SAINT LAZARUS©

The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

# International Pilgrimage 2026

## Stará Boleslav, Czech Republic

## An overview from the Grand Bailiff

On 2 and 3 October 2026, an international pilgrimage of the Order of St Lazarus took place in the Czech Republic. For our jurisdiction, this was the first-ever international Order pilgrimage, which we had the great honour of organising. Planning for this event began as early as 2019 in Madrid, during the Heads of Jurisdiction Meeting. Earlier plans to organise the pilgrimage were complicated by COVID, the war in Ukraine and other circumstances.

Over 70 members of the Order took part in the pilgrimage, including 13 members of the Grand Magisterial Council. The participants represented a total of 14 jurisdictions of the Order, including the International Grand Bailiwick, the USA, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, Italy, Malta, Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and, of course, the Czech Republic.

After 3 days of organised meetings for leading representatives of the Order, the pilgrimage weekend began with an organised tour of the Cathedral of St Vitus, St Wenceslas and St Adalbert and the Old Royal Palace at Prague Castle. This was followed by a transfer to the jetty by Čech Bridge and a sightseeing cruise along the Vltava River, combined with lunch. After the cruise, we made our way to Old Town Square, where we were officially received by the Mayor of Prague, Doc. MUDr. Bohuslav Svoboda, CSc., in the Brožík Hall at the Old Town Hall. As part of the official visit, members of the Order toured the historic rooms of the Old Town Hall, guided by Mr Jan Wolf, a Prague City Councillor. The tour of the Old Town Hall was followed by a tour of the Old Town, Charles Bridge and the Infant Jesus of Prague. A gala dinner was then held at the Lindner Hotel in Strahov.

Next morning, we travelled to Stará Boleslav, for the pilgrimage, commencing with a 2-kilometre procession to the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, where Holy Mass was celebrated. The principal celebrant of the Mass was the Abbot of Strahov Monastery in Prague, His Grace ThLic. PhDr. Daniel Peter Janáček, Ph.D., O.Praem. The homily was delivered by the Order's Ecclesiastical Grand Prior, His Excellency Bishop Lindsay Goodall Urwin, EGCLJ. The Chancellor of the Collegiate Chapter of St Cosmas and St Damian in Stará Boleslav, ThDr Gabriel Rijad Mulamuhič, Ph.D., O.Cr, briefed the members of the Order present on the significance of the place of pilgrimage in Stará Boleslav.

The Mass was accompanied by Vladimír Roubal, choirmaster and organist of Strahov Basilica, together with the Collegium Strahoviense choir.

After Mass, the pilgrims moved on to lunch, followed by a guided tour of the Basilica of St Wenceslas, led by ThDr Gabriel Rijad Mulamuhič, Ph.D., O.Cr.

*Recorded by: Ondřej Farka, GCLJ, Grand Bailiff, Grand Bailiwick of the Czech Republic*

# PILGRIMAGE 2026 – Meetings and Memories

The weather was glorious, the setting spectacular, the camaraderie magnificent and the itinerary well thought out. Our confreres in the Czech Republic welcomed members and friends of the Order to this ancient city full of charm and opportunities for reflection, business meetings and prayer.

The proceedings began with a Meetings of the Governance Working Group and Grand Magistral Council where the nuts and bolts of the international body are discussed and actions and policies are developed.

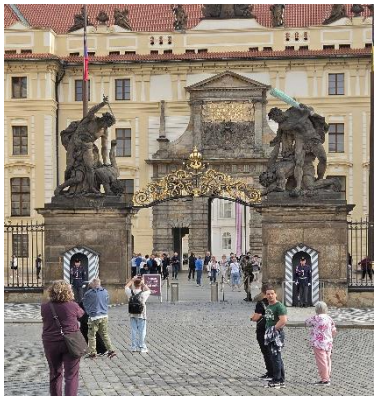
The Grand Master was in attendance and spoke directly to the Council on the many successes of the past year as well as the positive outcomes that have been achieved. During his address, he shared several strategic initiatives that will move the Order forward in the coming years. There was plenty of opportunity for discussion with the members of the GMC debating the various items brought forward and agreeing to the movement forward.

The following morning saw the GMC join with the Heads of Jurisdiction for further discussion and deliberation about the future direction of the Order. The Grand Master took the opportunity to speak directly to those present on the work he has been doing and various strategic developments in relationship to the international website and charity work. There was a lengthy question and answer period as well as updates on the Marshal's Manual, Insignia, and lively discussion on several topics of interest.

Later that day, the Hospitallers met to review previous reports and begin the process of distribution via the Hospitaller Fund. The group recommended the disbursement of €10,000 to the Terraza de San Lazaro, a safe outdoor space to promote healing for children admitted to a paediatric unit, and €10,000 to the Infant Welfare Centre in Jerusalem, site of the original Lazarus hospital. They also discussed several other potential projects and the work being done in individual jurisdictions.

**Prague Sightseeing,  Mayor's Reception and Gala Dinner**

The next day, many members took the opportunity to visit The Metropolitan Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslaus and Adalbert and the Old Royal Palace. This was followed by a sightseeing boat trip for all registrants on the River Vltava where a fulsome buffet lunch was served.



Following the cruise, members moved to Prague City Hall, where they were received by the Mayor of Prague, Mr. Dr. Bohuslav Svoboda, CSc and enjoyed a private tour of the building.

Some members chose to continue their visit in the Old Town and to view the Charles Bridge, others opted to return to the hotel and ready themselves for the evening's Gala Dinner. As is always the case, when members gather there were many opportunities for conversation.

**The Gala Dinner**

Members and guests enjoyed a superb feast at the Linder Castel Hotel. The Host Commander, Chevalier Ondřej Farka had the opportunity to formally welcome all those in attendance and express his appreciation for our attendance and friendship. He thanked the members of the Grand Bailiwick who had worked to make this a successful event and provided final details on the transport to the Pilgrimage site and the remaining events of our time together. The Grand Master expressed his appreciation for the organization and the work in putting together the various components of the event.

**The Pilgrimage**

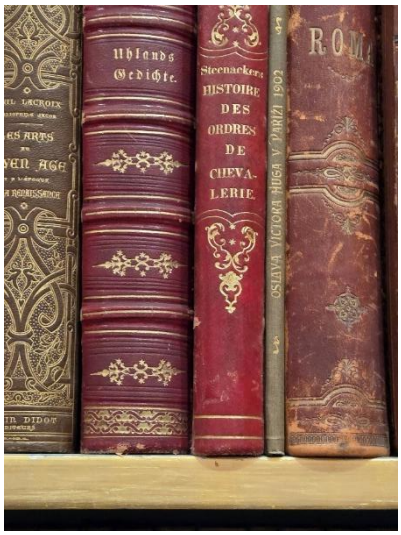
The bus journey, by double decker coach, to Stará Boleslav took approximately 30 minutes and provided members with view of the Czech countryside. Upon arrival, the group assembled to make the trek to the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The 2km distance was over flat, terrain along paved paths proved to be a wonderful opportunity for reflection and prayer.

Once at the church, members were seated and were able to admire the splendour of the sanctuary prior to the start of the Mass. Our Ecclesiastical Grand Prior had the honour of providing the homily and several of our members read the lessons.

After a group photo was taken, the group retired to Bohémovna V Pivovaře“ restaurant for lunch.

**Finale: A tour of Strahov Monastery**

Those who had opted to leave slightly later had the opportunity to spend their finale day in Prague enjoying a tour of the nearby Strahov Monastery. This is the oldest Premonstratensian monastery in Bohemia, founded in 1143, and one of the most significant architectural monuments Czech Republic. In the monastery, whose convention was restored after 1990, it is also home to The Museum of Czech Literature, part of the monastery is the famous Strahov Library and the art gallery.




The library was truly inspiring and to the delight of the Grand Hospitaller a book in which the Order is mentioned was found. As the Wi FI was working he was able to note the exact pages and gain an extract for his future work

***HE Dame Jane Anema GCLJ***
***Grand Priory of Canada***

**Excerpts from the Opening Address by the Grand Master**

**Grand Magisterial Council and Heads of Jurisdiction Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem, Prague 2026**

Your Excellencies, Members of the Grand Magisterial Council, Heads of Jurisdiction, dear Confreres and Consoeurs

It is important that we remember what this Order has achieved over the past year, which has been one of considerable activity and, I believe, of real progress for Saint Lazarus. Across our jurisdictions, our members have continued their charitable work, strengthened our relationships with one another, supported those who depend upon our assistance and represented the Order with dignity in their communities.

We have continued to develop our international presence. We have strengthened our institutional relationships. We have brought members together through our religious, charitable and ceremonial activities. And we have continued to build the foundations for an Order that is not simply proud of its history, but determined to have a meaningful role in the future.

None of this is the achievement of one person. It is the work of our jurisdictions, our officers, our volunteers, our benefactors and, above all, our members. So I want to begin by thanking each and every one of you. Because an Order such as ours exists only through the commitment of its people.

There is much that we still want to accomplish. We want to strengthen our charitable mission. We want to attract new generations of members without losing the traditions and values that give this Order its identity. We want to deepen co-operation between our jurisdictions. We want to develop our international relationships and ensure that Saint Lazarus is recognised not simply for its history, but for the contribution it continues to make today.

We are the custodians of an extraordinary history. But our responsibility is not merely to preserve that history. Our responsibility is to add something worthy to it. That means serving more people, strengthening our jurisdictions, embracing a new generation of members, building new institutional relationships and ensuring that the green cross remains as relevant tomorrow as it has been throughout our history. That is the Saint Lazarus I want us to discuss in Prague.

Our efforts toward reunification have been serious and sustained. We have been bringing people back together and welcoming members in the United States, Italy and Spain.

Reunification is not simply about increasing numbers. It is about healing old divisions, rebuilding trust and strengthening Saint Lazarus as one international family.

Communication is essential to our growth and our survival. If we want a new generation to understand Saint Lazarus, join Saint Lazarus and support Saint Lazarus, then we must communicate in the world in which they live. Tradition and innovation are not enemies. We can protect an ancient heritage while embracing the best modern tools available to us. Our responsibility is to preserve what is timeless while ensuring that Saint Lazarus remains relevant, visible and effective in the modern world.

When I look back at this year, I define it by what we did.

- Helping children in intensive care in Marbella.
- One hundred and nine places for the elderly in Ronda.
- Three hundred meals every day in Madrid.
- Veterans in Almería.
- A hospital in Ghana.
- Reunification in the United States, Italy and Spain.
- New relationships with Royal Houses, Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- New institutional partnerships. New technology. Artificial intelligence. A worldwide platform for our members.
- New fundraising channels for our Foundation.

And that is the Saint Lazarus I want us to build together. An Order proud of its past but not trapped by it. An Order that protects tradition while embracing innovation. An Order that attracts people of quality. An Order whose green cross is increasingly recognised around the world not simply because of what it represents historically, but because of what it does today.

I have served Saint Lazarus for 35 years. For ten of those years, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as your 50th Grand Master. I stand before you with my determination to grow this Order, to unite it, to modernise it without sacrificing its traditions and above all, to ensure that the green cross continues to serve those who need us.

That is our responsibility as Knights and Dames of Saint Lazarus. That is our responsibility as leaders. And that is what I will continue to do as your Grand Master. So let us work together and look forward. We have an Order to lead, a legacy to protect, a future to build - and people to serve.

*Thank you*.

***HE Don Francisco de Borbón, Graf von Hardenberg GCLJ***

***October 2026***