



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,

Sitting here one year later and writing this greeting for the 2021 Easter edition of The Hospitaller, I almost feel as though virtually nothing else has happened in the world outside the Coronavirus pandemic. For more than 365 days we have been bombarded with the terrible news of the devastation, on so many levels, that this cursed virus has bestowed upon mankind.

Whilst Brigitta and I praise the Lord for his blessings as we rejoice in the fact that we have not had to suffer the pain of loss of a family member or a very close friend from the Coronavirus to date, our hearts are full of sorrow for the hundreds of thousands of families who have had to bear such a tragedy in any way whatsoever, and we pray for the salvation of those souls lost to this vicious illness and for the spiritual comfort of those left behind.

We have, however, had to stand by and watch a number of our business competitors and colleagues go out of business due to the extreme economic devastation caused as a result of this latest pandemic. I, as yet having the blessed privilege of being only an observer, cannot see an end to this new array of reasons for human suffering for some time to come. I regret that the many evils and catastrophes of the current COVID-19 virus, in whatever form it may present itself, are to be with us for many months to come.

As I have mentioned many times, the COVID-19 virus is only one of millions of reasons for the suffering experienced by so very many people on this little planet of ours. In fact, as “unpopular” as it may be in such times, I have looked through some of the figures of human loss due to reasons other than the Coronavirus and they are bone-chilling in themselves. For example, since the beginning of this year more than 1,655,000 people died as a result of a cancer, more than 504,000 people have died in relation to alcohol consumption, more than 338,500 people have died from HIV/AIDS, and probably the most battled theme of all is the fact that more than 8,586,500 abortions have taken place since 1 January 2021. Other figures such as human loss due to conflict are equally heartbreaking. The list(s) go on and on.

Do forgive me for bringing what seems to be a very negative and upsetting theme to my greeting in this edition of The Hospitaller. I certainly do not wish to cast the shadow of foreboding upon the upbeat theme of this publication. The reason I mention these unpleasant facts is simply because this edition is the Easter edition and as we all know Easter has at its core the theme of suffering and death, but also the most important theme, that of resurrection – the very reasons we are able to celebrate our Christianity and to follow our path towards our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

The theme of suffering is a very deep, complicated and much argued subject, connected to many other subjects and further arguments. As Christians, we more often than not concentrate upon the Biblical perspectives of suffering. The Bible gives a rich insight into the variety of causes of, and responses to, suffering, but also declares that only God knows the answers to many of our questions about why particular individuals suffer.

Within the Bible, suffering is seen to have a number of very different causes. Equally, there are a variety of responses that people make to each situation. When we think of the suffering of Jesus Christ we are almost always brought to the recognition of his physical suffering. This is quite natural, especially for Christians, as it is the physical suffering of our Lord and Saviour that is recalled from scripture and teaching through to imagery and cinematography. I am certain that the vast majority of the human race, Christian or not, is at least partially aware of the full extent of Christ’s physical suffering.

Perhaps the two other forms of Christ’s suffering are not so obvious at first. These are His emotional trauma and His spiritual abandonment. When it comes to these two further



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types of suffering of our Lord and Saviour there are many explanations regarding the intricate details but basically one believes that Christ's emotional trauma was suffered as a result of His arrest, humiliation and ridicule as well as His betrayal.

Equally open to intricate variation is the matter of Christ's spiritual abandonment, but I think it would be fair to say that this point is concerned centrally with the "Ninth hour" when Christ calls out to His Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Despite any difference in interpretation(s) what we are ultimately taught, of course, is that through all this, Christ truly suffered for us and eventually died for our sins.

The exact timing and process whereby suffering entered the world is also controversial amongst Christians and tied up with different views on the age of the earth and evolution. All agree that the Bible describes how suffering increases when mankind decides to disobey God and ignore His advice. Indeed, the further people stray from a proper relationship with God, the more they can expect the entire system to dysfunction and for that dysfunction to bring about suffering.

All too often we ask ourselves why does our loving God allow suffering among His people? The Bible claims that the answer is often not ours to know - it is a mystery. The book of Job gives an angel-eye view of the cosmic battle that was going on at the time between God and the devil, and gives a measure of understanding of the reasons for Job's suffering. But Job went through it without that insight. He lived to glorify God, but the process, for him, defied rational explanation.

What is very clear to us, as members of our glorious Order, is that part of our service to God is doing what we can to relieve the suffering of this world. Every act of charity and kindness which we complete, no matter how large or small, goes towards helping to stem at least some of the suffering which is experienced by too many people. Even when we feel emotionally exhausted and feel that all we have done has made little difference, know that at the very least one more soul on this planet has been helped by you. With this in mind I want to once again thank all those brothers and sisters who tirelessly carry out their humanitarian works.

With all this said, let me turn now towards the hope that this latest pandemic will soon be gone and release us from our lockdowns, quarantines and self-testing! What is clear is that this will not happen by this Easter and so Brigitta and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a most blessed and wonderful Easter 2021 despite all that is going on in our present time! Please do join us in spirit to pray for all those who are indeed less fortunate than ourselves and for all those who must endure their suffering of whatever kind. May our merciful Lord help us to continue his work and to help these suffering souls!

God bless you all.
Yours in St John,



A MESSAGE FROM HE CONVENTUAL BAILIFF ALASTAIR REDPATH STEVENS GCSJ CMSJ

Your Excellencies and Dear Brothers and Sisters in St John,

I write this a few days before the 25th of March – Lady Day – the day that in England traditionally marked the beginning of the New Year, and the day when we celebrate the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel that she would conceive of a son who she should call Jesus, the Son of God.



Annunciation: Leonardo da Vinci. (Reproduced under licence of Wikipedia Commons)

Luke tells us that the Annunciation happened in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy; indeed the conception of St John is celebrated on the 23rd of September, which is close to the Autumnal Equinox. Our Patronal Feast Day itself falls three months after the Feast of the Annunciation, and is close to the Summer Solstice.

Lady Day falls conveniently between the Winter and Summer Solstices and is a full nine months before Christmas Day. Lady Day therefore is close to the Vernal Equinox; the day which marks the beginning of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when the days begin to lengthen.

Spring is a time of renewal: a time when the earth reawakens after the darkness of Winter - a time of cleansing and spiritual awakening, and characterised by Chaucer in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, as one when folk yearn to go on pilgrimages.

Chaucer was writing at a time when England was in the throes of the Black Death and although he was influenced by his reading of Boccaccio's Decameron, in which stories are told by privileged men and women sheltering in a secluded villa from the plague raging in Florence in 1348, the Tales are

related by a rather more egalitarian group of travellers.

Chaucer's most explicit reference to the pestilence is in the Pardoner's tale. The Pardoner takes as his theme 1 Timothy 6: 10 - the love of money is the root of all evil. There is quite some degree of irony in this because the Pardoner is himself a rather dubious character: a swindler, and peddler of false relics who tells a moral tale but seeks hypocritically to take money

from his fellow travellers so that they may receive a pardon for their sins.

As members of our Glorious Order we too are pilgrims: but unlike the brash, greedy, self-interested revellers of the Pardoner's tale, and the Pardoner himself, we are exhorted to enrich the lives of others through Christian

service rather than pursue self-gratification and earthly riches at their expense.

There will always be hypocrites and peddlers of false relics, much as there are those who peddle false orders for their own glorification: they are all among the spiritually dead. They are not true pilgrims but are more akin to the man to whom Jesus said let the dead bury the dead.

Unlike such people, may we never forget that Jesus' call to us is to deny ourselves and take up His cross daily and follow Him.

Yours in the service of St John,

Alastair

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



PRIORY OF NORWAY



The Knights and Dames in the Priory of Norway had hoped that the year 2021 would be a better year than 2020. However, so far we haven't experienced much in the way of change. We are still in the middle of a pandemic and although some elderly people have been given the vaccine, many of us have not. We have been unable to hold any Priory meetings since February 2020 and have had only a few council meetings. We desperately want to meet up and see each other again but the churches are closed, as are all the meeting places. We have however, been able to carry out some humanitarian work.

Easter will be upon us very soon. Last Easter was dreadful - we lost our dearly beloved Harald Løvheim, and the period following Easter was a time of sorrow and sadness. We sincerely hope for a better Easter this year and that it will be a time when we can meet up again. We pray that the coronavirus pandemic will soon be overcome and hope to see you all very soon. Please be careful and stay safe.

The Priory of Norway wishes everyone in the Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller a very HAPPY EASTER !

Chev. Geir Bråten KCSJ
Prior of Norway

PRIORY OF FINLAND

Unfortunately, because of the severe restrictions on movement and meetings imposed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, I have very little news to share with our beloved Sisters and Brothers in St John about what has taken place in the Priory of Finland in recent months. We have been, and still are, under tight government imposed restrictions.

As from the 1st of March, the Finnish Government, in cooperation with the President of the Republic, has declared a state of emergency in Finland due to COVID-19. Some of the restrictions apply to all of Finland while others are regional.

As you can see there has been, and will be for some time to come, very limited scope to allow us to help those in need. However, I know that many of our Sisters and Brothers in the Priory of Finland have been fulfilling their commitments to help individuals and families in need in their local and domestic surroundings in everyday life. There are always people we can help, including perhaps our elderly neighbours; especially in these very difficult and stressful times.

However, we have not been totally idle and have been using this period to keep up with, and even improve, our administrative procedures, while at the same time preparing for our next Investiture. The Investiture was originally planned to be held on 22nd of May - but we can now be quite certain that we will need to postpone the event until later in the year.

On behalf of the Knights and Dames in the Priory of Finland, I send our love and best wishes to all our Brothers and Sisters in St John.



Chev. Esko Vainio KSJ
Prior of Finland



PRIORY OF THE BALTIC

The Priory of the Baltic has 12 Aspirants, all waiting to become Knights and members of the Order of St John during our next Investiture. Here, in his own words, is a brief introduction to one of these Aspirants:

An introduction to Jouni Lehtimäki

My name is Jouni Lehtimäki. I am fifty six years old and I am an Aspirant of the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller and looking forward to being invested as a Knight of the Order when COVID-19 pandemic restriction are eased sufficiently to allow us to meet together. I have been asked to briefly introduce myself and to explain why I feel honoured to be invited to become a member of the Order of St. John. I am an active resident of the city of Pori which is on the west coast of Finland, 240 kilometres from Helsinki, and I have been blessed with three daughters and one son.

I knew from a very early age, in fact from my time in elementary school, that I wanted to become a lawyer. As I progressed through high school, that ambition just got stronger and I subsequently graduated with a Bachelor of Laws and then a Licentiate of Law in 2009. All going well, I will finalise my Doctor of Law degree in 2023.

While I was studying in the Faculty of Law at the University of Turku, politics came into my life and in the 1988 municipal elections, I was elected to the Pori City Council for the first time and, in the 1996 elections I was the vote-puller of the whole city of Pori. The 1999 parliamentary elections elevated me to the Finnish Parliament. It seemed my political career was taking off. However, the voters decided otherwise and I lost my seat in the 2003 parliamentary elections. Only a politician who has experienced being “dropped out of parliament” can understand the disappointment of not being re-elected, or the epicaricacy that a “dropped MP” is subjected to after an election. However, the election night events allow you to recognise who your real friends are, and really true friendships are greatly strengthened.

It was at this point strong friendships led me to my most cherished positions of trust. I was elected to the Board of the Finnish Businessmen’s Mission for 2004-2006 and I returned to this position in 2018.

As the old saying goes - when one door closes, another door opens! I got a call from the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre and was asked if I would go to Lebanon as a military lawyer - but I had only one weekend to decide since departure would be in two weeks. I agreed to go - and luckily I did because going to Lebanon brought me duties as a



military lawyer in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in two European Union Rapid Reaction combat units, in addition to the duties of Political Adviser in Kosovo (NATO KFOR military mission). Finally it brought me the duties of Chief Legal Advisor to the NATO Rule of Law Mission in Afghanistan from 26 September 2012 until 19 March 2013.

In Afghanistan, although I served in a Major’s military uniform, my duties were entirely civilian crisis

management duties. I was responsible for all legal advice and preparation of legal matters of the mission. I coordinated NATO’s cooperation with various international actors and maintained relations with the local judiciary, editors-in-chief and universities - students and teachers. In addition, I provided trainings for police officers, prosecutors and judges.

From 2013 to 2017 I worked in Kosovo as an international legal adviser to the Minister of Justice of Kosovo in Pristina, a dream job at the heart of Kosovo’s political decision-making where I was able to combine my own political and legal expertise. On Sundays, my steps led to worship services in Pristina’s Protestant “Fellowship of the Lord’s People”: a lot of music, strong faith, love and togetherness.

The government of Kosovo named me as its first Honorary Consul in Finland. The Finnish government confirmed my exequatur on 4 May 2017.

I wrote this introduction while in Ukraine where, until October 2021, I will hold the same position as I did in Kosovo.

This is who I am.

On many occasions those who ultimately win are those who initially apparently lost out, but who succeeded by deciding to try again!

The Order of St. John means to me - in my thoughts to mention but a few - networking widely, prodigiously interesting discussions and trainings/presentations/meetings on fascinating subjects and in alluring places, supporting fellow human beings and new ideas of how to support fellow human beings all over the world and especially in Kosovo.

Enthusiastically looking forward to the Investiture.

**Aspirant Jouni Lehtimäki FWRK
Priory of the Baltic**



COMMANDERY OF PORTUGAL



Chevs. Leopoldo Louro KSJ, Orlando Boas KSJ, Pedro Oliveira KSJ, Eduardo Gayo KCSJ and Dame Marlene Gayo DSJ



Our Priest, Chev. Dr Paulo Sérgio Rodrigues da Silva KSJ

The Independent Commandery of Portugal was officially welcomed into the OSJ just two months before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, because of the disruptions and difficulties that we have all had to face since then due to the pandemic, we have not been able to be as active as we would have liked.

The successive States of Emergency in Portugal, which have prevented travelling between locations and meeting up with others, and only allowing the functioning of Institutions recognized by the State, have prevented the Commandery carrying out our charitable activities in the way we would like.

However, members of the Commandery have kept in touch with each other by telephone or by video call and, being very aware of the principles they have sworn to the Order, they have continued to seek to raise funds to provide relief for those in greatest need.

In Portugal we have what is called the “Patronage Law”, which allows taxpayers to make a small reduction in the amount of tax payable when making their annual income declaration, and instead to make a donation to a charity or Social Support. Although the amount does not exceed 0.5% of the tax payable to the State these donations can bring a substantial boost to their diminished coffers if the number of participating donors is sufficiently high.

The members of the Commandery are honoured and delighted that His Royal Highness, Prince Karl Vladimir of Yugoslavia GCSJ, Grand Master of the Order, elevated our Commander, Chevalier Eduardo Alberto da Silva Felgueiras Gayo to the rank of Commander of Grace.

Finally, the Knights and Dames of the Commandery of Portugal earnestly request all members of our Order throughout the world to join with us to pray for a speedy end to this dreadful scourge of a pandemic. Let us pray that in the next edition of “The Hospitaller” we will be in a position to inform you of charitable works that we have been able to provide for our most disadvantaged and needy Brothers in Christ.

Chev. Eduardo Gayo KCSJ
Commander of the Commandery of Portugal



PRIORY OF FRANCE



Chev. Jean-Philippe Tresarrieu



HE Bailiff Alain Colorado



Chev. Laurent Arsac



Chev. Jean François Coulombie

The Priory of France is committed to the fundamental and original missions of our Order. That is why we readily made ourselves available when the Church of France asked us to accept responsibility for taking charge of funeral arrangements in the Nice and Cannes area.

It is five years since Chev. Jean-Philippe Tresarrieu agreed to take on this role and he is now in charge of training and of a team of ten officiants at the crematorium in Cannes. For over a year he has been a Member of the Funeral Council under the diocese's authority.

Other celebrants who responded to this call include our Prior, HE Bailiff Alain Colorado and Chevs. Laurent Arsac and Jean François Coulombie. All of these Knights have received a Letter of Mission directly from the Bishop of Nice, and as a team they had completed all arrangements for 888 funerals during 2020.

The objective is to make all the arrangements for the grieving families, and to ensure the funeral service is carried out in accordance with the appropriate ritual of the Church. This mission is fulfilling because it helps bring a peace to the families at a very difficult and stressful time of mourning. It

requires hard work because in our overly unchristianlike environment it involves communicating with families whose members are not all believers in Christ, and Celebrants are required to convey a message of Faith to all family members. The messages of thanks from the families are numerous and extremely touching. They tell us the Joy of applying the motto of our Order: "Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum".

Our next great wish is to become chaplains in prisons and administer to the needs of prisoners, be someone to whom they can speak and who will listen and enable them to have links with the outside world and receive answers to questions about their faith.

As always however, we continue to be on the ground, distributing food and clothing to the poorest and neediest of families. If you wish to learn more of what we do you will find some details of our ongoing activities on our website at <http://www.osj-france.org>

HE Bailiff Alain Colorado GCSJ
Prior of France



PRIORY OF MONACO



Knights and Dames visit the Hôpital San Salvadour to distribute new toys to the handicapped children who are patients at the hospital, and sweets to the staff

I am delighted to advise you that, with effect from 1st January 2021, as approved by the Petit Conseil and the Grand Master, Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ, the Independent Commandery of Monaco – Italy was officially recognised as a Priory and became the Priory of Monaco! This is a change in status of which all Knights and Dames of the young Priory of Monaco are justifiable proud.

I feel honoured to be Prior of the new Priory of Monaco at this time since I believe this change in status is particularly relevant during a period of negativity and many hardships caused by the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus. We do, of course, fully comply with the various restrictions imposed by the authorities at this time, even although it does mean that we cannot always help the needy and deprived as we would wish.

Just before Christmas our Brother Chev. Jean-Marc Robert had the happy task of collecting new toys from a Catholic school in the Principality and, on Saturday 19 December 2020, together with our Brothers from the Priory of France, we distributed these toys to children from families who had been experiencing financial difficulties during this period of crisis,

On the following very wet day, Sunday 20th December, several of our Knights and Dames visited the San Salvadour Hospital in Hyères (Var-France) and, together with Knights and Dames from the Priory of France, gifted hundreds of toys to the multi-handicapped children who are patients at the hospital, and we also distributed sweets to all the hospital staff. Because of the restrictions and social distancing rules during the pandemic, we were unable to physically meet the children but they knew we were there! The OSJ has visited this hospital every Christmas, for 12 years now and we all greatly enjoy bringing comfort and happiness to these children and are immensely proud of the bonds we have forged with the nursing staff. This is our greatest reward!



Distributing toys to families in Nice Centre-Ville

At Christmas Brother Chev. Jean-Marc Robert also presented gifts from the Order to three families in the Commune of Fontan (Alpes Maritimes-France). These families had greatly suffered and been very badly affected by the severe storm “Alex”. Jean-Marc handed over gifts of computers, printers and ancillary computer equipment in the name of the Order of St John.

The ingathering of men’s women’s and children’s clothing, spectacles and other non-perishable goods continues at the Centrauto of Cap d’Ail and I would like to thank our Brothers Ange Panizzi and Philippe Chaber, for the good work they do by being responsible for these collections. A lot of people make regular donations of items and we are pleased that an increasing number of volunteers have even started to collect and store clothes in their own garages.



Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich with gifts for the children



Presenting gifts to the families in the Commune of Fontan



HE Conventual Bailiff Martin Marschner von Helmreich enjoys a convivial meeting with our refugee friends



Chev. Dr. Pascal Hébert



The collection point at Centrauto of Cap d'Ail

As always we continue to maintain contact with our Christian refugee “students” from the Middle East and endeavour to help them in many different ways, including supporting them with French conversation classes and with administrative procedures. Conventual Bailiff Martin Marschner von Helmreich regularly spends time to speak to our refugee friends in French and supports them when he is required. As you might expect, these meetings often become very convivial occasions, because our Syrian and Iraqi Christian friends greatly enjoy giving and receiving hospitality !

In his professional life as a specialist doctor in palliative care at the Princess Grace Hospital in Monaco, and through his commitment to the elderly at the Cap Fleuri retirement home in Cap d'Ail, our Brother Chev. Dr. Pascal Hébert, is involved on a daily basis with many patients who are severely

distressed. Brother Pascal is one of the most devoted and caring of medical professionals and, assisted by wonderful nursing staff, cares for many seriously unwell individuals, including many who are terminally ill. He is truly a great example to us all !

Members of the Priory are in the early stages of preparing for the Sovereign Council Meeting which Monaco will host during the period from Thursday 20th October until Sunday 23rd October 2022. Our members are determined that we will be well prepared for this important event, since it will be a major occasion for our newly elevated Priory, and we are very keen to organise an event which will be worthy of the trust which has been placed in us. Let us all sincerely hope and pray that, by the date of the Sovereign Council Meeting, we will be free of this global pandemic.

May God protect us and guide our steps through the Feast of Easter; that of the Risen Christ ! May God help all of us to continue to honour the Motto of our Order - Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum.

Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich DSJ MMSJ
Prior of Monaco



PRIORY OF ITALY

The charitable activities of our Priory have been seriously curtailed because of the restrictions imposed as a result of the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. I have therefore decided to give a very brief history and some background information about the Priory of Italy, principally about our involvement in providing humanitarian aid to many parts of the world and to tell about an involvement which the Priory had providing humanitarian aid and assistance in the central African country of Cameroon, which included building a hospital in the city of Bamanda. Our involvement in Cameroon was initially in response to a call for help from the Sisters of Saint Anne.



Providing humanitarian aid to the distressed populations in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Albania



A brief history and some background information about the Priory

The first Prior of Italy, HE Bailiff Gualtiero Pollesel, Count of Tournay, was personally appointed by HRH King Peter II of Yugoslavia. Subsequently, as a result of his “Pro Fide Pro Utilitate Hominum” activities, Bailiff Pollesel received the Apostolic Blessing from Pope Paul VI.

The Priory was initially based in the city of Arona in Piedmont and, for various reasons the seat of the Priory of Italy has continued to be based in Piedmont – initially in Arona and then to the city of Fossano and thereafter to Turin where it remains to this day.

In 2001 the Priory of Italy carried out humanitarian missions alongside the Italian Army which was involved in “Joint Guardian” (Albania and Kosovo) and “ISAF” (Afghanistan) operations which lasted until 2012. There were a total of 12 missions involving the Priory, two in Kosovo, seven in Afghanistan and others in Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

The Priory of Italy and its members were awarded a medal by the Afghan Government and the Loya Jirga (assembly of tribal elders) and received five NATO medals from Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in recognition of its humanitarian work.

Many other humanitarian missions were carried out by the Priory for various civil and religious organisations in Australia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon (on three occasions), Cape Verde, India (on two occasions), Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Morocco, Poland (three times), Romania (also three times), Thailand, Togo, USA (on two occasions), Ukraine (also on two occasions) and of course, Italy.

In November 2005 I had the honour of being elected Prior of Italy and in accordance with tradition, the seat of the Priory moved with me to the city of Turin.

With my subsequent elevation in rank to Bailiff (Malta 2006) and my election as Grand Marshal (Belgium 2007) the Priory of Italy found itself with more of an international role, a situation which was unfortunately neglected by my predecessors. Our new international role allowed the Priory of Italy to carry out a beautiful Investiture ceremony in Rome in 2017 in the palace of Cardinal Cesi, directly in front of St. Peter’s Basilica. However, more importantly perhaps, it helped us secure worldwide assistance which enabled us to donate over 100,000 euros to the victims of the devastating earthquake which occurred in Central Italy in 2016.

Our Humanitarian work in Cameroon

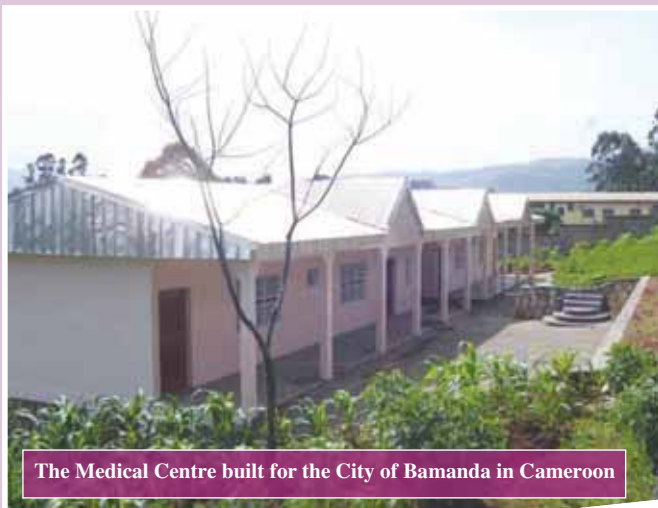
Together with three other members of the Priory of Italy, our Prior travelled to Cameroon with three main objectives: to build a medical center for the poor population, to feed 400



Two school buses were donated for use in Romania



A donation of 100,000 euros was given to help communities affected by the devastation caused by the earthquake in Central Italy in 2016



The Medical Centre built for the City of Bamanda in Cameroon



An Ambulance donated to the City of Bafoussam

children from rainforest villages and to organise a tailoring school to teach honest and productive work to young girls and thereby save them from ending up being trapped in a life of prostitution, which was sadly the norm for many young girls from very poor families.

The humanitarian mission was carried out over the two months of July and August, during which time, with the help of the General Delegate, Sr. Letizia Lo Re, the Prior and a volunteer Dame from the Order of St John, took care of 700 AIDS patients and met with local doctors to organise voluntary medical aid for the desperately poor population, while the other two OSJ volunteers involved themselves with childcare.

As a result of specific medical advice received as a result of the severe malnutrition which affected the children, two African women were hired to prepare nutritional foods suitable for their eating habits.

The delegation and all concerned worked non-stop from sunrise to sunset for two solid months. In total the Priory of Italy mission in Cameroon gave over 3,000 hours of volunteer work, completed the building of two full dental and medical



NATO Medal awarded for provision of Humanitarian Aid

practices, provided single-use surgical tools and AIDS disinfection products, an ambulance and donated 50,000 euros in cash.

In more recent times

In 2019 the Knights and Dames of Italy, tired of the isolationist and centralising policy of the Maltese Regency, and also due to our close friendship with the Prior of France, HE Bailiff Alain Colorado GCSJ and the Knights and Dames in the Priory of France, we sought and obtained the approval of Grand Master HRH Prince Karl Vladimir of Yugoslavia GCSJ and the Petit Conseil to integrate

with and become a Priory within the OSJ. As a result we have been able to embrace a new enthusiasm for service as Knights and Dames in the Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller - Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum!

HE Bailiff Roberto Volpe GCSJ
Prior of Italy



PRIORY OF NSW AND THE ACT



A Meeting of the Greater Sydney Central Fundraising Committee for the Red Shield Appeal

2021 has commenced quietly for the Priory as both New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory were again caught up in the ravages of another COVID outbreak over the Christmas period. In saying that though, the Priory Members are very much aware of how well Australia has weathered the pandemic and we pray for our brothers and sisters who are in jurisdictions where the pandemic is still causing significant physical and mental health issues.

Face to face meetings and activities have not yet begun for 2021 as our members, particularly those of senior ages, are still concerned about health risks. Notwithstanding this, we still hope that we will soon be able to hold a small educational event to introduce individuals who have expressed an interest in the Order, to greater detail about our history and operations. Hopefully, we will have something to report on this in the next issue of The Hospitaller.

Although there has not been a huge amount of activity that does not mean that we have been idle! One of our most significant support activities in the first half of the year was for The Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal. Two of our members, Prior Chev. Schon Condon and Chev. Richard Abela, both chair regional fundraising committees for the Red Shield Appeal, namely Greater Sydney Central and Macarthur respectively.

The Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal was founded in 1965 as the signature fundraising drive of The Salvation Army. They appeal to the entire Australian community each year for

donations to help fund a vast network of social and community services. It commences with an official launch of events nationwide where corporate and community leaders are invited to partner the Appeal in their mission to support Australians in need.

Every day countless Australians rely heavily on The Salvation Army's social welfare and community service programmes. The funds raised assist the organisation in providing family welfare assistance, refuge for women and children in crisis, shelter for the homeless, youth drop-in centres and support programmes, emergency and disaster relief, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, disability programmes, employment services and training programmes, rural and outback chaplains, court and prison chaplains and emergency service personnel chaplains.

In 2020 The Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal raised a total of A\$85.5 Million nationwide. The Greater Sydney Central contributed A\$87,509 and A\$8,769 came from Macarthur Group. All philanthropic funds raised were utilised to enable The Salvation Army to provide services for the sick, poor and displaced throughout the year.

Involvement with the Red Shield Appeal is not only very rewarding but it can also be very humbling, and Schon and Richard get to see and meet the individuals who, out of the kindness and generosity of their own hearts, provide vital support to those in need, day in and day out. In addition, occasionally they get to meet a few of the individuals who have benefitted from that assistance.



COMMANDERY



The Salvation Army Western
Sydney VIP Pre-Launch Event

To experience the grateful thanks expressed by the many individuals who have been assisted clearly reinforces that there really is a God, and that much can be done with genuine love and support. Schon and Richard are honoured and immensely proud to have had the opportunity to witness and experience all of that, and to have been instrumental in enabling the Priory of NSW to become a part of The Salvation Army's remarkable history in Australia.

Schon first became aware of the work of the "Salvo's", as they are fondly referred to in Australia, from his grandfather, prior to his death when Schon was around 7 years of age. His grandfather had served with the First Australian Imperial Force, which was formed as Australia's contribution to the First World War effort. After training, he was sent to the Middle East and formed part of the initial landings in Gallipoli. Alas, his stay was to be short lived as, within the first three months he was severely wounded when his right shoulder was struck by a mortar round. However, Schon's grandfather survived, was repatriated to Australia and ultimately went on to serve in a limited capacity during the Second World War. His grandfather very rarely spoke of the war and certainly never about the atrocities he saw and experienced. However, he often repeated the same message



Chevs. Condon and Abella at the
Service of installation & Thanksgiving

that consisted of three simple facts: - "nothing is achieved by fighting; the Turk's are a wonderful people; and never forget the Salvo's". The message from his grandfather still resonates with Schon today and has had a significant influence on how Schon has lived, and continues to live, his life.

Chev. Schon Condon GCSJ MMSJ
Priory of NSW



PRIORY OF QUEENSLAND



Great excitement - our first ACTUAL Priory meeting of 2021

Greetings from sunny Queensland!

2021 has brought an awakening from the dark night of COVID, and with the roll-out of the vaccines now beginning here, we are optimistic for a brighter future than we could possibly have imagined a year ago.

A strong sense of excitement attended our first Priory meeting of the year as you can see from the accompanying photographs. We were all delighted to be able to actually meet together again at last in the fellowship that the Order generates, and overdue promotions and awards were given out to a number of those present.

Our plans for the coming year are threefold. Perhaps the most important is our intention to open a new Commandery in Brisbane, the State capital of Queensland, where we already have a significant number of Knights and Dames as members.

We are also planning to hold an Investiture in the third quarter of the year for a growing number of Aspirants for membership of the Order. We will be very pleased to welcome any candidates for admission to the Order from other States (or indeed, countries) who would like to join us on that occasion,

and all Knights and Dames, wherever they may be situated, are invited to join us for the celebration.

Thirdly, we will be holding one major fund-raising event to continue our support for our two principal beneficiaries, the St John's Drop-in Centre for the Homeless, and the Institute of Glycomics for Medical Research. We are planning to repeat our highly-successful 'A Night in Scotland', and early indications are that we may double the amount raised by the event in 2019. As you can see from the attached photograph, a large number of gifts have already been donated as prizes for the occasion.

We lead a very privileged life here in Australia, but we are very conscious that two thirds of the world's population endure conditions of ignorance, poverty and disease. We cannot save the whole world, but we can reach out to those in our own community who are destitute, hungry, or sick. As caring human beings, and particularly as Knights and Dames of the Order of St John, we have an inherent duty to strive to meet this challenge.

Chev. The Baron Andre von Zeppelin GCSJ
Prior of Queensland



Chevs. The Rev. Jim Stonier and Dr. Robert Likeman are presented with their Meritorious Service Medals



Dame Shireen Clarke to Dame of Justice



Dame Sallyanne Hough receives her Meritorious Service Medals (MSSJ)



A large number of prizes have already been donated for our highly acclaimed fund raising event "A Night in Scotland"



PRIORY OF VICTORIA AND NORTHERN COMMANDERY

Following a snap lockdown of five days the State of Victoria has opened up for business again and the Priory of Victoria and its Northern Commandery were delighted to be able to meet in person, for the first time in a long time, at our Annual General Meeting in November.

On Display alongside our Vice Chancellor in the attached photograph is one of the Homeless packs with its contents which have been issued by the Northern Commandery to members of the Priory during its 'Geoffrey Evans Winter Appeal' which is now in its fifth year of operation. You may recall that our members carry at least one of these packs in the boot of their car to enable them to assist homeless individuals who are rough sleeping and in desperate need of warmth and support.

New Friends of the Order

The first new Friend of 2021 for the Priory of Victoria and Northern Commandery was commercial lawyer Robert Zucca who met Chev. Dino De Marchi when he assisted him with some legal work for a few months while on work experience at his office two years ago. Robert now has a developing practice at Southbank in Melbourne's Docklands and he will make a worthy contribution to the ongoing activities of the Priory.

A further two new Friends of the Priory of Victoria and Northern Commandery are retired nurse Fleur Jennings and her husband Allan. Allan was a major fund raiser for the Sir Edward Dunlop Medical Research Foundation (Sir Edward Dunlop, whose portrait is hanging on the wall, was a Commander Grand Cross of the order in the Priory of Victoria). Fleur is the Secretary of the Ivanhoe Branch of the RSL (the Returned and Services League in Australia).

In late December 2020, a delegation of the Priory, led by Prior HE Bailiff William Meehan, visited Fr. Bob Maguire at the Bob Maguire



Vice Chancellor Chev John Horan hard at work



Dinner at the home of Dame Giuseppina De Marchi

Foundation and presented him with a cheque for A\$1,500 as a donation to assist the Foundation with its charitable works.

Fr. Bob's community work is an extraordinary example to us all. The work he has undertaken through the Fr. Bob Maguire Foundation is very impressive, with one example being the distribution of more than 2,500 meals per month to the many families in need, and his service to the homeless youth through the Open Family Foundation is extraordinary.

Fr. Bob was also heavily involved in the CMF (Army Reserve) in which he distinguished himself, reaching the rank of Lt Col. and Commanding Officer of the Character Training Unit for Young Officers. He was grateful for the generosity of the Priory and he readily accepted the very warm invitation we extended to him to become a Friend of the Order.

The Northern Commandery of the Priory of Victoria held its first function of 2021 on 12 March at the home of Dame Giuseppina De Marchi in



NORTHERN COMMANDERY

Moonee Ponds, Melbourne, Victoria. Dame Giuseppina can be seen in the foreground of the photograph, with our Prior HE Bailiff William Meehan at the Head of the table.

Dame Maria Carboni, Serving Sister Tina Sannia and her daughter Pierina together with Sister Gianna Colonello provided the wonderful food and our assistant Treasurer, Antonio D'Amico, collected donations for the benefit of the Mother and Child Relief Fund. The evening was enjoyed by all and was rated 10 out of 10 for the gourmet food and conviviality. Friend of the Order Laura Benedetti had invited her daughter, Dr Flaviana Benedetti to attend. Flaviana accepted our invitation to become a Friend of the Order and she was warmly welcomed into the OSJ family.

At the Maiella Club in Thomastown, Victoria, on 28 February 2021 members of the Order celebrated the 36th Anniversary of the establishment of the Italian Non Commissioned Officers Association in Australia. In the background in the photograph are the flags and banners of the participating Associations

Chev. Dino De Marchi RFD KCSJ
Vice Chancellor, Priory of Victoria



Fr. Bob becomes as a Friend of the Order



Allan & Fleur Jennings



Commercial Lawyer Robert Zucca



Dr. Flaviana Benedetti is welcomed as a Friend of the Order



L-R STANDING Chev Dino De Marchi KCSJ, Vice Chancellor Priory of Victoria, President of the Italian Naval Association and friend of the Order, Mr Bartolo Fonti Friend of the Order Mr Vincenzo Gentili; Chev James Long KCSJ; Friend of the Order and president of UNSI Cav Joseph Morizzi; Friend of the Order and President of the Italian Artillery Association, Cav Epifanio Naselli; Newly created Friend of the Order Gerontology Professor Walter Petralia. SEATED: Friend of the Order Cav A Nardello; Serving Sister Cheryl Dorgan SSSJ, newly admitted Friend Cav Enzo Catelli, a veteran of the Russian Front; and Serving Brother Antonio D'Amico SBSJ, Assistant Treasurer, Priory of Victoria.



PRIORY OF SCOTLAND

In common with all our fellow Knights and Dames in the Priories and Commanderies worldwide, the members of the Priory of Scotland have been severely curtailed in our activities because of the restrictions imposed on travelling and meeting as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Fortunately most of our members have either managed to avoid being infected by the virus altogether, or have fully recovered from its effects, although in one or two cases this has taken a fairly long time.



A screenshot of our Priory Meeting held on Saturday 20th March 2021 and which was attended by 16 members

Over this past year we have kept in touch by telephone and by holding various virtual meetings using videoconference facilities (how did we manage before these wonderful communication systems were developed!). We have held full Priory meetings, which were great once we introduced a system for controlling the various microphones. Unfortunately a few of our members were unable to participate in our full Priory meetings due to broadband issues. We have also been able to hold meetings of our Priory Council, our Fundraising Group and the Board of Trustees of our Charitable Trust.

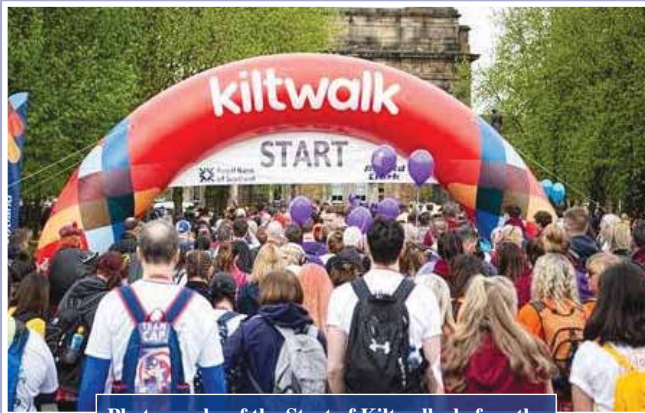
As our first fundraising venture of 2021 the members of the Priory have decided to enter a team in the 2021 Virtual Kiltwalk, which all members will support. Normally the Kiltwalk is held over organised courses of five, fifteen or twenty four miles in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and other towns and cities across Scotland, but the virtual Kiltwalk is a wee bit different. Each team, in fact each team member, is allowed to decide if they want to walk, run or even boogie for whatever distance and at whatever location they wish – although it has to be a reasonable challenge to make it all worthwhile. As well as taking part in the challenge each team member has the task of encouraging family, friends and neighbours to sponsor them, with all sponsorship moneys going to the charity the Priory has agreed to support, which for 2021 is The Social Bite Fund (Scottish Registered Charity No. SC045232). As an added benefit of participating in the Kiltwalk the amount the Priory Team raises will be increased by 50% as a result of the generosity of The Hunter

Foundation, a Scottish charity set up and funded by Sir Tom Hunter, a well known Scottish businessman and philanthropist (the amount the Hunter Foundation will contribute is capped at £5,000).

HE Bailiff Glenn Wales and his wife Dame Elaine Wales, both of whom were very ill with COVID-19 but have now fully recovered, have agreed to act as joint Team Captains and will personally walk 10 miles through the Loch Lomond and Trossachs area. They will be joined, for at least part of that walk, by Chev. Maurice Taylor. Our Prior HE Bailiff Jim Wylie has agreed to walk 6 miles around Mugdock Country Park and Milngavie Waterworks, both of which are reasonably close to where he lives.

Our Conventual Chaplain, Prelate The Revd. Tom Pollock has decided to walk for a not inconsiderable distance around the City of Glasgow, calling in at various famous landmarks on the way, such as Glasgow Cathedral, the Necropolis, Provan's Lordship, the City Chambers, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and a few other interesting places. Dame Rose Mary Harley, who first came up with the idea of participating in the Kiltwalk, will accompany Tom on his tour of Glasgow and they (Tom) will prepare a video of their journey. At each site, he will add to his commentary by including a potted history and some additional background information about the venue. Tom and Rose Mary will then arrange for the members of the Priory and our Sponsors to be able to download the video from YouTube (Tom is much more technically adept than most of us!).

Other members of the Priory will make their own decisions about what they do to complete their own Kiltwalk, but when



Photographs of the Start of Kiltwalks before the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic



Prior Wylie training for his Kiltwalk in Mugdock Country Park

all the activities are completed the amounts raised from all sponsorships will be merged onto the OSJ Priory of Scotland Team Kiltwalk page to show the total amount raised by the Priory in support of The Social Bite Fund.

Social Bite

The Social Bite charity was founded in 2012 and began life as a little café in Edinburgh. This small business became involved with homelessness issues when a young homeless man entered the café and asked for a job. The young man was offered employment but his story of homelessness affected Josh Littlejohn and Alice Thompson, the owners of the café, to such an extent that it was the start of great works, campaigning for homeless issues over the next nine years. Today Social Bite is a major employer of homeless people and the largest provider of free, freshly made food in the UK for those in need.



The Social Bite Village in Granton

In addition to providing meals to people in need the charity has also set up The Social Bite Village project whereby it took on an area of vacant land owned by Edinburgh City Council and built a small village made up of eleven two bedroom prefabricated houses together with a large community hub, to provide safe accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. Today this village is home to a vibrant community of people; all helping each other get their lives back on an even keel. In partnership with other agencies at the village, Social Bite provides dedicated on-site support with links to employment, education and other activities.

The charity has also created a “Scotland’s Housing First” program through which it has secured over eight hundred mainstream flats across five cities to provide permanent homes to Scotland’s rough sleepers and, together with the Scottish Government, has helped fund a wrap-around support to help people sustain their tenancies.

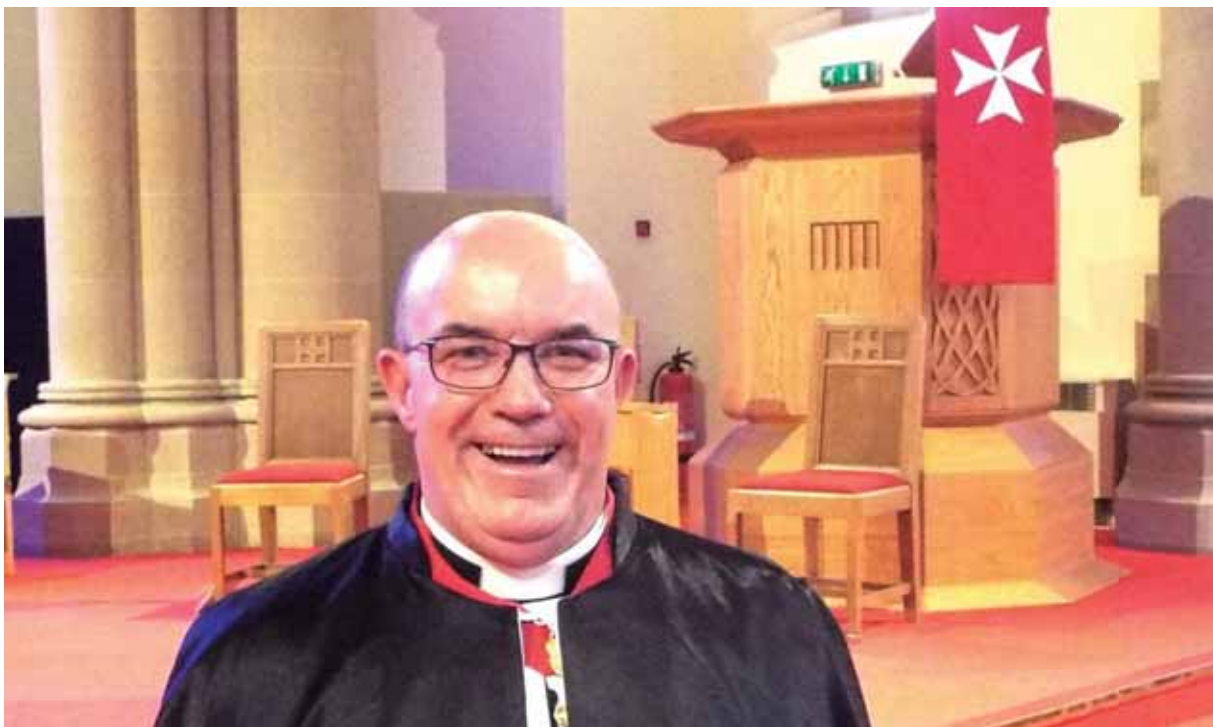
The Priory of Scotland has decided that this is a charity worthy of our support during these dreadful times and we hope to raise at least £5,000, to which will be added a further £2,500 from The Hunter Foundation, making a grand total of £7,500 (secretly we hope to double this amount – but time will tell!).

**HE Bailiff Jim Wylie GCSJ MMSJ
Prior of Scotland**



THE RESURRECTION

If you look at the four gospels you will discover the first disciples, and those around them, did not expect the event we call Resurrection. In Matthew, the women who went to the tomb were afraid; in Mark we are told they fled the tomb in trembling and in astonishment; in Luke they are perplexed and in John there was disbelief. We are even told that two of the disciples ran to the tomb because they could not believe the report by the women that the stone had been rolled away (John 20:4).



We, from the standpoint of our 21st century scientific view of the world, think it must have been easier for the first followers to believe, but really? Was the 1st century Palestinian Jew more credulous than ourselves over two thousand years later? I would suggest not. A careful reading of the passages toward the end of the four gospels dispels the nonsense that the disciples rose in joyous acclamation that first Sunday. They, like many of our contemporaries, were sceptical, because resurrection, despite the story of the raising of Lazarus, was not part of their experience. They did what most human beings do - they reject the story because it did not accord with their worldview or understanding.

Why do I write this for you, as we, in the Order of St John of Jerusalem, and countless millions of Christians around the world prepare for the great festival of Easter? Because I want you to believe: I want you to believe that resurrection is real and not just a one off event that happened just outside the city walls of Old Jerusalem. The Resurrection of our Lord was that one off event that leads to resurrection in every age and for everyone who believes. If we treat the stories of Jesus Resurrection as nice historical pieces we fail the gospel, we

fail the Risen Lord, because the resurrection is about seeing new life when life appears to have died. Resurrection occurs when the woman who has lost her child has the courage (with her husband) to have another; resurrection occurs when the man who has destroyed everything he held precious, his love for his family, his contribution to society, his life as a friend re-discovers that without the alcohol that anaesthetised his hurts, he can begin again; resurrection occurs when the person who has been grievously wronged finds the capacity for forgiveness and new life emerges; resurrection occurs every time you and me look at the world and despite its very often ugly, cruel treatment of many have the strength to say "I believe".

The Resurrection of our Lord was not an historical anomaly but rather God, the Father, inviting us into that new relationship for which, in His Son, He gave Himself. Why did God do this? To show us that love can overcome the darkness and in love, the gift of new life, is the promise for all humanity.

Prelate The Revd. Tom Pollock KSJ
Conventual Chaplain, Priory of Scotland

THE HOSPITALLER

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