



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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in St. John



As we, in the northern hemisphere, move ever deeper into autumn, it is time for our Brothers and Sisters in Australia to enjoy their months of spring! Spring is very often considered to be the “new beginning”, or the prelude to summer, and this year it is certainly quite fitting as it is within the Australian spring that the 2019 Sovereign Council Meeting will take place.



The triennial Sovereign Council Meeting is the occasion when those Dames and Knights, who have been elected to do so, meet at the chosen location to ensure that our glorious Order continues to be run in the full, legitimate, Christian and Sovereign manner in which it should be run. All as laid down in the Order’s Constitution, given by the hand of King Peter II of Yugoslavia in 1964. This very Constitution

identifies the Sovereign Council as “the custodian of the Sovereignty of the Order”, and, “the legislative body of the OSJ”!

My very first attendance at a Meeting of Sovereign Council was as an observer back in 1992. I can well remember being completely baffled by the matters being discussed, as well as by the jargon that was used. What immediately struck me however, was the sincerity of those who were present, how intent they were in upholding the Sovereignty I mentioned earlier. Yes indeed, there were sometimes great differences of opinion, but these were discussed and dealt with on every such occasion in the manner of true gentlemen. Ever since I had the honour of being elected Grand Master of our Order, I have cherished the “old school” manners of the Sovereign Council Meeting. As belittling of others as this may seem, it reminds me tenfold that we are not just another organisation of do-

gooders, nor are we an association or a club – we are a Christian Order of Chivalry, blessed with the Royal Charter and Constitution of 1963 and 1964. We can quite openly and legitimately model our traditions upon the histories of those who served the original Order in Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta. The traditions of serving Christ by our service to those less fortunate than ourselves whilst also defending the Christian faith from our enemies.

Whilst reverence of the past is a vital part of the traditions of our glorious Order, it is the duty we owe to the future which is of equal importance, if not more so. Once again, this is why the Sovereign Council and the triennial meeting is so very important. It is our duty, as elected senior members of our glorious Order, to ensure that the future generations of Brothers and Sisters in St. John are given a pure, untarnished and Sovereign Order so that they also will be able to give their service to our Order and continue to protect it for the future.

In closing, I would like once again to thank all those who have been working in the wings to achieve unification of the Order of Saint John. You know who you are, and I am deeply grateful for all the years of hard work that have slowly but surely come to bear fruit. I also thank those who put their trust in all of us and have closed ranks with the King Peter II Order under my Grand Mastership.

God bless us and protect us all!

Yours ever in the service of St. John





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

Your Excellencies and Dear Brothers and Sisters in St John,

In the past few years we have seen our glorious Order growing through a process of voluntary integration and reconciliation and indeed through the investiture of new members. This process continues apace, and indeed the next few months will see further developments.

An Order such as ours necessarily attracts a wide variety of people with a range of skills, abilities and expectations. It is important, however, to ensure that those people who are introduced to the Order are not attracted merely by the pomp – however much it may remain a part of our ceremonial – but are truly committed to a life of service to the Order.

It is essential to ensure that the flow of information to and from our central administration, including the Petit Conseil, and between the Order's hard-working units – our Priories and their dependent Commanderies and our Independent Commanderies – is improved to enable us all to become more invested in the workings of the Order and to benefit from, and inform the process of Integration.

How often have we heard the question: which Order of St John are you? Putting aside the sad fact that such a question has any proper basis, how many of us can truly answer that question with any degree of cogency? The reality is that disagreements in the past have given rise to a plethora of organisations, all making various claims to be the Order of St John and relying on various combinations of doubtful histories and provenances as well as resorting to mutual recognition and self-legitimation and such vague concepts as internationality to mask any lack of legal or indeed moral integrity.

Many of these organisations squabble, some try to undermine each other whilst wearing a mask of cooperation and others attack aggressively but the sad conclusion is that many ultimately are lacking those fundamental characteristics of chivalry, humility and dedication to true charity which are essential in any Order.

It is of course very much a human dilemma that although we may strive to achieve perfection, we must necessarily fall short. This is not to say that we are engaged in an exercise in futility, but rather that we should have the requisite level of humility to recognise the limitations placed upon us and seek to be reconciled with each other, rather than pursue a course of self-aggrandisement, self-importance and division. As to the true path, I would venture to suggest that the facts speak for themselves.

In a month's time I will be in Australia for the meeting of the Sovereign Council. By now you will have been provided with the draft Agenda, which I circulated to all members of the Sovereign Council, and have had the opportunity to put forward items for discussion. This meeting is taking place at a very exciting time for the Order: a time of great change, when we welcome new members to the Sovereign Council, but also express our thanks to those members who are retiring after years of selfless devotion.

In this regard I wish to pay tribute, in particular, to HE Conventual Bailiff Tony Sheill GCSJ CMSJ MSSJ, my immediate predecessor as Grand Commander and the current Lt Grand Commander, who will be stepping down after the conclusion of the meeting of the Sovereign Council and to HE Grand Dame Elizabeth Carey-Sheill GDSJ MMSJ, who will be stepping down as Registrar General. Both have, for many years, operated the central administration of the Grand Magisterium with great skill and dedication and the Order is greatly indebted to them.

Although it is the Grand Master's wish that the Order continue to be based in London, given the imminent retirements mentioned above and the situation in the United Kingdom, much of the administration of the

Grand Magisterium and in particular the Registry, is in the process of being relocated to Norway. Arrangements have been made with Via Baltic to transport some 2.7 metric tons of documents to the new office in Norway for digitisation and storage. You will see a short article in this edition of *The Hospitaller* setting out the new procedures relating to the production of Diplomas.

New members bring new ideas; and, change creates new challenges and offers new possibilities. I trust that we, as members of a truly great Order, will seize upon these opportunities and continue to make progress, *Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum*.

Yours ever in the Service of St John,

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





PRIORY OF NORWAY

Election of Our New Prior



L-R, Chev. Øivind Olsen, newly elected Prior of Norway Chev. Geir Bråten, HE Bailiff Emeritus Dan Vegard Hansen and Chev. Frank Johnson.

On 28th June 2019, and after following due process in accordance with the Constitution during which members were asked to propose candidates for election as Prior of the Priory of Norway following the retiral of Chev. John Harald Sundseth, who had served as Prior of Norway for one year, the Priory of Norway held a Chapter Meeting at Hotel Atlantic in the Norwegian City of Sandefjord.

The Chapter Meeting was chaired by HE Bailiff Emeritus Dan Vegard Hansen, Chev. Frank Johnson and Chev. Øivind Olsen. Several members of the Priory proposed that Chev. Geir Bråten be elected as Prior and, following a vote, Chev. Geir Bråten was unanimously elected as our new Prior.

The meeting thereafter approved the election of a Priory Council, which included HE Bailiff Emeritus Dan Vegard Hansen as Chairman and Dame Kathrine Kjergaard and Chev. Øivind Olsen as members.

The appointment of Chev. Geir Bråten as Prior of the Priory of Norway was subsequently confirmed by the Petit Conseil.

The meeting was held in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm and optimism and all members agreed to work to ensure an excellent future for the Order and the Priory.

The meeting was followed by a very enjoyable meal at which we welcomed and toasted our new Prior.

Project Aluminum Can Tabs

In 2008 our dear deceased Brother in St. John, Åge Schie persuaded Gullaug elementary school in Lier to start collecting the tabs from aluminum cans and, throughout all these years they have continued to collect the tabs for us. Since Åge's departure, Brother Tore Walther, with good help from Arild Østeby, has continued with this project and they have collected several kilos of these tabs over the years.



In Spring of this year I received a request from their teacher, Gro Odde, who asked if I could pay them a visit, tell them about the project, and also pick up the collected tabs. Which, of course, I did.

Serving Sister Kristin and I met up at the school at 9.00am! The first graders sang and danced for us in front of the entire school. I then went on the stage and told them about us and the Aluminum Can Tab Project. The school children were very proud, and we were extremely humbled, when they brought out bag after bag with tabs. The ultimate total was 89 kilos and, since 3 tabs weigh only 1 gram, then you can figure how many cans are needed to make 89 kilos of tabs.

These fantastic kids also helped us with filling gas in my car, and they promised to continue collecting the tabs - which is great!

Two very humble St. John helpers thoroughly enjoyed this experience and the funds gained from the tabs we collected from the school will be used to help some children in need, later this year.



Memorial Service to Honour Our Sailors of War

Our Independence Day on May 8th was a beautiful sunny day in Bygdøyen where we celebrated peace, freedom and democracy, with a Memorial Service to our beloved sailors of war, thanking them for their supreme effort risking their lives during the war.

The director of the museum, Tove Wefald Pedersen, was in charge and she began by paying respects to "our" last living sailor of war, Jan August Ørner, who passed away February 2019. He had for the past number of years, as the last survivor of the sailors of war, laid the flowers at their monument on behalf of our group.

The Minister of Health, Bent Høie and the historian, Bjørn Tore Rosendal, addressed those assembled and gave a very moving account of the history of D/S Octavian, a ship with a crew of 17 which was lost without a trace in 1942. The ship was ultimately located outside Virginia, on 4th July last year, by divers from the research vessel Explorer who discovered that the D/S Octavian had been hit by torpedoes and sunk. The Captain of the Explorer, Rustin Cassway, brought back the

plaque which identified D/S Octavian and the plaque was given to the Norwegian Maritime Museum, to fill a gap in history and as a permanent memorial for the families of those lost at sea.

Flowers were laid at the Memorial by the Veterans of War Associations, Maritime organisations and Bjørge Schinrud, on behalf of the Sailors of War Group, and roses were laid on behalf of the war widows, by Bjørge Schinrud and Gro Lippert Andersen from Hurum (a daughter of one of the sailors of war).

The ceremony ended as usual, with a choir of sailors singing, at the Norsk Maritime Museum,

It is now 74 years since the war ended and, since the last surviving sailor of war passed away in February earlier this year, we did consider closing down our Sailors of War Group. However, since it will be the 75th Anniversary next year, we have decided to close the Group in 2020.



Representatives from Johanniterhjelpen, Ragnhild Skaare, Geir Bråten, Bjørge Schinrud, Øivind Olsen and Gro Lippert Andersen.





A FEW THOUGHTS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE ORDER



HE Conv. Bailiff Harald Løvheim
GCSJ CMSJ MSSJ, Grand Councillor.

I will be stepping down as Grand Councillor at the Sovereign Council Meeting in Sydney in October and I am taking this opportunity to cast a glance at recent events within of our Order.

The last couple of years have created an optimistic ambience in our Order, starting with the signing of Letters of Integration between elements of the SOSJ in Europe and our Order, followed up by the signing of a similar document between the former HOSJ Priory of Baltic and our Order.

I have also recently been advised that the OSJ-Malta Priory of Italy, headed by Grand Marshal, Roberto Volpe, has joined our Order together with what is left of the Priors in Spain and Portugal.

Our family unites, and that gives this elderly Norwegian soul much joy and happiness.

I regret that I will be unable to be at the Sovereign Council Meeting in

Sydney in October, but my doctors will not allow me to sit in a plane for so many hours until the leg injury I sustained in Israel in 1967 is properly and fully healed. However, I wish all of you who will be participating in Sydney a happy and constructive Sovereign Council Meeting.

Although I will be stepping down as Grand Councillor at the Sovereign Council Meeting, I will continue as Secretary for Medals and Insignia. In addition, it has been decided that our Order should have a proper office base, and I have been asked to set up an office in Norway. The new office will be situated in Drammen, which is some 30 miles southwest of Oslo and should be operational by the end of September. However, further information will be issued in due course. The address of the office is Øvre Eikervei 14, NO-3048, Drammen and once all documents and papers have been transferred from Bedfordshire to Drammen they will be scanned, digitised and logged. I will manage the office and



The new office
building in Drammen.



L-R, Prior of Finland Timo Lääperi, Mrs. Lääperi, Grand Commander Alastair Redpath-Stevens, Grand Master HRH Prince Karl Vladimir of Yugoslavia, Dame Evy Pettersen, Chev. Øivind Olsen, Grand Councillor Harald Løvheim and Prior of the Baltic Priory Vesa Viitaniemi.



A NEW SYSTEM FOR DIPLOMAS

Following the relocation of the Registry to Norway, and as a result of recent experience, all requests for Diplomas must in future be made by heads of unit on the relevant form which must be completed in typescript and not handwritten, save for the signature unless the form is signed digitally. Completed forms must now be sent electronically to the Grand Commander at grandcommander@osj-kh.com for forwarding to the Petit Conseil and Grand Master for approval.

Once you have been notified that an application has been approved, you will need to send the original form to the Registry at Øvre Eikervei 14, 3048 Drammen, Norway (unless it has been signed digitally when it may be sent to the Registry at office@osj-kh.com) and make payment to the Grand Treasurer, after which the Diploma will be issued and sent to you.

You will need to factor in these changes when making requests to ensure that Diplomas are received in good time.

HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz GCSJ PUHO CMSJ has agreed to be responsible for scanning and logging all documents.

As I take a step back from being Grand Councillor to now becoming Office Manager, I take great pleasures recalling many enjoyable events that have taken place over recent years and in particular the recent Investiture in Turku, Finland in June. The Investiture, organised by the Priory of the Baltic under Prior Vesa Viitaniemi and Vice Prior Ralf Sundgren, was a great success from beginning to end. The Priory of the Baltic has certainly set a very high standard for Prior Timo Lääperi to follow, when it is the turn of the Priory of Finland to host an Investiture in Tampere, Finland next year.

**HE Conv. Bailiff Harald Løvheim GCSJ CMSJ MSSJ,
Grand Councillor**



Norwegian participants at the Investiture in Turku: L-R, Dame Evy Pettersen, Grand Councillor Harald Løvheim, Chev. Øivind Olsen and HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz.

THE GRAND MASTER'S NEW CHAIN OF OFFICE

At the investiture in Turku at the beginning of June, the chain of our Grand Master suddenly started to fall apart, and HE Conv. Bailiff Harald Løvheim was instructed to have it repaired.

Harald examined the chain with OPRO, who manufacture the Order's insignia, and it very quickly became clear that the chain was primarily made of brass, and that little could be done to rectify the problems. They agreed that the Grand Master should have a new chain made in solid, gilded silver with all crosses in the new chain being suitably enamelled.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of our Brother Harald, the new chain will be ready for the Grand Commander to collect when he visits Oslo in early September. He will then present it to the Grand Master prior to the Sovereign Council Meeting in Sydney in October.

Regrettably, because of problems with his legs, Harald's medical advisers have refused him permission to fly to Sydney, and he will therefore not be present when the Grand Master receives his splendid new chain of office.





Fest i Dalen (Party in the Valley)

Our most fun and pleasant volunteer work took place on 15th and 16th June at the 'Fest i Dalen' for the Church of Ila.

Despite the light rain and changeable weather, lots of people showed up at the church for the party. To stay dry the musicians performed beneath a tent, so all three choirs were accompanied by the music essential for their performances. The three choirs were Stas, Song Choir Major and the church's own choir,



The eight smiling St John Helpers who grilled, prepared hotdogs and served food, drinks and ice cream to all.

Sagene. As normal the food, drinks, cakes and ice cream were provided by the St. John helpers and eight St. John helpers were on hand to prepare and serve the goodies to all concerned.

As it was a bit chilly our 2 grill chefs, Kristin Brudheim and Tore Walther, were kept very busy. Snefrid & Ivar Cor Salvesen, Ragnhild Skaare, Geir Bråten,

Ole Georg Jensen and I attended to the hotdogs which we served up to the happy and hungry people. The guests thoroughly enjoyed themselves and they got all the food and ice cream they wanted. We ended up getting lots of positive feedback from the priest, guests and the church, which is important for us since this enables us to continue to use Ila church as a base for the Priory of Norway.

Chev. Øivind Olsen, GCSJ MMSJ
Leader of St. John Helpers, Priory of Norway



PRIORY OF FRANCE

Following a very successful Investiture in Nice in March 2019, the Priory of France continued to carry out charitable activities and the mission entrusted to it by our Grand Master. As Ambassador for Europe, HE Bailiff Alain Colorado GCSJ, Prior of France continued his unifying work that included working for the integration of the Commandery of Monaco-Italy and various Grand Priors, Priors and European Commanderies of the former SOSJ and Formhals Orders. Most recently, the OSJ-Malta Priory of Italy, agreed to integrate with our Order. This is hopefully the beginning of a long process of reunion, integration and restoration for our beloved Order.

In our meetings and discussions, we have found there is a great desire for unity and common goodwill, values that are shared by the Knights and Dames in all the various Priors and Commanderies. The Commandery is the principal unit at the centre of our Order, and thereafter, the Priory. The governing bodies such as the Sovereign Council and the Small Council are there to assist the Priors and Commanderies that elected them.

Our beloved Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir, has made it clear that everyday charitable efforts are fundamental and crucial for our commitment to serve our fellow man in accordance with the aims of our Order.

In recent months, the Priory of France has been involved in various charitable tasks, in particular to help the poor. Jointly with the Knights and Dames in the Order of St Lazarus in France and other local associations, we have shipped a container full of items, such as 20 medical beds, 500 pairs of spectacles and a number of wheel chairs, to health clinics in Senegal. Together with the Commandery of Monaco-Italy we also sent a container full of medical equipment and food to Madagascar.

HE Bailiff Alain Colorado GCSJ
Prior of France



HE Bailiff Robert Volpe, Prior of Italy signs with HE Bailiff Alain Colorado, Prior of France.



A procession at a Priory of Italy Chapter Meeting.



A container load of medical supplies destined for health clinics in Senegal.

PRIORY OF DACIA

Commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Danish Flag (Dannebrog)

A number of Knights and Dames from the Priory of Dacia participated in a ceremony held in Vordingborg to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Danish flag (Dannebrog), which is reputed to be the oldest national flag in the world. Legend tells us that Dannebrog fell from the sky in 1219 in Tallinn, Estonia, at the time when the Danish King Valdemar II was on a crusade to convert the people of Estonia to Christianity. Legend also tells us that as long as the King held the flag in the air, the Danish troops were winning, but when his arms grew tired and the flag fell to the ground, the Estonian army would triumph. Thus, even today, it is a rule that Dannebrog is not allowed to touch the ground.

At the Ceremony in Vordingborg HRH Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark unveiled a copy of the original flag from 1219, which appears to be quite similar to the flag of our Order. The Order of St. John had been asked to provide an honorary guard for the Danish veterans at a coronation, and we had the opportunity to give Dannebrog's poppy pins to Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary, and were awarded the Anniversary Medal by Vordingborg's Mayor and Sea Veterans.

Chev. Per Østergaard KSJ
Grand Herald



A Brief Report from Uganda



Copied here is a very brief report, together with a photograph, which we received on the work in Uganda being carried out by one of our helpers, Kirsten Andersen. We will endeavor to incorporate a fuller, extended report regarding Kirsten's activities, in the next issue of The Hospitaller.

"Here I am again in Uganda, working

for Youth Arise Uganda Network, a life-changing programme of health, leadership and livelihood for young people in Uganda.

In April we went to Papoli and gave out pads to the young girls and books and pens for all. It demonstrated to us how much these young people really need our help. They have a lot to deal with,

and struggle greatly. It is very clear that even a very small amount can make a huge difference, and give them the strength to carry on to overcome the many problems and difficulties."

Kirsten Andersen
Uganda



PRIORY OF THE BALTIC



Investiture in Turku

On Saturday 1st June 2019 we held the first ever OSJ Investiture in Turku, Finland. 70 guests came from seven different nations and from six different Priors. There were attendees from the Priors of England, Central-Europe, Norway, Finland, the Commandery of Monaco-Italy and, of course, from the Priory of the Baltic

The Investiture, which was organised by the Priory of the Baltic, was presided over by Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ and, in attendance, were Grand Commander, HE Conv. Bailiff Alastair Redpath-Stevens and

Grand Councillor, HE Conv. Bailiff Harald Løvheim. Chev. Ralf Sundgren was Acting Chamberlain for the Investiture Ceremony and Prelate Chev. Matti Halmesaho conducted the Service.

We were also honoured to have as our guests the Grand Prior of Archangel Michael, Mr Viktor Vassiljec and his wife Lena, from Estonia.

On Friday 31st May the Priory of the Baltic hosted a reception at Marina Palace Hotel's Kirjastokabinetti which was attended by HRH Prince Karl Vladimir together twenty OSJ members

from other countries. We all listened with great interest to a presentation by Ton van de Ven about the new Crovv communication platform which is being introduced for use by our Order.

On Saturday afternoon a very moving Investiture Ceremony was held in Mikael Church in Turku city center. The Knights and Dames processed into Church to the sounds of Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* and ultimately recessed to the music of G.F. Händel's *The King Shall Rejoice*, played by Chev. Pami Karvonen, KSJ. During the Service eighteen new Knights and Dames of Honour were invested into the



Order and, in addition there were several well deserved elevations, and Medals of Merit were awarded to Chevalier's Heikki Sario, KCSJ and Kari Tähtinen, KSJ.

The Investiture Service was followed by a Champagne Reception which preceded the Grand Commander's Banquet in the nearby Submarina Restaurant near to the River Aura.

During the Grand Commander's Banquet we held an Art Auction which raised 530 euros which was given as a cash donation to the Mother and Child Relief Foundation. The

Priory of the Baltic will donate further funds generated from the Investiture to Operation Foodbag which provides food to poor families in the larger Turku area and also to the Mikael parish.

The next Investiture in Finland will be organised by the Priory of Finland in Tampere on Saturday 12th September 2020. All will be made most welcome!

HE Bailiff Vesa V Viitaniemi GCSJ
Prior of the Baltic Priory





COMMANDERY OF MONACO-ITALY



Syrian and Iraqi students at a French conversation class.



Commander, Dame Jacqueline and Elias Azar.



Three of the volunteers working on the stand were delighted to pose for a group photograph with their Royal Highnesses.



Their Royal Highnesses, Prince Karl Vladimir and Princess Brigitta visit various stands at the Fair.



Each week the Commandery of Monaco-Italy holds French conversation classes and provides support for groups of Syrian and Iraqi Christian refugees who have been given refuge in the Principality of Monaco. They are provided with a safe haven to save them from being persecuted in their home countries because of their Faith. Our commitment and dedication is bearing fruit and we are delighted to announce that one of our brothers from the East, Elias Azar, has integrated well into our Commandery since his arrival in Monaco, and has now joined the Commandery as a Donat. Elias will be welcomed into our Order as a Knight of Honour at a forthcoming Investiture of the Priory of France. Congratulations to Elias - we offer him a big thank you for his dedication to our noble cause.

The period from March 7 to March 10 was a busy time for all members of our Commandery. During that time the Sister Mary's Fair was held, in which most of our Knights and Dames participated. They found themselves selling men's clothing during two busy days, not to mention the time spent preparing stalls for the Fair and the subsequent time spent dismantling them. We were delighted that the funds raised far exceeded the amount raised last year. We should mention that our Brother Philippe Chaber is one of the sponsors of the 'Lotto Bingo' that closes the event.

The Commandery had the great honour and privilege of welcoming our Grand Master HRH Prince Karl Vladimir and HRH Princess Brigitta to 'Sister Mary's Fair'. The President of Sister Mary's Monegasque Association, who was in charge of the fair, welcomed their Royal Highnesses on the afternoon of Friday 8th March and accompanied them from stand to stand. Our beloved Grand Master, Prince Karl Vladimir, asked many questions and showed great interest in the diversity of products being offered for sale. The proceeds from the Fair go to support Sister Mary's Association which cares particularly for the suffering elderly.

Four of our refugees, who participate in our French courses, were working on the stand that



A visit to the Prince's Palace in Monaco.

had been assigned to the Commandery and they were introduced to Their Royal Highnesses who chatted very happily with them – what an wonderful emotional moment they experienced!

Everyone involved in the Fair was delighted and very impressed by the friendliness and great kindness of the Prince and Princess.

On the morning of Friday 8th March Commander, Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich and HE Bailiff Martin Marschner von Helmreich had the honour of accompanying HRH Prince Karl Vladimir and HRH Princess Brigitta on a private visit to the Prince's Palace in Monaco. The Palace is the official residence of the Sovereign Prince of Monaco, and the guide in charge of the Archives at the Palace gave a potted history of the various Princes of Monaco and answered questions raised by the Prince and Princess.

The following day, at noon on Saturday 9th March – the day of the Investiture of the Priory of France, Dame Jacqueline and Dame Martine had organised a working meeting, bringing together the Knights and Dames of the Commandery of Monaco-Italy, allowing everyone to meet and exchange ideas on the future activities of the Commandery.

Most of the members of our Commandery participated in the Investiture and attended the subsequent Grand Commander's Gala Dinner, which had been organised by the Priory of France.

It was a great weekend, full of emotion and sharing for everyone who attended, and particularly for the members of the Monegasque Commandery.

**Dame Jacqueline Marschner von Helmreich DSJ
Commander of Monaco-Italy**



DAME JUDITH ANNETTE GRUBER DCSJ - SECRETARY GENERAL



Dame Judith Annette Gruber DCSJ.

The new Secretary General of our Order is Dame Judith Annette Gruber DCSJ who was born in Denmark in 1956 and is married to Chev. Franz Pius Gruber. Judith was invested into the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller in May 1995 and since then she has been involved in various charitable projects.

Judith and Franz are members of the Commandery of Monaco-Italy, and are both firmly of the view that membership of the Order has given them very many enjoyable experiences and great friendships spanning many borders.

Although she has since retired, in her professional life, Judith was Executive Secretary to the Chairman and Board of a large international company for many years. Judith speaks several languages fluently, including German, English and Danish and also understands the Scandinavian languages. Several years ago, Judith became Assistant Secretary General to HRH Princess Brigitta and she has now taken on the role of Secretary General.



PRIORY OF NSW



The Annual Sydney Fundraising Lunch - held this year for the benefit of the Children's Medical Research Institute.



A few of our members and guests socialising and enjoying a wonderful lunch.



The wonderful display of raffle and auction prizes which helped raise much-needed funds for CMRI.

I am delighted to report that the Priory of NSW & the ACT had a very successful Annual Sydney Fundraising Lunch, which this year was held for the benefit of the Children's Medical Research Institute (CMRI), who are celebrating their sixtieth year of operation. The lunch was held on Thursday 25th July in the historic Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, and this year we were privileged to not only have a representative from CMRI as our main guest speaker, but a number of other scientists and medical professionals were in attendance.

The focal point of our luncheon was a presentation by Andrew Kelly, Director of Fund Raising at CMRI, who gave us a wonderful insight into CMRI's vision, which is to focus on the fundamental causes, and thus find cures, for children's genetic diseases. A few years ago, CMRI focused their research on the causes of cancer, epilepsy and birth defects. The current focus is to raise funds to support the CMRI scientists, who are accelerating the search for cures to childhood diseases, by helping them acquire cutting-edge equipment, facilities and other resources that will enable them to achieve solutions more quickly. The talk was most heart-warming and informative, which encouraged everyone to donate and support the cause of the CMRI.

The funds raised on the day and forwarded on to the CMRI, were obtained from the surplus proceeds of the lunch tickets and donations from Members, in addition to the sale of auction items and raffle tickets. I am very proud to announce that this amounted to a little under \$8,000. An amazing and outstanding result from a group of less than fifty people!

My sincere thanks and congratulations must go to all those members of the Order who assisted with the organisation of the lunch and made it such a huge success. Without their efforts, the event could not have achieved the success it did.

In addition to the Order's normal annual activities, we are currently planning for the upcoming Siege of Malta function to be held in September 2019.

I am particularly pleased to report that our preparations are well underway for the 2019 Sovereign Council Meeting to be held in Sydney, Australia on 15th – 19th October 2019, to which we will be most honoured to welcome the Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ, and HRH Princess Brigitta GDSJ.

The key events at the Sovereign Council will be as follows: -

- Civic Cocktail Function – Parramatta, 15th October 2019
- Grand Master's Cocktail Function – Sydney, 16th October 2019
- Sovereign Council Meeting – Sydney, 17-18th October 2019
- Church Service and Investiture – Sydney, 19th October 2019
- Grand Commander's Reception and Banquet – Sydney, 19th October 2019

We are truly looking forward to this event and trust that this will be another great opportunity for all Priories to unite in our efforts to achieve the wonderful aims of our Order.

In closing, and on behalf of the Priory of NSW and the ACT Commandery, we look forward to seeing everyone in Sydney, not only to foster stronger relationships and understanding between the various members from all parts of our great Order, but also to showcase a little of what Greater Sydney and this wonderful country of Australia has to offer.

**Chev. Schon G Condon GCSJ,
MMSJ, RFD
Prior of NSW**



THE ACT COMMANDERY



The ACT Commandery Investiture on 30 March 2019.

The ACT Commandery continues to evolve in our Nation's Capital. Although we have had no formal functions since our Investiture on 30 March, we continue to advance our cause, and since most of us are regularly in and around the City Centre, either for business reasons or for medical or dental appointments, we often meet up for a coffee and a chat.

Our Annual Church Service at St John's Anglican Church in Reid (a suburb of Canberra), which was planned for Sunday 29th June was cancelled (the church had roofing problems), but we are all pleased to note that the Church is now closed to allow it to have a new \$330,000 roof of Welsh Slate installed. The Anglican Church of St John the Baptist predates the Nation's Capital by 70 years. The Church, Graveyard and Schoolhouse are living reminders of Canberra's pioneering farming community, and the first European Settlers. The beautiful high steepled Church was built of local bluestone and sandstone in 1841 and was consecrated in 1845 by the first European Settlers.

Along with the NSW Priory, we are looking forward to the Sovereign Council Meeting in Sydney in October. The local arrangements for

the SCM are being organised by Grand Hospitaller, HE Conv. Bailiff Peter Shilton, and Prior, LTCOL Chev. Schon G Condon, under the guidance of Grand Commander, HE Conv. Bailiff Alastair Redpath-Stephens, and their plans are well advanced.

Several of our members met recently at Poppy's Café at the Australian War Memorial (named in honour of Trooper David 'Poppy Pearce', killed in action when the ASLAV he was travelling in ran over a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in 2007) to discuss arrangements over lunch, and we had a wonderful time together. As usual, along with the injections of good Australian humour, and other light-hearted banter, we were first to arrive and last to leave. However, be assured, we all had a wonderful time!

**Chev. Derek J Robson
AM KCSJ
Commander ACT Commandery**



An ACT Commandery Meeting at the Australian War Memorial.



PRIORY OF VICTORIA AND THE NORTHERN COMMANDERY

The University of Melbourne



L-R: Professor Alan Cowman AC and Professor Ruth Bishop AC.

The University of Melbourne has supported the Priory of Victoria and the Northern Commandery of the Order of St John of Jerusalem Hospitaller for many years and it was therefore pleasing to see some of the University's alumni being recognised and rewarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Chev. Dino De Marchi RFD KCSJ, Commander, Northern Commandery was an alumnus there, as was Knight Commander Grand Cross Sir Edward Weary Dunlop, and almost certainly many others in the Order, through the years.

The University's Newsletter announced that a total of 110 alumni, staff and former staff have been honoured for their contribution to Australian society, in the Queen's Birthday Honours, two of whom received the nation's top civilian honour – Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AC). The two recipients are Professor Ruth Bishop AC (BSc 1954, MSc 1958, PhD 1961, DSc 1978, DMSc 2009) and Professor Alan Cowman AC (PhD 1983).

Professor Bishop is an internationally renowned virologist who is honoured for her eminent service to global child health through the development of improved vaccines and for her service to medical research, and one of the world's leading molecular biologists focused on malaria. Professor Alan Cowman AC receives his Honour for his eminent service to the biological sciences.

The Priory of Victoria and the Northern Commandery send our sincere congratulations to all of the worthy alumni recipients.

Mother and Child Foundation Dinner

The Priory of Victoria, Northern Commandery's Mother and Child Foundation Dinner was held in the Potter Room, University Union, University of Melbourne on 10th May 2019. The event was a great success and we were all delighted to congratulate Prior of the Priory of Victoria HE Bailiff Bill Meehan GCSJ on his promotion to the rank of Bailiff and his authorisation to conduct Investitures in the Priory and its dependent Commanderies.



L-R: Dame Giuseppina De Marchi, Chev Dino De Marchi, Friend Julia De Marchi, Chev Daniel Allwood, Chev John Horan, Friend Mrs Cheryl Horan, Chev Renato Raimondi, The Hon Ralph De Marchi (Auctioneer) and Dame Maria Carboni.



Newly promoted HE Bailiff William B Meehan GCSJ is at the centre of the photograph standing behind Dame Giuseppina De Marchi DSJ.

Chev. Dino De Marchi RFD KCSJ
Commander, Northern Commandery



PRIORY OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Communication is very important within our Order, and The Hospitaller is very effective at ensuring our Brothers and Sisters throughout the world are kept abreast of all that is happening in our various Priors and Commanderies. During the past few months, our Priory has successfully used Crovv, the magnificent communication tool which was created by our Brother Chev. Ton van de Ven, and donated by him for use by the Order. The use of this wonderful tool has enabled our Priory to have many meetings of our members without the need to travel. This is particularly useful for us, since the Priory of Central Europe has members living in a number of different European countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Belgium and Holland.

Prior, HE Bailiff Kurt Schaller GCSJ is keen to bring as many Knights and Dames of good standing, into the Order, as he possibly can. Introducing members, who will honour, perpetuate and be faithful to the Oath they take when joining the Order of Saint John and to our Moto: "Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum". It is essential to bring together people who have the desire and passion to help ease human suffering while giving priority to the Christian faith.

The Priory of Central Europe has increased membership numbers by welcoming new Knights and Dames into our Order during recent Investitures:

- Six Knights and Dames invested at the Priory of England Investiture in London, in October 2018.
- Six Knights and Dames and one Demoiselle were invested at the Priory of France Investiture in Nice, in March 2019.
- Three Knights and Dames were welcomed at the Investiture of the Priory of Finland in Turku, in June 2019.

Since joining OSJ-KH, under the leadership of our Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic of Yugoslavia GCSJ, membership of our Priory has therefore increased by fifteen (15) Knights and Dames in the past year. These Brothers and Sisters all have a strong Christian faith, a commitment to helping others and are encouraged to honour and respect their Oath to the Order.

HE Bailiff Kurt Schaller GCSJ
Prior, Priory of Central Europe



Six Knights and Dames were invested at the Priory of England Investiture in London in October 2018.



HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz and Prior, HE Bailiff Kurt Schaller at the Investiture in Turku in June 2019.



Six Knights and Dames and one Demoiselle were invested at the Priory of France Investiture in Nice in March 2019.



Three Knights and Dames were welcomed at the Investiture in Turku in June 2019.



The Procession of Knights and Dames into the Church at the Investiture of the Priory of Finland in Turku in June 2019.



Chev. Dr Gordon Wright gives a spirited address to the Haggis.

PRIORY OF QUEENSLAND

The Priory of Queensland celebrated all things Scottish at its Fundraiser, "A Night in Scotland" held on Friday, 31st May 2019.

The magnificent venue of the Southport Yacht Club (overlooking the Gold Coast Broadwater) was transformed into a small corner of Scotland as 110 attendees comprising Knights, Dames and guests joined in the spirit by donning kilts, sporrans and other Celtic accoutrements.

Guests were greeted and piped into the dining room where a digital collage of Scottish images provided sweeping Highland and Hebridean vistas.

Guests were treated to the very finest Scottish fare, which of course included a spirited address

to the Haggis by Chev. Dr Gordon Wright KSJ. The Selkirk Grace was delivered by Chev. Bill McCord KCSJ, himself a recent émigré from the shores of bonny Scotland.

A troupe of prizewinning dancers from the Donna Manning Academy of Highland Dancing enthralled the audience and the entertainment reached fever pitch when the Piper and choristers joined in to lead a rousing rendition of traditional Scottish songs.

Between silent auction items and raffles, there was still time for a mystery Whisky Tasting Competition organized by Chev. Dr Gordon Wright KSJ, Dame Naomi Wright DSJ and Dame Moira Lockhart DSJ.



Chev. Dr Gordon Wright and Chev. Bill McCord.



The Whisky Tasting Competition in full swing.



Dancers from the Donna Manning Academy of Highland Dancing entertained our guests throughout the evening.



Enjoying "A Night in Scotland" are HE Conv. Bailiff Shane Hough GCSJ CMSJ, Dame Sallyanne Hough DCSJ CMSJ, Chev. Professor Mark von Itzstein AM KSJ, Dame Anne Maree, The Baroness von Zeppelin DCSJ and the Prior of Queensland Chev. Andre, The Baron von Zeppelin GCSJ.



Chev. Dr Robert Likeman, Mr Richard King and Chev. Dr Chris Cunneen.



Prior of Queensland, Chev. Andre, The Baron von Zeppelin GCSJ read a letter of greeting and best wishes from the Prior of Scotland Chev. Jim Wylie GCSJ MMSJ.

Representatives from the Priory's chosen charitable recipients made short presentations about the benefits the funds raised will make to their respective charitable causes. The St John Crisis Centre helps the homeless and needy in South East Queensland. Proceeds raised will also benefit the Institute for Glycomics and the Institute Director, Chev. Professor Mark von Itzstein AM KSJ spoke of the pioneering research into disease and global health issues being conducted by him and his team.

The Prior congratulated the Priory Fundraising Committee, and the ongoing support of all Priory members for achieving yet another successful event, honouring the Hospitaller spirit of the Order. A substantial donation from the proceeds of the event will be presented formally later in the year.

**HE Conv. Bailiff Shane Hough
GCSJ CMSJ
Grand Chancellor**



PRIORY OF SCOTLAND

A Visit to Pitlochry Festival Theatre

On Saturday 25th May, a number of our members decided to enjoy a great social day out and travelled north to Pitlochry in Perthshire, to visit Pitlochry Festival Theatre and attend a performance of "Summer Holiday", the musical made famous by Cliff Richard and the Shadows who starred in the film of that same name. We arrived at the theatre in good time to enjoy a convivial lunch before the performance began at 2.00pm. It was a highly successful social occasion and, despite the atrocious weather, we all had a thoroughly great day enjoying the company of our fellow Knights and Dames.



A few members gather in the theatre foyer.



Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

Sicilian Gourmet Dinner and Wine Fundraising Evening



On Saturday 20th July, the Priory of Scotland held a Fund Raising event with a difference – a Sicilian Gourmet Dinner and Wine event. The menu was prepared, and the high quality Sicilian produce and wines sourced, by the renowned Sicilian Chef Filippo Madonia who was guest Chef for the evening.

In addition to everyone enjoying great Sicilian food and wine, and having a good fun evening, one of the main objectives of the event was to raise funds for the very worthwhile charitable causes we support - to enable the Priory of Scotland to help those in society who are less fortunate than ourselves.

The evening commenced with a Champagne Reception followed by a truly exceptional, authentic four course Sicilian Gourmet Dinner using

locally sourced Sicilian ingredients of the highest quality, excellent Sicilian wines and some great entertainment. Throughout the evening we enjoyed some wonderful music and singing associated with the region of Sicily.

During the evening we held a raffle and a very brief auction (strictly limited to only four auction lots) to help us achieve our fund raising target. However, although this was a fund raising event, much emphasis was placed on everyone enjoying good food, fine wines, socialising and enjoying a relaxing time together.

Numbers attending the event were limited to only sixty members and guests, but even so, I am delighted to report that the evening raised £10,450 for our charitable causes – a great result from such a small gathering.



Suzanne Ritchie, Chev. Barrie Fleming & Janice Fleming.



James Thomson OBE, Chev. Bruce Reidford & Anne Reidford.



Chev. Maurice Taylor CBE, Chev. Jimmy Sinclair, John Mackie & Ross McKenzie



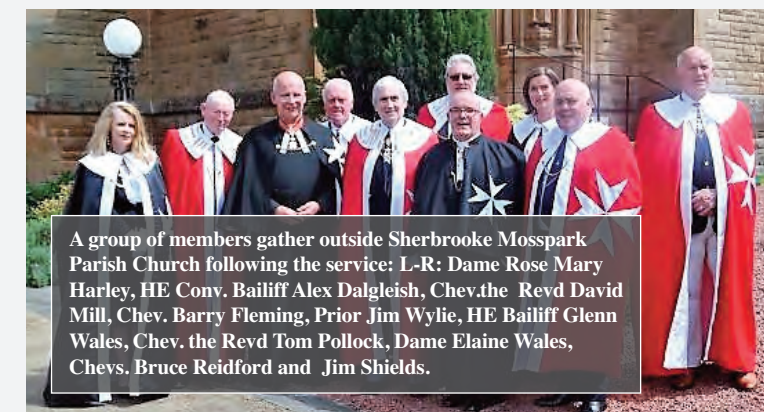
Wendy Eales & HE Bailiff Glenn Wales.



Patronal Feast Day



The Knights and Dames enjoy an excellent Patronal Feast Day Lunch prepared and served by members of Sherbrooke Mossspark Parish Church.



A group of members gather outside Sherbrooke Mossspark Parish Church following the service; L-R: Dame Rose Mary Harley, HE Conv. Bailiff Alex Dalgleish, Chev. the Revd David Mill, Chev. Barry Fleming, Prior Jim Wylie, HE Bailiff Glenn Wales, Chev. the Revd Tom Pollock, Dame Elaine Wales, Chevs. Bruce Reidford and Jim Shields.

Members of the Priory celebrated our Patronal Feast Day on Sunday 23rd June at a service conducted by our Chaplain Chev. Revd Tom Pollock KSJ and our Prelate Chev. Revd David Mill GCSJ in our home church, Sherbrooke Mossspark Parish Church. Once again we were treated to the moving and uplifting experience of listening to the magnificent Sherbrooke Mossspark Church Choir under the leadership of the renowned Choirmaster and Organist, John Gormley.

We also had the privilege of sharing our Patronal Saint's Day Service with the baptism of a baby boy and the Revd Pollock very neatly linked the baptism with the aims of our Order and the service celebrating the life of our Patron, Saint John.

During the service, Dame Rose Mary Harley was presented with the diploma confirming her promotion to Dame Commander of Grace as a result of her work and commitment within the Priory, and Prior, Chev. Jim Wylie was greatly honoured to receive the Medal of Merit (MMSJ) which had been bestowed on him by Grand Master, HRH Prince Karl Vladimir Karadjordjevic in recognition of his significant contribution to the Order, not only in relation to the growth in the Priory of Scotland and its charitable work, but also as regards his editorship of The Hospitaller.

Following the service, we all retired to the small hall downstairs in the Church where tables had been beautifully set out, and members of the Church, led by Elaine Pollock, the Revd Tom Pollock's wife, proceeded to serve up an excellent lunch accompanied by a glass or two of very nice wines.



Charitable Donations

Already during 2019, the Priory of Scotland has donated the sum of £20,000 to various very worthwhile and very needy charitable causes:

St Catharine's Homeless Project in Edinburgh – £2,000

A rota of approximately 100 unpaid volunteers give practical support to homeless and disadvantaged people in the city of Edinburgh, which includes providing morning and evening meals, toilet and shower facilities, and even more importantly, a warm welcome, a listening ear and a place to call 'Home'.

Up to 200 people a day use the project, ranging from long-term homeless people who are sleeping rough or staying in hostels around the city, to old age pensioners who bus in from their flats in the Edinburgh estates for a meal and some company.

Chev. Jimmy Sinclair KSJ presenting our cheque for £2,000 to Sister Aelred of St. Catharine's Homeless Project.



Night Ministry, Dundee – £4,000

Night Ministry is an ecumenical Christian charity based in Dundee, which provides humanitarian support and pastoral care, helping to maintain human dignity through practical help. It aims to improve the lives of homeless people, in particular rough sleepers and, each night, every night, the volunteers will tour the city of Dundee in their customised transit van

looking for rough sleepers – making sure they are safe and have warm and dry bedding. They provide a hot drink and some hot food. They also minister to their Spiritual welfare by sharing the Christian Gospel with them, and the volunteers encourage them to contact appropriate agencies within Dundee City Council who can provide them with help.



Glasgow Golden Generation – £3,000

The charity "Glasgow's Golden Generation" is Glasgow's leading charity for the elderly. It aims to improve the quality of life of lonely and vulnerable elderly adults in Glasgow through a variety of support

services, ranging from setting up day care centres (there are three day care centres within Glasgow) aimed at reducing loneliness and social isolation. Each centre has its own programme of activities including

carpet bowls, art classes, armchair exercises and much more. The charity also gives advice on other support services and benefits available to elderly individuals.

Kinship Care Initiative – £2,000

The Kinship Care Initiative is designed to help children whose parents have either died, or are unable to look after them due to illness, addictions or some other reason and they are being cared for by a relative, most often, by their grandparents. There are

over 2000 children in Glasgow in this position in either an informal or formal kinship care arrangement. These children often have a poor start in life, have poorer life skills and often suffer from low self-esteem.

Chev. Jim Wylie GCSJ MMSJ presents a cheque for Kinship Care to Dame Rose Mary Harley DCSJ, Chair of the Kinship Care Initiative.



Loaves & Fishes – £2,000

Almost 30 years ago a man, George Aitken, arrived in Glasgow with very few possessions but filled with a fierce determination, borne out of his deep Christian beliefs, to do whatever he possibly could to help feed and clothe the poor and hungry. Since then, his "acorn" of determination has developed until today, it has become the "oak tree" of the Scottish

registered charity, Loaves & Fishes, which is funded solely by voluntary donations and flourishes primarily because of the voluntary service provided by a number of committed individuals such as Denis Curran MBE.

Dame Elaine Wales DCSJ, presented a cheque for £2,000 to Denis Curran MBE, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Loaves & Fishes.



Alzheimer's Scotland, Edinburgh – £3,000

Alzheimer's Scotland has a programme (which is also popular in Australia) whereby Dementia Assistance Dogs are placed full time in homes, where one person is living with an early stage diagnosis of dementia. The charity tailors the dog's skills to the specific needs of the individual to ensure highly

tailored support is provided to help support the daily routine of waking, eating, taking medication, exercise, socialisation and sleeping patterns. Daily routines can be a secure anchor for families as the condition progresses and the dog acts as a household reminder to help take some weight and

worry from partners and carers. Assistance dogs have full public access rights, enabling them to support and accompany their owners wherever they go, including public transport, doctors and hospital appointments, cafes, restaurants and shops.

Starter Packs Glasgow – £2,000

As the name would indicate this charity provides a "starter pack" for homeless individuals and families moving in to their first Housing Association tenancy and who have none of the essentials needed to start a new home. Nor do they have any money to purchase these much-needed items such as pots and pans, crockery, bedding or toiletries.

The "starter pack" is customised for families or individuals and contains all of these necessary items plus soap, toothpaste and even toilet rolls.

Chev. Alex Hutton KSJ presents a cheque from OSJ Priory of Scotland Trust to Jackie Flynn of Starter Packs Glasgow.



The Preshal Trust – £2,000

The Preshal Trust seeks to tackle the problem of social exclusion in a very deprived area of Glasgow, in a thoughtful, caring, loving and supportive way. The main problems to be overcome are manifested in poverty, alcohol and drug addiction, low literacy and numeracy levels,

depression and low self-esteem. The Trust provides a wide range of social, recreational and educational activities enabling many of these issues to be dealt with effectively and adopts a truly holistic approach to meet the individual physical, mental and spiritual needs of all who enter its doors. The word

"Preshal" is Scottish Gaelic for "Precious" and the charity treats everyone who enters the trust centre as a precious individual.

Sadly, May Nicholson, the inspirational Founder of the Preshal Trust, passed away on 27th March earlier this year.

**Chev. Jim Wylie GCSJ MMSJ
Prior of Scotland**



PRIORY OF ENGLAND

Patronal Feast Day Service



HE Grand Dame Liz Carey-Sheill GDSJ MMSJ.

On Saturday, 22 June 2019, the Priory of England celebrated St John's Day by holding a very moving Patronal Feast Day Service in the beautiful St Cuthbert's Church, 50 Philbeach Gardens, Earl's Court, London SW5 9EB. The Patronal Feast Day was the Priory's principal event for 2019, and all members were encouraged to invite family and friends who either have or may have an interest in knowing more about what our Christian Order of Chivalry is, and perhaps to learn more of what our guiding Motto "Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum" really means.

I am pleased that a number of our members will soon be flying off to Sydney to attend the triennial Sovereign Council Meeting which will be held in that wonderful Australian city on 16th to 20th October.

I send my best wishes and heartfelt prayers that members of the Sovereign Council will have a very good and productive meeting in October.

**HE Grand Dame Liz Carey-Sheill
GDSJ MMSJ
Prior of England**



A group photograph taken following the Patronal Feast Day Service.



THE FIERY VERB – ON TAKING THE OATH

Every Knight and Dame in the Order has laid his or her right hand on the Holy Scripture on taking the Oath of Loyalty, of Knighthood, before being received into the Order. It is a prerequisite. There are details, however, that eclipses the candidate as she or he faces this passing moment, and few take into consideration the deeper aspects of this important moment. It is not simply an act that has to be done in order to earn permission to join the Order. It has some profound aspects.

As the Bible is presented for the confirmation of the Oath, the candidates are required to take off their gloves in order to lay their naked hand on the text. This is not only symbolic. It represents the nakedness of the soul, the receptiveness of the candidate's spirit to the Light of a reality beyond human comprehension, an openness that permits the spiritual scrutiny of the candidate's sincerity at the very moment the hand touches the scripture and he or she confirms the Oath.

With the same sincerity that the candidate delivers the word of honour, he or she will receive the fiery realisation of the power of that which the hand touches.

The Bible should be open on the first page of the Gospel of Saint John, and it is on top of this page the candidate will place his or her naked hand. The first words of this text, in its Latin translation reads "In principium erat verbum", usually translated into English as "In the beginning was the word". This translation misses an important detail; the fact that this word refer all the way back to Genesis and the famous "let there be Light" of the creation, which is also described in the even more ancient text of the Rig-Veda.

Creation, of any kind, is an act. A substantive describes objects. A verb is a word of action. Therefore, even though "verbum" may be translated both as "word" and "verb", the latter will be more precise as related to the act of creation. This detail may seem minor, but considering that the hand of man is his foremost agent of creative action in the material world in which he lives and moves, there is a direct connection between the hand and the verb of the text it touches at this important moment of

becoming part of the body of the Order and an agent of its action.

Now, as the hand of the new Dame or Knight will serve the purposes of the Order, it needs to take its strength from the power that the Order takes as its source. The Oath in fact, binds the acts of the new Dame or Knight to this source as well as to the ethical guidelines emanating therefrom. The hand will ideally never deviate from this for the rest of its earthly existence. Therefore, the influence of the text must be carried from the touching hand to the heart and mind of the candidate there and then.

Considering man as a cross, with his arms stretched out, we easily observe that a line from the hand will pass through the heart before continuing to the brain where we figuratively imagine the seat of the mind. This is logical, as there must be an emotional arousal in order to transfer the right quality of impulse to the mind.

If no emotion arises in the candidate at the investiture, the reception into the Order will be experienced more or less like a mere formality. Consequently, the dedication to its spiritual content and outward action will be to the same degree superficial, sans dedication. This will also ruin a true sense of loyalty and often result in passivity and even to leaving the Order without respecting the fact that the Oath was a lifetime commitment.

When the Order is not understood properly for what it is, individuals who took the Oath as a mere formality, will also tend to see the Order as just any organisation and often try to seek a 'political' career within its hierarchical structure. This, obviously, may only result in disaster, sometimes with very negative repercussions for the Order. Regrettably, there are too many examples of this through its history of internal strife and division.

Sincerity and devotion is necessary in whatever task man may wish to undertake. It is the basis of both motivation and possible success, and it must be in place at the very moment a candidate takes the Oath of the Order. A serious scrutiny of one's own motives is of paramount importance, for one must know what one is doing when committing oneself for life. Even

as important is the Order's serious approach towards candidates. This also goes for those who wish to propose candidates. They must know that their candidate is truly ready. It is the quality of the members that makes the Order, not the number of heads and particularly not what their status may be in civil society or how rich they are.

We need to return to the basic tenets, to the fiery connection that is established between the spirit residing in the words upon which the candidate places his hand and the hand that will ever after act in the service of the Order. When the candidate is deeply dedicated and spiritually aware, the placing of the hand on the text is not simply a physical act. It is highly spiritual and deeply significant as it creates an unbreakable bond as well as a will to serve, and with this, any 'political' ambition drowns in humbleness, in realisation of the predicament of humanity, of the dire conditions of our fellow man to whom one enters into service and the magnitude of the task.

Even officers of the highest rank may not have a full understanding of this flash of fire that goes with the confirmation of the Oath as the hand touches the scripture, but any experienced presiding officer who dubs Knights and receives Dames will see it and read the candidates as it happens. This may be somewhat humbling to the candidate, but it will deliver the experience at this very moment, even though most will only realise it quite some time later. It is important, though, that the spiritual attitude resides within the heart of the candidate. It is upon this the fiery impulse actually creates the Knight or Dame.

Taking an Oath may seem like a formality, but as such has only superficial value. It is necessary to be deeply conscious and to understand what is established the moment it is empowered. The fiery verb must translate into an inner realisation of its true power, an intellectual, emotional and spiritual energy, a burning away of egoism and egocentricism. The fiery verb then will create a new dimension in the person, never to disappear. Such is the power of spiritual fire.

**HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz
GCSJ PUHO CMSJ**



EASTER IN AUGUST



For many people, the summer months are a time of pilgrimage to a holy shrine. Many pilgrims from around the world travel to the sacred grotto in Lourdes, the rock cave, where Our Lady appeared to St Bernadette in 1858. The spring of holy water gives strength and healing.

In this holy place, the malades (the sick pilgrims) have pride of place and are centre stage. In contrast to daily life, where it is often people who are successful and strong who take first place, we see those who are lowly being exalted and those, who in their need hunger and thirst for God, being at the front of the queue.

We can see this reversal of values in the life of St Bernadette. The young

fourteen-year-old girl, weak and sickly with asthma, went down to the river to collect firewood because her family were destitute.

There we can see God's favour falling upon Bernadette when she is chosen to witness the apparition of Our Lady. We see her calling from God, the generosity of

her response and the conversation that follows, the deepening of her love of Christ through sickness and suffering, and finally the promise of a share in the glory of heaven from Our Lady.

Three events in the life of Our Lady help us to understand the Assumption. Firstly, we recall the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Mary offered her firstborn son as a gift to the Lord in accordance with Jewish custom. In doing so, she thanked God for the gift that she had received. The old man Simeon praised God when he saw the child but told Mary that a sword would pierce her heart. She was told that she would know sorrow and suffering so that many could open their hearts to her and ask for her intercession. The sword most deeply pierces the heart of

Our Lady as she stands at the foot of the cross and sees the death of her son. She is the Mother of Sorrows.

A second event is the meeting with Elizabeth and the time they spend together. It is a time of intense joy as two expectant mothers rejoice with the children in their wombs. John the Baptist, leaping in the womb of Elizabeth, reveals his excitement at meeting the Christ whom he would proclaim not only in the womb but also through his life and death. Mary sings with joy of the works of the Lord. She is the Mother of Joy.

Finally, this feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary teaches that at the end of her life Mary is taken, body and soul, to heaven. Eastern iconographers depict the dormition or "falling asleep" of Mary. Since she is conceived without original sin, the "Immaculate Conception", in the name revealed to Bernadette, it is impossible that she would know death and decay. She is the first after Christ to be taken to heaven where she now reigns as queen.

**Chev. The Revd Canon
Andrew Stevens GCSJ
Chairman of the
Ecclesiastical Council**

A Note from the Editor

"THE FIERY VERB - ON TAKING THE OATH" by HE Bailiff Emeritus Dag von Schantz, included at page 27 in this edition of The Hospitaller, is truly excellent and contains some really deep and important messages for all of us. There are elements in the article which reminded me of recent thoughts I have had about Christ's teachings as included in his Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps we should all take time to consider more often how we conduct ourselves, particularly with regard to Christ's instructions to us as contained in Matthew chapter 6, verses 2 – 6.

THE HOSPITALLER

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Layout: Greg Smith

**More news
coming
soon...**

