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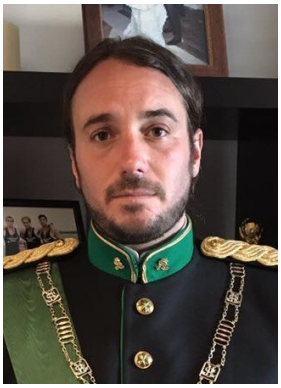
SAINT LAZARUS ©

The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

The International Newsletter



From the Grand Master

Dear Confreres and Consoeurs

Thank you for your prayers and messages of condolence on the sudden death of my sister and mother. They have been a source of considerable comfort to my father and me, and have reinforced the reality of the fraternity and closeness of our Order. The pandemic of coronavirus has added a new dimension to our daily lives and the activities of the Order. Lockdown has resulted in many being placed in self-isolation, with shops and restaurants closed, streets deserted and the activities of our Order being put on hold. Never before have we experienced these effects in this way.

Easter, however, brings joy, hope and confidence in the future for each of us as Christians. In turn the same is true for the Order. We are learning a lot about ourselves through these difficult times and we shall come out of them better people, more able to face the challenges of daily living.

The Order, too, will become stronger as we learn to review our purpose and our activities. We should use this period of enforced inactivity to review what we have done and plan what we shall do, to refocus our priorities at national and international levels on helping others and building a stronger society.

Resurrection is not about rebuilding the old, but about renewal and change both for ourselves and the Order of which we are proud to be members.

HE the Chevalier Don Francisco de Borbon,

Graf von Hardenberg GCLJ

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The Hospitaller Flagship Project

The Grand Chancellor informs us that for a number of reasons, it will no longer be possible to proceed with the plan to make a grant of € 15,000 to the St Louis Hospital in Jerusalem.

Dame Marny writes:

"A decision has been made to pursue the project proposal that received the second highest number of votes, the St. Anne School in Riyak, Lebanon. This project was proposed by the Hereditary Commandery of Rurich, and they have supported the St. Anne School since 2015.

St. Anne School is run by the local Orthodox Melkite Catholic Church. While the Orthodox Church provides enough funding to feed the children and enough teachers, the Church is not able to spend money on the important renovation of the last two storeys of the school to provide schooling for 750 children. The Hereditary Commander of Rurich visits the school regularly and is in close contact with the head person of the school.

This jurisdiction has made donations to the school in the past and knows how to ensure the funds are received. Consequently, they will also be able to ensure there is proper transparency and accountability before, during and after the project has been completed. They can also guarantee that 100% of the funds donated will go directly to St. Anne School."

Grand Bailiwick of the Czech Republic and the COVID-19 pandemic

On 15 March, H. E. The Chev. Ing. Ondřej M. Farka KCLJ, Grand Bailiff announced a charity collection to support the fight against the pandemic COVID-19. By the end of March the collected sum amounted to approx. 2 200,- USD. The Order has used these resources for the acquisition of medical equipment which has been distributed to hospitals, hospices, etc:

- 1,100 face masks made of nano-fibre from the public collection will be distributed to places in need
- Medical equipment (400 face masks, sanitizing gels, medication) was donated to medical staff
- Local tailors, including JD Tailors and MANEMO in Prague, have produced hand-made face masks for distribution

Members of every Commandery of the Czech jurisdiction are actively involved in charitable activities:

Brno Commandery has cooperated with local organizations resulting in the sewing and distribution of masks (presently 4,800 pieces). **Commandery of Saint Zdislava** has secured delivery of 1,100 face masks. The members are also sewing face masks which will be donated to places in need. Csr. MUDr. Andrea Kunschová, MLJ from **Pilsen Commandery** is sewing face masks which are distributed to a hospital in Pilsen. So far she has created 110 pieces.

204 face masks from JD tailor's shop in Prague were given to hospice Štrasburg and to the palliative ward of the hospital of the Merciful Sisters of Saint Karel Boromejský. Both facilities cooperate closely with the Czech jurisdiction. The leadership of hospice Štasburk has also received face masks from our jurisdiction.

iKhaya Loxolo, South Africa

In early March in the days leading up to a looming national lockdown caused by the global Corona virus pandemic, the Western Cape Commandery of the Order handed over a large donation of much needed bedding, curtains and towels to the Board of iKhaya Loxolo Lase in Gugulethu.

This facility houses up to 100 elderly persons – mostly listed as terminally ill – from the poorest of poor communities in the heart of a notorious area beset by widespread unemployment, violent crime, xenophobia and a fractured social structure.

Ms Matiwane, Commander Anthony Storr Lister, Chairman Frank Fredericks, Nandi Dlamini, Will Carter and Secretary, Zukile Malusi with just a portion of this considerable donation.

iKhaya Loxolo Lase (loosely translated as 'our home') is an oasis in this troubled, marginalised community. Each resident is given the very best care possible with the limited funding available from the public purse.

Through the Commandery's association, increasing involvement and desire to improve the wellbeing, comfort and dignity of iKhaya's elderly and infirm men and women, a welcome donation by Selwyn Veley – our Grand Bailiff's father - was bolstered by Commandery funds to purchase – again with sincere partnership support from manufacturing supplier *Sheraton* - of 100 sets of mattress protectors, fitted sheets, duvets and covers, pillows in pillow cases, bath towels and 100 pairs of curtains.

"These are increasingly desperate times for this most threatened group," said Grand Bailiff, Tamra Capstick-Dale. "Our work to significantly add self-worth to the last weeks and months in the lives of these frail people who have largely fallen through the cracks in our society, is a humbling and worthy Hospitaller endeavour."

Help Bewust

The Grand Bailiwick of the Netherlands is undertaking a special project for children, young adults and older people with very serious multiple disabilities. These children and adults can hardly do anything themselves - some of them can only lie in a bed.

Dame Herma Wijers DCLJ tells us:
"The Help Bewust foundation offers this group of children and adults the chance to be outside, to see the sky and enjoy nature in a covered bed with two horses. You can see that it does them good, you can see that they relax, pain is reduced, bowel movements are stimulated and the rocking of the horses leads to light massage. You often see a smile on their faces, which is fantastic.

"The covered bed needs to be renovated and there is not enough money to do the work. It should not happen that due to a shortage of money this group of children and adults, who already have so little, should miss this. That is the reason why we support the foundation Help Bewust and we hope that many member of the Order will join us and become sponsors of this worthwhile project."

For more information you can visit the Help Bewust website: https://helpbewust.nl/

Saving lives in India

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Indian women in India, the most prevalent cancer in most cities and the second most common in rural India. More than 50% of breast cancer patients in India are suffering from stage 3 and 4, where the chances of survival are extremely low.

The iBreastExam (iBE) pilot project was launched in 2018 by a charity called Women in Need (WIN) in the Indian rural district of Wardha where no such screening programs have previously been conducted. The project is supported by the Grand Commandery of the Castello, Malta.

In the last two years, the iBE was conducted across 21 villages in that district, screening 2,000 women. Ten women (0.5%) were detected with early stage breast cancer, for which they have received successful treatment. Given the current low survival rate in India, this is a very positive result.

Leah Pattison, founder of WIN, which also assists female lepers, said: "If we compare these figures with the numbers of women with cancer referred to WIN from the Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) in Nagpur, where our charity is also operational, we find that out of the 156 women referred in 2018-2019, 61 had breast cancer, which is 40%. All of these women had 3rd or 4th stage breast cancer."

Chev Paul Warren donating the iBE device to WIN's new doctor Dr-Yashasvi Khobaragade

The Grand Commandery's Hospitaller, Chev Paul Warren, said: "Two years ago, we decided to raise funds from among our membership to donate the iBE together with two cartridges capable of performing 4000 scans to WIN with the aim of decreasing the mortality rate in the two areas where WIN operates. The high mortality rate in these areas is mainly due to the lack of awareness and delay in both screening and diagnosis. Through this donation, we are helping WIN to save lives."

Looking to the future of the project, Ms Pattison proposed that "given the cost of the cartridges and the information we now have, it would be useful to utilise the remainder of the second cartridge (1,600 scans) in the working class communities in Nagpur and then compare the difference in prevalence between the two environments. In doing so, we can make a better judgement on where the IBE, donated by our Grand Commandery of the Castello friends in Malta, can be more effective in saving lives."

The GCC has further assisted WIN by raising an additional €20,000 in order to purchase a second ambulance to provide mobile healthcare services in the slums of Nagpur city. Both ambulances are providing an invaluable service during the current coronavirus lockdown, delivering essential supplies of food and medicines to women and children in the most impoverished parts of the city.

Out of darkness into light

During the past six months we have seen apocalyptic weather in the bush fires in Eastern Australia and California. The United Kingdom suffered the worst flooding in a century, as did other countries in Europe and across the world. This has now been followed by the outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan and the subsequent pandemic now affecting all of us. The season of Lent has given us time to reflect on the cumulative effect of these and other similar occurrences on our lives, our living and the work of our Order.

Now we are celebrating Easter. Jesus Christ may have risen but are we risen with him? The hymn writer has written "Now is eternal life, if ris'n with Christ we stand" and we can relate to this in our Christian life and belief. But, what about the present? What about our immediate future – our jobs, our families, our society, our Order? What does resurrection and new life have that is relevant to us at this time?

In areas affected by fire and flood, not for the first time, new green shoots have been seen. Nature has conquered what appeared to be total devastation. A twentieth century poet wrote –

> "Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,
> Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
> Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
> Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.
>
> When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain
> Thy touch can call us back to life again;
> Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
> Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green."

"Let us use this time to reflect on our Order and our part in it and commit to making it and ourselves better and better able to serve others through it."

So, this Easter let us look forward to the inevitable rebirth that will follow this devastation. Let us use this time to reflect on our Order and our part in it and commit to making it and ourselves better and better able to serve others through it.

Norman Hunter Rose

Editor

Surrexit Christus! Alleluia!

Easter greetings from the PRCC team