we continue to provide assistance to those who need our help.

The economic problems caused by COVID-19, has thrown thousands of workers into unemployment, many of whom were regrettably not entitled to claim help from the state in subsidies or benefits, and thousands of families have been dragged into poverty. The region of Braga, in the north of Portugal, where our Headquarters are located, is an area with a substantial amount of industry, commerce and tourism, and has a high immigrant population which has been very badly affected by the crisis.

The people of Portugal were the first Europeans to discover and colonize Brazil, and sent missionaries to spread Christianity throughout that country. History has left an indelible mark on Brazil's culture and by doing so, has created a permanent bond between the two continents – Europe and South America.

From 1500 until around 1950 literally thousands of Portuguese nationals emigrated to Brazil. However, that situation went into reverse from around 1980 up until the present day, and the opposite is now true. In the last four years alone, the region of Braga has received and given employment to more than 13,000 Brazilian immigrants.

The Commandery of Portugal is very aware of our responsibilities to those in need and, as a result of donations from members and other patronage we managed to obtain funds to enable us to supply basic foodstuffs to a great many individuals and families who were most in need.

On 1st May, the Commandery donated approximately 1,000 kg of basic necessities to the Brazilian charity U.A.I. (www.uai.pt) and on 7th July, after making contact with His Most Reverend Excellency Dom Jorge Ortega, Archbishop-Primate of Braga, we made a further donation of approximately 1,250 kg of foodstuffs to the charity, Cáritas, linked to the Archdiocese of Braga (www.caritasbraga.pt), and which has the charitable objectives of helping those in desperate need.

Our Order was originally known in Portugal as “Ordem do Hospital” (Hospital Order), and was mainly made up of the second children of the most noble Portuguese families of the time. The Order played a crucial role in the consolidation of the Kingdom of Portugal and was the Protector of Christianity in various conquered territories. The “Ordem do Hospital” became the most important institution of those times, loved for its charity, respected for its honour and feared for its bravery.



The OSJ Commandery of Portugal has members who are directly descended from the Knights of the “Ordem do Hospital”, and we believe that, with help of our Patron, Saint John the Baptist, and our Lady, Saint Mary of Fatima, God will guide us in the performance of the charitable works we carry out in the name of the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller and our Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ.

Chev. Eduardo Gayo KSJ
Commander of Portugal



PRIORY OF ITALY



Prior HE Bailiff Roberto Volpe GCSJ



Chev. Domenico Antognozzi GCSJ



The Castle of Neuhaus



Church of San Claudio al Chienti (Marche)

In common with all Priories worldwide we have had to face up to the impossibility of organizing chivalrous or charitable events or to physically go to provide assistance to the areas in need, and this has greatly influenced the activities of the Priory of Italy during the first six months of 2020.

We have organized ourselves as best we can, with a series of online videoconferences to keep in touch and to discuss the various issues inherent in life within our Order and our Priory and to decide on matters relating to our future charitable activities.

As a result of the current Covid-19 restrictions we have had to postpone the Investiture Ceremony in Italy until next year (hopefully life will get back to some form of normality by then), but meantime I personally organized an online further training course for our Donats.

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, we also had to cancel the symbolic ceremony of thanks to the Order for the two electric orthopedic beds which the Priory donated to the Brescia hospital in Lombardy, fortunately however the beds have been operational and in use within the department for some time.

During this period the Priory donated four thousand five hundred euros (€4,500) to three hospitals in Bergamo (Lombardy), Camerino (Marche) and Turin (Piedmont) to help with the covid-19 emergency.

Under the guidance and direction of Chev. Domenico Antognozzi GCSJ, maintenance and restoration work of the ancient church of San Claudio al Chienti (Marche) is continuing, which together with the Sanctuary of Cussanio (Piedmont), make up the two spiritual homes of the Priory of Italy.

As soon as we possibly can, it is our intention to organize a General Meeting of the members of the Priory in the other historic building at the disposal of the Priory, the castle of Neuhaus, owned by Chev. Siegfried Hofer CGSJ, because we are very keen to meet again, as soon as possible after the pandemic restrictions have eased.

The Priory of Italy sends best wishes to Their Royal Highnesses Prince Karl Vladimir and Princess Brigitta and to all our Brothers and Sisters in the Order of St. John around the world.

Grand Marshal HE Bailiff Roberto Volpe GCSJ
Prior of Italy



PRIORY OF QUEENSLAND



Chev. Professor Mark von Itzstein AO KCSJ in his laboratory and with his Award.



Di Eadeh and Dame Susan Douglas (on right), who regularly assists as a volunteer at the Centre.



Prior of Queensland, Baron Andre von Zeppelin and Di Eadeh, a volunteer at the St John's Crisis Centre, accepting the gift of sausages from Chev. Kevan Wolf and Dame Jan Wolf.

CARING FOR THE SICK ...

Teams of expert scientists from Griffith University on Queensland's Gold Coast are targeting the virus SARS-CoV-2 in an attempt to discover new vaccines and drugs to prevent or cure COVID-19. The teams are led by Professor Mark von Itzstein, Founder and Director of The Institute for Glycomics at the University. Professor von Itzstein is a Knight Commander of Justice in the Priory of Queensland and is a staunch supporter of the Order. He is also an internationally acclaimed research scientist, whose research led to the discovery of the world's first 'designer' anti-influenza drug, Relenza®. This drug was designed, synthesised and biologically evaluated (in vitro) in his laboratory.

Currently Professor von Itzstein and his research team are using advanced ex vivo (outside the body) human respiratory system models to evaluate existing drugs and combinations to prevent or treat COVID-19, without working with human patients. The team is working in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute for Toxicology and Experimental Medicine in Hannover Germany, and the Hannover Medical University. His ground-breaking work was formally recognised last year when he was awarded one of Australia's highest honours, that of Officer of the Order of Australia (AO).

The Institute for Glycomics, which receives regular support from the Priory of Queensland, was recently the recipient of a generous donation of A\$3000 (three thousand Australian dollars) from the Priory of NSW and the ACT towards its research into Covid-19.

... AND THE POOR

The Priory of Queensland is also very proud to be a regular supporter of the St John's Anglican Crisis Centre in Surfers Paradise, which cares for the homeless and other less fortunate members of society. In the present Covid crisis, the Centre is also giving bags of groceries to many who do not receive assistance from the Government, including New Zealand and International students, and it continues to serve up to 100 meals a day. Last year the Priory fitted out a new kitchen in the Centre, and earlier this year we donated a fridge. Individual members of the Priory have recently donated 120 kg of meat, 60 kg of sausages and 60 kg of minced steak.

Chev. The Baron Andre von Zeppelin GCSJ MSSJ
Prior of Queensland



PRIORY OF NSW & THE ACT CO

The world has definitely changed! We have come to accept the new “normal” where Coronavirus has become a part of our way of life. The pandemic has had a large impact on the Order and all conventional activities have ceased. However, we are happy to advise that the Priory of NSW & the ACT Commandery have still managed to help people in need during these uncertain and unprecedented times.

In the absence of physical gatherings, the Priory of NSW & the ACT Commandery have maintained communication with Members through newsletters and regular email and phone correspondence with the aim of reminding Members to stay true to the principal cause of the Order – helping others.

Charitable Works

Successful projects during this period of crisis have been:

Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal

For a number of years Prior Chev. Schon Condon, has chaired the Central Committee of the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal Sydney Wide (Auburn, Blacktown, Holroyd, NSW & ACT Divisional Headquarters, Parramatta and Ryde), which has raised an amount in excess of A\$87,500 (eighty seven thousand, five hundred Australian dollars) through the 2020 ‘Virtual’ Door Knock appeal. This year, we were forced to transition to a digital door knock appeal due to the pandemic.

Greg Donovan, Public Relations Manager Community Fundraising sent the following message of thanks: -

“The Salvation Army is grateful for the ongoing support of OSJ members who are holding key roles in our fundraising efforts which include the Red Shield Appeal and Christmas events. Leaders such as Schon are invaluable to our efforts through their leadership, support and encouragement as we seek to “Leave no one in need” and together we have an aligned vision for the faith and the service of Humanity”.

Griffith University

Subsequent to the Sovereign Council Meeting in Sydney in October 2019, it was agreed that surplus funds raised at that event would be donated to the Griffith University’s Institute of Glycomics to fund much needed research into this very important field. Our Priory topped up the amount raised and ultimately an amount of A\$3,000 (three thousand Australian dollars) was donated. Further information on this very



Members hamming it up at a Priory Education session presented by Chevalier Victor Tsang at the Digital Dental Surgery Sydney Training Centre



Our historical presenter with guests at a Siege of Malta function held in Parramatta pre Covid

important field of research is given on the website <https://news.griffith.edu.au/category/institute-for-glycomics/>. Griffith University is located in Queensland with its largest campus in Southport on the Gold Coast. The Priory of Queensland will continue with their ongoing support to this worthy cause.

Sundry Minor Donations

The Priory of NSW was also involved in raising funds to support the Parramatta Mission, an organisation run by the Uniting Church that does much to assist the homeless of Western Sydney. Funds were also raised for the local Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) which provides support, training and activities to youth not normally able to access this type of support due to their financial position.

Serving Sisters Mae Lieb and Therese Chan



COMMANDERY



A meeting of the members of the Priory pre Covid

Some thoughts from our Prior

Finally, as always and sincerely, we give thanks to the historical work of the Order of St John and the Members who have preceded us. All the members of the Priory of NSW & the ACT Commandery continue to stand by our loyalty and respect to our Grand Master, HRH Princess Brigitta and the Grand Commander.

Moving forward, the Priory is taking a month by month approach to future activities based on the state of the environment as it develops and unfolds. This effectively means that all physical gatherings will be subject to Government and the Order's

restrictions. However, at the time of writing, we are still looking at the possibility of holding a Siege of Malta function in September, our Annual General Meeting in November and an end of year Function in December – all will hopefully involve fundraising. At the moment, the Priory of NSW has decided to defer all Investiture activities until 2021. Events will be held virtually if that is the only practical solution.

Finally, if there is one good thing that has come out of this pandemic– it is fully appreciating the small things – their significance and beauty. Right now, it may feel as though we are still

falling and we don't know how much further we can fall, but we implore all to stay positive and strong - for whilst we may not have hit rock bottom, we are still here. Let us trust that there is a silver lining and that faith, and dedication to others, will be the key to our salvation. A small change in our point of view can produce miracles. We should be appreciative that we are alive and we can still do all that we are able to, to comfort, help and support one another.

Chev. Schon G Condon
GCSJ MMSJ RFD
Prior of NSW

News from the ACT Commandery

We remain, as all others do, under the cloud of the Coronavirus pandemic and while the Australian Capital Territory has not had any new cases for some weeks, there has been a major outbreak of COVID-19 in Victoria and we are at risk of cases coming to the Territory.

We have, by necessity, had no meetings at this time and we will not plan any until the Government permits greater flexibility with gatherings and meetings - I expect that to be some time away.

Ray Newcombe remains in Dorothy Henderson Lodge in Sydney and remains safe and as well as can be expected. Mike Dalton is recovering from a hip replacement following a very nasty fall and is doing well. There is no other news of ill health in our members of which I am aware. We all miss each other's company and certainly

look forward to the time when we can meet together. It seems so long since we last met.

We remain fully committed to supporting our NSW Priory but face to face meetings cannot occur under the present circumstances,

Notwithstanding the World's current predicament, we remain committed to our ideals. Our prayers remain with the selfless work by our health professionals in both the treatment of the sick and the detailed health advice they give to Governments to keep us all as safe as can be done. We also pray for the wellbeing of all members of the Order that they, and their loved ones, keep safe.

Chev. Graeme Moller AM KSJ
Commander of the ACT Commandery



PRIORY OF VICTORIA AND NOR



A group photograph of the Priory of Victoria and Northern Commandery taken before the Covid-19 pandemic

In the Priory of Victoria we are keen to build our membership and structure and we have therefore produced an introductory program, which includes a brochure and short introductory DVD. The program will be used for presentations to groups, including groups of prospective Serving Brothers and Sisters. The main purpose is to give interested parties an understanding of the history of the Order and the aims and objectives of our modern day Order of St John. We are also recording DVD's of past Investitures, and events at which past Grand Masters, Grand Commanders and senior members have been involved, even including an interview with one of the four eminent officers involved in helping to draft the 1964 Constitution.

The Priory currently has 34 Knights and Dames, and 8 Serving Brothers and Sisters, all of whom we anticipate will progress to become future Aspirants.

Our main charitable efforts in recent times have been aimed at raising funds for the International Mother and Child Relief Fund and providing support for Homeless Veterans. However, every year at Christmas time, we also get involved with the Melbourne City Missions, to provide unwrapped Christmas gifts for children of families who would otherwise have a very bleak yuletide with no "Father Christmas".

The Northern Commandery has also started an initiative whereby most of our members carry emergency "Kits" in their car boots, enabling them to give help and support to the desperately helpless, homeless and destitute people they find freezing in the streets, particularly during our winter. This is the second year of this initiative which, until now, has been called the "Winter Blues Appeal" and is an initiative developed by our recently departed Brother, Chev. Geoffrey William Evans KSJ. The project provides winter backpacks containing a warm blanket, beanie, socks, gloves, a "rough" sleeping bag and, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, it also contains a facemask, to homeless people. Members of the Priory and Commandery distribute these backpacks as needed and at their discretion, ensuring that recipients are genuine people in need and willing to accept the packs.

Geoffrey Evans had explained to the Commandery Council that, during our first appeal, in the middle of our Melbourne winter, he had observed a man, driving a Porsche and wearing a very warm expensive jacket, pull up next to a shivering young man begging in the street. Without any hesitation the man removed his jacket and placed it on the young man's shoulders, he then walked away without saying a word! Geoffrey felt that the action was in the tradition of St Martin, the former Roman Centurion who had converted to



NORTHERN COMMANDERY

The Vice Chancellor when he originally welcomed Geoffrey William Evans as A Friend of the Order



In memory of Geoffrey's generosity, the Northern Commandery has now renamed its winter appeal, the "Geoffrey Evans Winter Appeal".

Our Priory Council consists of nine members and over recent months, like most other Priorities throughout the world, we could only hold meetings by means of videoconferencing facilities. Due to the restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19, we are banned from the streets between 8pm and 5am and we are not permitted to travel more than five kilometres from our home without specific approval.

The coronavirus pandemic has seriously limited our ability to undertake our charitable fundraising activities. The death rate in Victoria from Covid-19 is relatively low, but our small population is feeling the strain and, for example, we have had

Christianity and, on one occasion had cut his cloak in half, in order to share it with a beggar who was shivering in the street. Geoffrey was a humble and caring man who was also Chamberlain of the Northern Commandery and, even when he was a young printer, he had already been involved in assisting the poor. In his early days, Geoffrey collected the wooden pallets, which were delivered to his printing firm, and he would break up these pallets and distribute them to the needy local neighbours for firewood. He did not think that he had done anything out of the ordinary by this deed, which he often did during his lunch hour.

to postpone the International Mother and Child fundraising dinner, and also the Siege of Malta dinner. Regrettably, we have also had to postpone our Investiture, with the result that our Aspirants have had to accept a delay, as no more than four persons can gather in our Churches at any one time.

We believe that, in this time of crisis, in accordance with the vows we have taken as members of the Order of St John, we must all work together to increase our potential to assist the poor and vulnerable in our society and for the advancement of our faith and the betterment of society,

**HE Bailiff William Meehan ED GCSJ
Prior of Victoria**



The final act of immense generosity by our dear departed Brother, Chev. Geoffrey Evans KSJ was to bequeath ownership of his house in Pascoe Vale South, to the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller. The property will be sold and the funds used by the Priory and Commandery to assist the various charities we support. In addition, in terms of the Rules of the Order, we are required to donate 10% of the net proceeds to the International Mother and Child Relief Fund; which we will do once the property has been sold and the various estate obligations have been met by the Administrator. This generous bequest by Geoffrey will provide a considerable contribution to the Mother and Child Relief Fund in the near future.



PRIORY OF SCOTLAND



When Priory members and guests attended our Annual Burns Supper on 15th February earlier this year, little did we know that it would be the last time we would be able to get together for some considerable time. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions our Patronal Feast Day Service and lunch had to be cancelled for this year but, Chev. The Revd. Tom Pollock KSJ, with the help and assistance of his Organist and Choirmaster John Gormley, organised an excellent virtual online Service, which was enjoyed by many members of our Order worldwide.

Regrettably, we have also had to postpone our Investiture, which had been scheduled for later in the year, but hopefully we will be able to get back to some semblance of normality in 2021, which will enable us to plan for an Investiture in Edinburgh next year.

Fortunately, we were able to hold our Council and Priory meetings on 18th June by using the Crovv video conferencing system developed by Chev. Ton van de Ven from the Priory of Central Europe. Ton even attended the initial part of our meeting to give advice and assistance in the use of Crovv and we sincerely thank him for doing so. The meetings went extremely well and we will certainly continue to meet online while the pandemic restrictions are in force.

At the Council and Priory meetings, Prior Jim Wylie advised the members that HE Bailiff Emeritus Alex Dalgleish, having given exemplary service to the Priory as Treasurer for a great many years, had decided the time had come for him to pass on the mantle and retire from that role. The members of the Priory were however delighted to also be informed that HE



HE Bailiff Emeritus Alex Dalgleish GCSJ OMSJ MSSJ

Bailiff Glenn Wales GCSJ had agreed to take on the hard task of following Alex as Priory Treasurer.

Alex had previously served the Priory and the Order at large in a number of very senior roles including Treasurer, Vice-Chancellor, Prior and Grand Prior and indeed, had served as Grand Marshal on Le Petit Conseil for a period of time. On behalf of all members of the Priory, Prior HE Bailiff Jim Wylie warmly thanked Alex for his many years dedicated and committed service to the Priory and to the Order.

We are delighted that Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir has subsequently honoured Alex by awarding him the Cross of Merit for his sustained and committed contribution to the cause of charity and advancement of the Order, particularly in Scotland.



HE Bailiff Glenn Wales
donating his blood plasma

Charitable Donations

During this period of lockdown, the Priory donated £3,500 (three thousand, five hundred pounds) to the Preshal Trust to assist the charity to deal with the greatly increased calls for help, which it has received on a daily basis during these very difficult times. The charity is located in a very deprived area in Glasgow and seeks to tackle the problems of poverty, social exclusion and alcohol and drug addiction, together with the mental and physical health issues that can often result from these problems. The charity has experienced a huge increase in demand for help from many people who simply cannot afford to buy food and the basics in life we all tend to take for granted. The Trust seeks to ensure that those in need have access to these basic necessities while, at the same time, it continues to meet the physical, mental and spiritual needs of all who seek help.

The Priory has also donated £2,500 (two thousand, five hundred pounds) to Night Ministry, Dundee to help ensure that they continue to have the resources to improve the lives of homeless people in that city. The charity particularly helps rough sleepers, providing them with not only the humanitarian support and pastoral care needed to help maintain human dignity, but also by ensuring they have warm and dry bedding, and hot food to eat and something warm to drink.

When donating involves giving more than just cash!

The last few months have been very challenging; we have all had to face adversity and show enormous adaptability. Scientists and those involved in medical research are doing all they can to protect humankind from a possible second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the UK an urgent appeal has been issued for individuals, who have recovered after having been seriously ill with Covid-19, to consider donating their blood plasma, when the level of antibodies in their system is suitable, in a bid to help the NHS treat people who contract the virus during a potential second wave this winter and who have difficulty developing their own immune response. A major trial is currently being conducted to investigate how convalescent plasma can be transfused into these patients in order to help them recover more quickly, or indeed recover at all.

Donors are therefore being sought from groups of people who are more likely to have the high levels of antibodies needed for the trials, and their plasma therefore most likely to help save lives. Individuals who have tested highest for antibodies are normally male, aged over 35, who were so ill with Covid-19 that they required treatment in a hospital.

HE Bailiff Glenn Wales and his wife, Dame Elaine Wales unfortunately contracted the virus from neighbours who had returned from Northern Italy just as the general lockdown began. Thankfully, both Glenn and Elaine have now fully recovered and Glenn subsequently enrolled with the NHS to volunteer to be tested for levels of antibodies in his blood. The results of those tests indicated that he has a very high level of antibodies in his blood and Glenn has now agreed to donate blood plasma to the NHS on a regular basis. The donated plasma is rushed straight from the blood transfusion unit to the Intensive Care Units of hospitals which have seriously ill patients suffering from Covid-19 virus.

HE Bailiff Jim Wylie GCSJ MMSJ
Prior of Scotland



Dame Maureen Duff DSJ from the Priory of Scotland answered the “Call”



The Covid-19 pandemic has had a dramatic effect on all our lives! When it all began, no one could ever have imagined the ultimate far-reaching consequences and devastation that it would cause.

I had taken early retirement to care for Roy, my husband and brother in St John. Although Roy's health had not been good for a few years, his death was very sudden and unexpected. Following Roy's untimely death I was left feeling very much alone and with a lot of time on my hands. My emotions and feelings of loneliness intensified after lockdown was imposed because of the pandemic. Like everyone else in the country, I was unable to see or meet with my family.

In March of this year, the UK Government issued a plea for medical, nursing and paramedical staff who had retired or left the National Health Service for any reason, to return to work if they were able to do so.

It was at this point, when the government “put out the call” that I decided to use my time and experience to help in the current situation by getting back to work and doing something useful. I therefore responded to the call and applied to return to work.

Before retiring, I had not only been a lecturer and Programme Director in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Stirling but had also held several posts within NHS Forth Valley, most recently as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner with the Emergency Out of Hours Service. I was also an external examiner at universities in Oxford, Cardiff,

Cork and the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin where I was the first ever examiner on their Nurse Prescribing Course. I had always ensured that I kept up to date with my clinical practice while working at the various universities.

Very quickly I was offered, and accepted, a post as a Clinical Supervisor with the Covid-19 Assessment Team at NHS24, and have very much enjoyed helping people in a clinical capacity once again. My role involves dealing with telephone calls from people from all over Scotland,

who believe they may have contracted the Covid-19 virus. It is my responsibility to ensure that each patient gets the best treatment at the most appropriate time in the most appropriate place depending on the symptoms described.

Each call is different and varies in urgency depending on the patient's symptoms. The patients themselves range from those who are very calm to patients who are terrified and extremely distressed.

I am very grateful and honoured to be part of such a wonderful team, and to be able to contribute, in a very small way, to fighting the battle against Covid-19.

**Dame Maureen Duff DSJ
Priory of Scotland**



Dame Maureen Duff DSJ in her emergency response uniform



HE Conv. Bailiff Tony Sheill GCSJ CMSJ OMSJ MSSJ and Grand Dame Liz Carey-Sheill GCSJ MMSJ were allowed a few minutes relaxation during their visit to the Order's administration office in Drammen, Norway.

PRIORY OF ENGLAND

This year has been very strange for everyone and the Priory of England has been no exception with social distancing necessitating a very different style of operation. Our usual events have been completely disrupted by the pandemic, and many of our members found themselves having to isolate because of age and/or medical conditions, which has meant that our ways of communicating has changed as well.

The Priory normally has two main events each year; the Feast Day Ecumenical Service, which was to have been held in June, had to be cancelled, and the Investiture - planned for September - also had to be postponed. It is very disappointing that these two key events will not have featured in 2020. In practical terms, however, travel restrictions, social distancing requirements together with the restrictions on social gatherings as well as the closure of all places of worship, and the overall concern for our Brothers and Sisters and their friends and family have been such that these events could not be countenanced.

However, we are now planning to hold a combined Feast Day Service and Investiture event on 26th June 2021. So far we have nine potential candidates for Investiture and hopefully there will also be a number of elevations.

The Grand Master and HRH Princess Brigitta have graciously indicated that they will attend this event and we cordially invite all members of the Order and their guests to join us, assuming of course that life has returned to a sufficient degree of normality by then. We are delighted that Fr. Paul Baggott has agreed that we may hold the service in the magnificent Grade I listed St. Cuthbert's Church in Philbeach Gardens.

The Church is a Victorian Gothic jewel, whose proportions are modelled on those of Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire, and decoration inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement. Of

particular interest to members of the Order is the magnificent Reynolds lectern - described by Sir John Betjeman as Nouveau Viking in style - which is surmounted by a statuette of St John the Baptist. The reference to Vikings in the context of the Anglo-Saxon St Cuthbert is ironic, given that the Saint's body had to be moved on a number of occasions to escape from those fierce warriors, before tradition dictated that the remains stay at Durham.

In October 2019, Prior Grand Dame Liz Carey-Sheill GDSJ MMSJ indicated that, although she would continue in office as Prior of England, the time had come for her to step down as the Order's Registrar General. Our new Registrar General, HE Bailiff Vesa Viitaniemi GCSJ invited Liz and her husband HE Bailiff Emeritus Tony Sheill GCSJ CMSJ OMSJ MSSJ, a former Grand Commander, and more recently Lieutenant Grand Commander with the responsibility of production of Diplomas, to the Order's new offices in Drammen, near Oslo in Norway. Liz and Tony were delighted to accept Vesa's invitation to visit the new offices to see "the office staff" hard at work, and assist in ensuring a smooth handover of the relevant duties. Both Tony and Liz enjoyed their trip immensely and were very impressed with the new office setup and wished Vesa (and the "office staff") well in his new role.

The Priory of England continues at this very difficult time, to remember all members of the Order and their families in prayer, and sends our very best wishes to all for a happy, virus-free and safe future when we may all meet again - hopefully in the not too distant future!

HE Grand Dame Elizabeth Carey-Sheill GDSJ MMSJ
Prior of England



“BLESSED ARE YOU ...”



In his Easter message in the last issue of *The Hospitaller*, our brother Chev. The Revd. Canon Andrew Stevens expressed the hope that we would be able to celebrate Pentecost free of the constrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. Sadly, throughout the world the numbers of those infected and those dying continue to rise alarmingly as we wait and pray for an effective vaccine to be developed. The toll on lives and livelihoods is incalculable. We hold in prayer all those who are suffering, and all who strive tirelessly to bring help, hope and healing.

Within the community of the Church, the seasons of the Christian Year roll on, and Advent and Christmas rapidly draw nearer. However, before we prepare to celebrate the coming of God in human form, the Word made flesh, we mark another major feast day in the Christian calendar – All Saints’ Day, widely observed each year on 1st November, which in 2020 falls on a Sunday.

It is an opportunity to remember and to celebrate our place within the communion of saints, the fellowship of all believers, extending beyond this life to include those who have gone before

us in the faith, and those who will follow after us. It’s a day to celebrate our part among the people of God – ordinary saints and sinners, joined in a community of God’s redeemed holy people – past, present and yet to come.

That sense of communion transcends denominational distinctions; and it transcends whatever circumstances may prevail at any given moment in history – even the enormity of this current and terrible pandemic. It finds its focus in the supreme example of Christ himself.

As the New Testament writer of the Letter to the Hebrews urges: *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.”* [Hebrews 12:1-3, NRSV]

For those privileged to be members of the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, there is a particular relevance in the Gospel reading for All Saints’ Day this year as prescribed by the Revised Common Lectionary: Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1-12. It is the passage from Christ’s ‘Sermon On The Mount’ known as ‘The Beatitudes’ – verses which lie at the core of our self-understanding and *raison d’être* as an Order.

Blessed are the poor in spirit ... those who mourn ... the meek ... those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ... the merciful ... the pure in heart ... the

peacemakers ... those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake ...

Such as they are the ‘cloud of witnesses’ who surround us, the saints who have gone before us and continue to inspire us.

Such as they are the saints of our present day, who stand up for what is right and true and holy and who show Christ’s compassion to those who suffer.

Such as they are the Church, who in every age proclaim and live by the gospel of God’s love revealed in Christ.

Such as they are those who within our Order wear with humility the eight-pointed Cross of Amalfi, reminding us constantly of the eight Beatitudes. We are called to profess, in word and action, what true blessedness is. We have committed ourselves to live and work *Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum*.

A Collect for All Saints’ Day:

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son. Give us grace to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those inexpressible joys which you have prepared for those who love you: through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Prelate The Revd. David Mill
GCSJ MSSJ
Member of the Ecclesiastical Council

THE HOSPITALLER

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