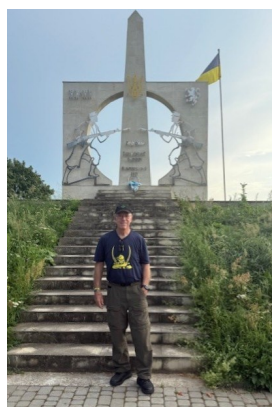
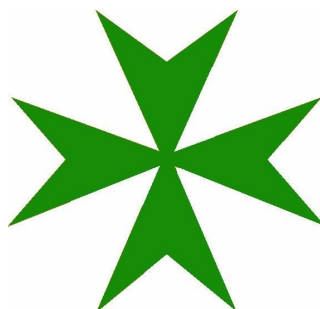


November 2025

SAINT LAZARUS[©]

The Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem

The International Newsletter



International Public Relations and Communications Committee

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From the Editor

This autumn has seen the Order of St Lazarus in full activity with a swathe of national Investitures and our Grand Master and Grand Chancellor adding up the air miles as they attend as many events as possible. Across the Order, charitable activities and good works are taking place and international projects funded. In this newsletter, and across social media, we aim to bring you news of as many of these activities as possible.

Viewing the international website and Facebook pages, and receiving communications from around the world, reminds us of what a vast organisation we belong to and how much each of us has a part to play in continuing and increasing the effects of our charitable and social endeavours.

The war in Ukraine continues and our members have continued their financial and practical support for those most badly affected by it. In October, the Grand Prior of America, HE Chev. John Byrnes paid another visit to that country, and we include an account of his time there. Sadly, the prospect of peace remains a distant hope and our continued support remains vital.

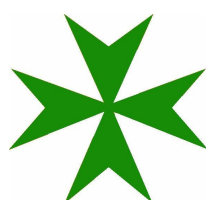
We also have another update on Hansen's Disease (leprosy) from our Grand Hospitaller, HE Chev. Charles Savona-Ventura, which reminds us that nearly 200,000 cases are still diagnosed each year across the world. Our Order has been active in this area throughout its history and our support for those treating sufferers and helping their families remains vital for them. We are grateful to our members across the Jurisdictions for their continued and growing support for our work in these areas, but we can never have too much to support our endeavours.

Other articles in this edition include some challenging thoughts on the spiritual heritage of the Order from the Senior Chaplain of the Grand Priory of Slovakia, and our regular diary page.

We are now in the most important series of seasons within the Christian Year, as we celebrate the Feast of All Saints, then All Souls followed by Advent and Christmas. These remind us of Christians past, leading on to our looking forward to the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Together, these festivals remind us of the heroes of the past and focus our minds on the present and the future.

Atavis et Armis!

Norman Hunter Rose KCLJ, GCMLJ



Hansen's Disease in the Developed World

According to the World Health Organization, the number of new cases of Hansen's Disease reported globally during 2024 had fallen by 5.5% from the previous year. There were however still 172,717 new cases reported, many in areas having a high prevalence for this chronic disease – Brazil, South Asia (India, Nepal), some parts of Africa (Tanzania, Madagascar, Mozambique) and the western Pacific. While Hansen's Disease has more or less disappeared from the developed world, cases are still being reported from the European region [134 new cases including three children in 2023-24], from North America [370 new cases including five children] and from Australia [17 new cases with no child cases].

The case-detection rate in the developed world is reassuring, especially when compared to the high prevalence regions such as Southeast Asia, South America and Africa. With increasing globalization and migration trends, it remains important for low prevalence countries to stay vigilant. Unfortunately, in low prevalence countries, the education and training of medical



Squirrels as pets

practitioners may not concentrate sufficiently on tuning in to the diagnosis of the infection in its early stages, resulting in late diagnosis. During the two years 2023-24, a significant proportion of new cases reported were diagnosed with grade 2 disabilities (G2D) [22% European Region; and 29% Australia. There were no G2D stage cases in North America]. While it is generally assumed that the new cases are in the migrant movement to these countries, infection may also occur through contact with zoonotic reservoirs such as the armadillo and the squirrel.

One would of course expect that cases of Hansen's Disease in the developed world are free from the stigmatization process their counterparts living in the developing world suffer. However, both Australia and the United States of America still retain discriminatory legal provisions for the victims of this infection. These legislations discriminate in regards to enforced segregation, employment, and being fully accepted as immigrants. Victims of Hansen's Disease should be legally viewed in the same fashion as are victims of any other infectious curable disease.



Barbequed armadillo offered as a delicacy in the Americas



The Order of St Lazarus has traditionally supported victims of Hansen’s Disease and targeted, during 2020-24, about 1.9% of its overall philanthropic activities towards this cause. As ‘Soldiers of Christ’ we should seek to support all those who are in need of assistance, especially those who are suffering the effects of stigmatization. Each national jurisdiction should look at its national legal corpus to identify any outdated legislation that contributes towards any form of stigmatization and follow this up by striving to get this unchristian legislation wiped off the books.

Let us follow Christ’s example and truly embrace the ‘leper’ whether the individual suffers from Hansen’s Disease or, because of the circumstances he/she lives in, is stigmatized by society. With World Leprosy Day approaching, let us ensure that we are sensitized to the needs of the stigmatized in society.

H.E. Chev. Charles Savona-Ventura, Grand Hospitaller





International Academy of the Order of Saint Lazarus

6th International Academic Meeting

22-24th October 2026
The Universitas Studiorum, Valletta, Malta



- 22.10.2026: Preliminary meeting [history of leprosy & Patron saints of lepers]
- 23.10.2026: Academy Meeting [history of the Order of St Lazarus]
- 24.10.2026: Academy Meeting [history of the Chivalric Orders]
- 25.10.2026: Guided tour of Valletta





FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

For more details, contact:
s.lazari.ordinis.academia@gmail.com

Those interested in contributing with a presentation are asked to indicate their interest.

Chivalry and True Identity Courage, Faith and Dignity – the Heritage of the Order of Saint Lazarus

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem,

I would like to draw our attention to the vocation of our Order. Before our inner eyes stand the men who have belonged to the Order throughout history – men of courage, nobility, and devotion. The knight was a symbol of the true man: brave in defending the truth, just in his actions, and selfless in his service to the weak and the sick, especially the lepers. This was genuine heroism that has marked the history of the spiritual knightly orders.

In modern times, the word *knight* has been replaced by *gentleman*. Yet even that term once referred to a man of integrity, decency, and respect for others. Today, however, we live in a culture that often rejects such concepts.

Those who grew up with a devoted father and a loving mother know how sacred these words are. They carry identity, security, and gratitude. From this divine harmony arises the family, the foundation of every healthy society.

Saint John Paul II once said: *“The future of humanity passes by way of the family.”* These simple words contain a profound truth: without healthy families, there can be no healthy society.

Sin has damaged this order, but Christ has redeemed and healed it. Whoever believes in Him bears the image of God within. A knight of Christ strives to refine this image: he protects his family, honours his wife, and lives with fidelity and courage.

Every member of the Order of Saint Lazarus is a bearer of this noble heritage. Preserve it, pass it on, and embody the true type of man – courageous, noble, and devoted. The world needs men with the heart of a knight and women with royal dignity. Only thus can families and societies be restored.

Our age suffers from a kind of cultural leprosy that destroys identity. The Order of Saint Lazarus is called to help heal these wounds through faith, courage, and love.

Msgr. DDr. Michal Baláž, KCLJ
Senior Chaplain, Grand Priory of Slovakia



GPA Humanitarian Mission to Ukraine: September 2025

In the face of adversity and conflict, three members of the Grand Priory of America, Grand Prior John Byrnes and new members Brian Harlow and Sean O'Donnell, embarked on a mission to Ukraine in September 2025. Our goal was to enhance frontline medical supply and training, providing critical support to those in dire need. This mission was not just about delivering supplies; it was about standing in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, showcasing resilience, and fostering international cooperation in the midst of one of the most intense conflicts of our time.



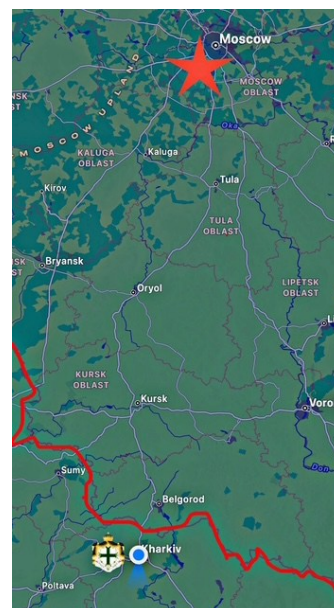
The journey began with a challenging border crossing on foot and a vehicle breakdown,

which necessitated an adaptation to train transit from Lviv to Kyiv. Despite these initial hurdles, our team demonstrated commitment and determination.

During the mission, our team met with several other veterans, including a U.S. Marine veteran of the Battle of Fallujah who also served with Brian Harlow in Ukraine, and was with Brian when he was severely injured and lost his right lower leg in Bakhmut in 2022. Together, we discussed the urgent need to train local medics for sustainability and identify overlooked but essential miscellaneous medical supplies. We introduced Ukrainian-made “Cinch” tourniquets, which are cost-effective, combat-tested, and locally sourced, addressing the supply needs for lesser-known frontline units.

On the frontlines we distributed Individual First Aid Kits (IFAKs) and tourniquets purchased by a grant from the Grand Priory of America, doubling capacity from 200 to 400 kits by integrating Ukrainian-made products. We met with Azov medics in Izyum in the southeastern front and conducted training on the new Ukrainian tourniquets for effective field use.

Our team also had direct observations of the intensity of the conflict, with 10 vehicles hit by FPV (first-person view) drones on our drive to Izyum. Our team assisted with the medical supplies handoff and provided tactical medical instruction on site, and on the return back to Kiev we traveled through Kharkiv, overlooking Russian border positions.



This mission coincided with Russia’s largest aerial attack on Ukraine to date on September 6th, involving approximately 810 Shahed drones and 13 cruise/ballistic missiles. A cruise missile narrowly missed our hotel in Kiev, striking a building across the street. As we departed Warsaw on September 10th, Russia launched 415 drones, with 19 entering Polish airspace and being intercepted. Subsequently NATO enacted Article 4 after these deliberate drone flight paths into Poland, but many flight delays occurred in Warsaw due to suspended Polish airspace.



We felt that our mission outcomes were significant. Our team strengthened international cooperation with Ukrainian medical units, expanded supply capacity, and introduced cost-effective, combat-proven medical solutions. We provided needed training to sustain lifesaving measures on the frontlines and documented ongoing humanitarian and security needs under extreme combat conditions. This mission highlighted the commitment of the Order of St. Lazarus and the members involved, as all worked without regard to personal safety to support Ukraine in its time of need. These efforts not only saved lives, and will continue to save lives, but also reinforced the bonds of international friendship and cooperation, proving that even in the darkest times, humanity can shine through.

***H.E. The Chevalier John F. Byrnes GCLJ, GMLJ, GCMLJ
Grand Prior, Grand Priory of America***



The Ecclesiastical Grand Prior

It has been announced that the Rt Revd. Lindsay Urwin OGS ECLJ, of the Grand Priory of England & Wales will take up the position of Ecclesiastical Grand Prior of the Order at the next meeting of the Grand Magistral Council in Madrid in November 2025. He succeeds Msgr. Michele Pennisi EGCLG, Archbishop Emeritus of Monreale, who has served in this role since 2014.



Bishop Lindsay was born in Australia, but has spent much of his ministry in the UK. He served as Bishop of Horsham (Sussex) from 1993-2009, before being appointed as the Administrator of the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Many members will recall meeting him during the Order’s international pilgrimage to the Shrine in 2014.

In 2015, he took up a new post in his native Australia, but on his retirement in 2023 he returned to England, where he serves as an Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Southwark.

Diary 2025-26

2025			
14 -15 November	Grand Magistral Council	Meetings	Madrid, Spain
14-15 November	GP of Portugal	Vigil & Investiture	Setubal, Portugal
28 - 29 November	GP of Ireland	Vigil & Investiture	TBA
5 - 7 December	GP of Greece	Vigil, Investiture & Dinner	Athens, Greece
2026			
24-25 January	GB of Sicily	Vigil & Investiture	Monreale, Sicily
7 March	GB of Austria & HC of St Severin	Investiture	TBA
16-19 April	GP of England & Wales	Pilgrimage & Investiture	Walsingham, Norfolk, UK
18-19 April	GP of Finland	Vigil & Investiture	Lappeenranta, Finland
1-3 May	HGP Europe	Vigil & Investiture	TBA
7 - 10 May	GP of Australia	Vigil & Investiture	Perth, Western Australia
14 - 17 May	GB of Germany	Vigil & Investiture/ Installation	Düsseldorf, Germany
25 - 28 June	GP in Canada	Chapter-General	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
25-26 September	GP of England & Wales	Vigil & Investiture	Oxford, UK
22-25 October	International Academy of the OSLJ	6th International Academic meeting	Valletta, Malta

Full details of all these and other forthcoming and recent events can be found on the international website. You can also find information about events and activities around the world on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/st.lazarus

Items for inclusion in the diary should be sent to the Vice-Grand Chancellor (Administration) at bennisonpm@gmail.com