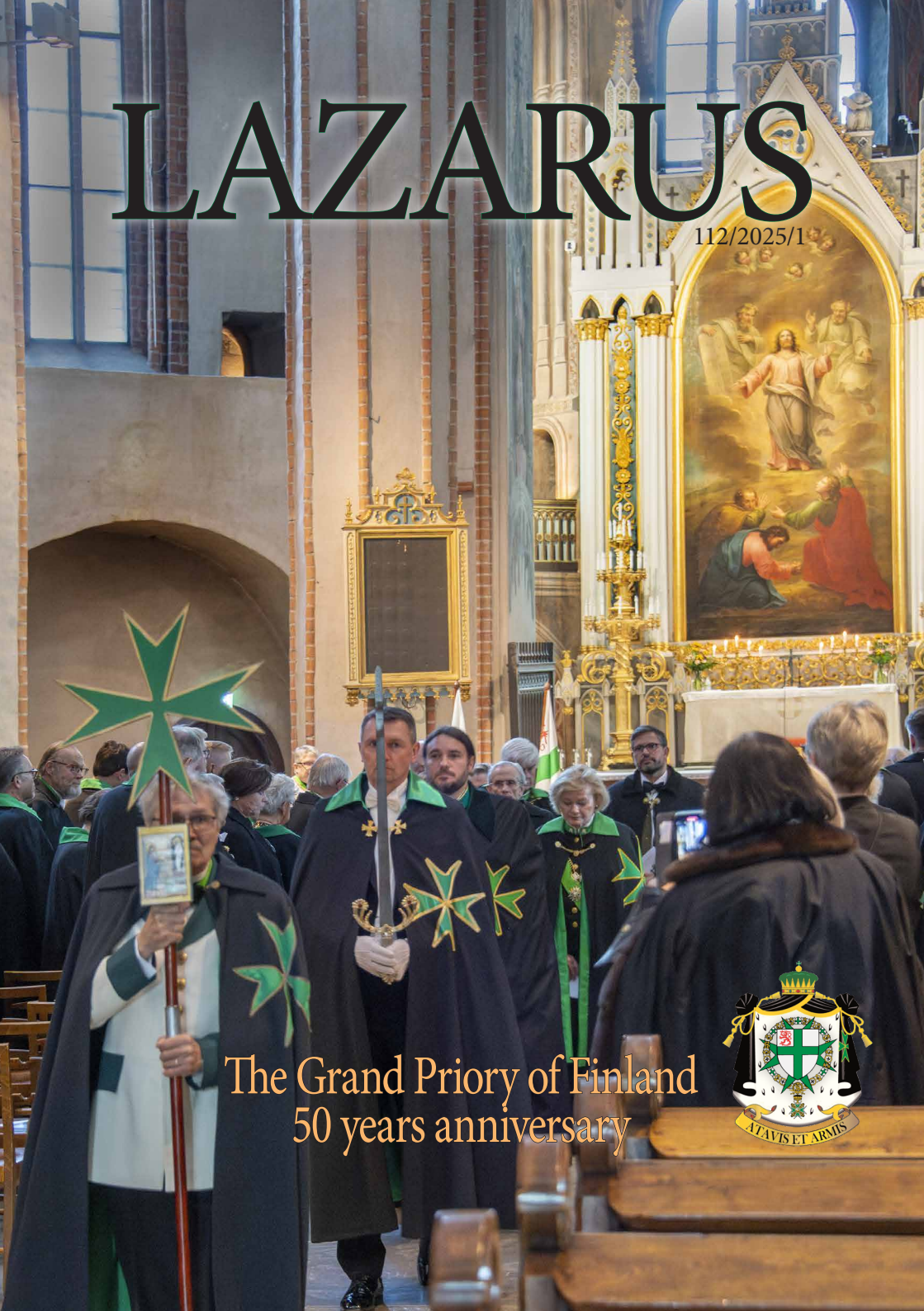


# LAZARUS

112/2025/1



The Grand Priory of Finland  
50 years anniversary



# The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

50th Grand Master  
His Excellency Don Francisco de Borbón Graf von Hardenberg



## Grand Priory of Finland, Suomen Suurpioraatti, Storprioratet Finland

Grand Custodian and Grand Referendary  
Grand Prior Emeritus,  
Palvellut Suurpiori, Storprior Emeritus  
Matti Vuoria GCLrLJ  
matti.vuoria@kolumbus.fi

Grand Prior, Suurpiori, Storprior  
Helena Pesola GCLJ  
helena.pesola@outlook.com

Grand Prior Emeritus,  
Palvellut Suurpiori, Storprior Emeritus  
Aarne I. Koskimies GCLJ  
aarne.koskimies@icloud.com

Prior, Piori, Prior  
Berndt von Veh GCLJ  
bvonveh@gmail.com

Prior Emeritus, Palvellut Piori  
Caj-Gunnar Lindström KCLJ  
caj-gunnar.lindstrom@abo.fi

Chancellor, Kansleri, Kansler  
Otto Virtomaa KCLJ  
Leantie 4B 02700 Kauniainen  
virtomaa@gmail.com

Prelate, Prelaatti, Prelat  
Sakari Lehmuskallio ECLJ  
sakari@lehmuskallio.net

Inquisitor, Inkvisiittori, Inkvisitor  
Erkki Tuormaa GCLJ  
erkki.tuormaa@sulo.fi

Hospitaller, Sairaanhoidovirkailija, Hospitalit  
Jukka H. Meurman KLJ  
jukka.meurman@helsinki.fi

Almoner, Almujen jakaja, Almoseutdelare  
Eeva Moilanen OLJ  
eeva.moilanen@uta.fi

Officer of Arms, Heraldikko, Heraldiker  
Chancellor Emerita  
Marja Kyyhkynen DCLJ  
marja.kyyhkynen@elisinet.fi

Capitular, Kapitulaari, Kapitular  
Bror Gammals KCLJ  
bror.gammals@aland.net

Treasurer, Rahastonhoitaja, Skattmästare  
Ralf Bäckström KCLJ  
Ljusågegatan 8 B 7, 65320 Vasa  
ralf.backstrom@netikka.fi

Regitrar, Registraattori, Registrar,  
Custodian of Insignia,  
Kunniamerkkien hoitaja, Insignievårdare  
Henrik Ramste KLJ  
sirhenry@kolumbus.fi

Marchal, Marsalkka, Marskalk  
Bengt Engblom KLJ  
bengt.engblom@gmail.com

Herald, Pääairut, Härold, PRO  
Elina Tiainen CLJ  
ketiainen@gmail.com

Receiver, Jäsenten vastaanottaja,  
Mottagare av nya medlemmar  
Ralf Bäckström KCLJ  
ralf.backstrom@netikka.fi

Crucifer, Ristinkantaja, Korsbärare  
Onni Honkasalo CLJ  
onni.honkasalo@kolumbus.fi

Sword Bearer, Miekankantaja, Svärdbärare  
Esa Peuraniemi OLJ  
esa.peuraniemi@iki.fi

Vice Chancellor, Varakansleri, Vice Kansler  
Tommi Laukka CLJ  
tommi.laukka@gmail.com

Archivist, Arkistonhoitaja, Arkivare  
Teemu Hankamäki CLJ  
Eteläviitankuja 4A1 02330 Espoo  
teemu.hankamaki@gmail.com

## Commanders, Komentajat, Kommendatorer

Commandery of St.Mary, Pyhän Marian Komentajakunta, Kommenderiet Sankta Maria  
Janne Annunen KLJ  
Wahalankatu 11, 20900 Turku  
janne.annunen@hotmail.com

Commandery of St Lawrence, Pyhän Laurentiuksen Komentajakunta, Kommenderiet Sankt Laurentius  
Turkka Hovila KLJ  
Käpykuja 3,16300 Orimattila  
turkkahov@gmail.com

Commandery of St Olaus, Pyhän Olavin Komentajakunta, Kommenderiet Sankt Olof  
Patrick Donner CLJ  
Solbergsvägen 2 C 13, 22140 Mariehamn  
patrick.a.donner@gmail.com

Commandery of the Holy Cross, Pyhän Ristin Komentajakunta, Kommenderiet Det Heliga Korset  
Jari Andersson KLJ  
Vohlakuja 1 38200 Sastamala  
jari.andersson@sastamala.fi

## Delegates, Delegaattit, Delegater

Delegation of St. James, Pyhän Jaakobin Delegaatio, Delegation Sankt Jakob  
Timo Sairo KLJ  
Aleksis Kiven tie 71 D, 65300 Vaasa  
timo.sairo@hallioy.fi

Delegation of St. Margaret, Pyhän Margaretan Delgatio, Delegationen Sankta Margareta  
Pirkko Hyrynkangas-Järvenpää CLJ  
Äyräänkuja 24, 90840 Hailuoto  
pirkko.hyrynkangas@icloud.com

Delegation of St. Andrew, Pyhän Andreaksen Delegaatio, Delegationen Sankt Andreas  
Jouko Leppänen KLJ  
Töröstinkatu 45100 Kouvola  
jouko.leppanen@kouvola.fi

Delegation of St. Christopher, Pyhän Kristoforuksen  
Delegaatio, Delegationen Sankt Kristoffer  
Olli Piirtola KLJ  
Aarnipolku 4 B, 40600 Jyväskylä  
olli.piirtola@sci.fi

Delegation of St. Nicholas, Pyhän Nikolauksen Delegaatio, Delegationen Sankt Nikolaus  
Jorma Luoma KLJ  
Marssitie 9 as. 21, 56300 Lappeenranta  
jorma.luoma@kymp.net

## Editors of the Lazarus Magazine, Lazarus-lehden toimitus, Lazarustidningens redaktion

Editor in chief, Päätoimittaja, Huvudredaktör  
Pekka Lehmuskallio KLJ  
Meriraumantie 20 K, 26200 Rauma puh/tfn, 0500-860155  
pekka.lehmuskallio@gmail.com

Internet  
<http://www.st-lazarus.net>



©1996, Her Majesty's Office of the Order of St Lazarus



## Helping is at the heart of our mission

Half a century of shared journey in the Grand Priory of Finland is part of the great story of the Order of Saint Lazarus. We are a strong link in a chain of generations, where traditions and Christian values guide the choices we make along our path.

Our Order is a community shaped by its members - a Lazarus family. We all understand that together, we uphold something greater than ourselves. Our work is newer complete; it must continuously evolve and adapt to the times. Standing still means falling behind. We cannot remain mere spectators. When we feel part of something greater and have the opportunity to contribute, it inspires enthusiasm and creativity – both of which shine outward through acts of kindness, great and small.

At the heart of our mission is bringing together those in need with our members who have the will and ability to act and care. We stand on the side of humanity. The most valuable things cannot be measured in money. Helping those in need is like an ethical investment – its value grows through action. It is more than visibility, status or measurable results. Helping others is one of life's great callings. It gives life meaning and helps us grow as human beings.

Despite the global transformation taking place around us, the strong values and sense of community within our Order keep us standing firm even in the harshest winds. We can look to the future with courage and determination and take part in building a better world. There is a growing need for the work we do.

It is said that a celebration is what touches the depths of the mind. We experienced this when our Grand Master honored us with his presence at the celebration of our 50 years of activity in Turku. It touched our hearts, nourished our souls and sent us forward with a sense of purpose. It also serves as a reminder of to whom and why we write the great story of our Order. We do this for the benefit of those in need, rooted in Christian values.

“If one's relationship with life is genuine, it demands that we all sacrifice part of our own life for others.”

With this magnificent thought by Albert Schweitzer, I wish all Lazarus-sisters and Lazarus-brothers a shared, fulfilling Lazarus-journey.

Helena Pesola GCLJ

## The aims of the Order of St. Lazarus are

- to preserve and defend the Christian faith,
- to support, care for and help the poor, the sick and the dying,
- to promote and maintain the principles of Christian chivalry and
- to follow the teachings of Christ in all it does.

This time I will discuss the last point in the list of aims of our Order. It refers to the words of Jesus: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* (Luke 9:23)

The idea of following Christ is found in the three Gospels, Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34 and Luke 9:23. In Christian theology, the ideal of following Christ is called with the term *Imitatio Christi*. The great teachers of the Church, the Apostle Paul, Saint Augustine, Francis of Assisi and many others described the Christian life in this way. Perhaps the most famous teacher in the topic was Thomas à Kempis, who published a four-volume book in Latin in 1418, the first part of which was entitled *De imitatione Christi et contemptu omnium vanitatum mundi*, or *On the imitation of Christ and the contempt of all worldly vanity*. The book is one of the basic works of Christian devotional literature, along with Augustine's *Confessiones* and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come*.

Imitatio Christi, following Christ, means following the teachings of Jesus in word and deed. The word imitation does not appear in the Gospels but is of later origin.

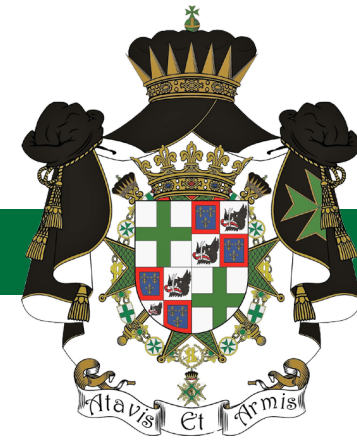
The early Church was not very interested in the historical Jesus. Instead, it focused on the influences of the Holy Spirit, self-sacrifice and martyrdom. Later Christianity in its various forms gave rise to withdrawal from the world, poverty, self-torture and other forms of piety. Some of these seem quite foreign to modern man.

What is more significant to modern man is doing good deeds. Such, metaphorically and concretely, are the works of charity of the knighthood: feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, providing shelter to the defenceless, visiting the sick and caring for the dead. List of today can be continued with the many charitable activities of the Order of St. Lazarus.

Denying oneself is humility, humble courage, showing love that takes persons absolute value into account.

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22: 34-40)

Sakari Lehmuskallio ECLJ



From the Grand Master, his Excellency Don Francisco de Borbón Graf von Hardenberg



I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Grand Priory of Finland for their warm hospitality and genuine welcome. Our brothers and sisters in Finland are a shining example of true brotherhood and cooperation, embodying the values we hold dear. I also extend my warmest congratulations on their anniversary, and wish them many more years of dedicated service to the Order and to the charitable spirit that unites us all.

It has been a true honour to join you in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Grand Priory of Finland — an institution whose inauguration my grandfather had the privilege of attending here in the historic city of Turku, the oldest in Finland. I am deeply proud to witness how your Grand Priory has grown into such a distinguished, well-organized, and admirably led body. I extend my sincere wishes for continued dedication, strength, and success in the years to come. May God be with you in your noble and worthy mission.

## 50 years ago...

The Finnish press was interested in the gathering of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Turku, Finland, 50 years ago. The following is a short excerpt from an atmospheric article in a newspaper.

*"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I name you a knight..."*

*The words came in Finnish, but with a Spanish accent. The speaker was His Royal Highness Prince Don Francisco Enrique de Borbón y de Borbón, a member of the Spanish royal family. Sales director Ole Ulfstedt from Pietarsaari had knelt before the prince in the chapel of Turku Cathedral. The atmosphere was quiet and focused. In ecumenical understanding, Metropolitan Johannes—himself newly adorned with the Grand Cross—Roman Catholic Bishop Paul Verschuren, and Lutheran Bishop Karl-Erik Forssell watched, along with the rest of the order, the kneeling man who had pledged to uphold the knight's eight virtues: piety, generosity, honor, disregard for death, respect for the church, and aid to the poor and the sick.*

*The sword touched his shoulders lightly, a green eight-pointed Maltese cross was hung around his neck. A final embrace, and Finland had gained one more knight.*

*Nearly a thousand years after the Crusades..."*



# The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus in Finland 2015–2024

The Order celebrates 50 years in Finland 2025

*The history of the Order of Saint Lazarus and its beginnings in Finland in 1974, along with the first 40 years of its activities, are presented in the 2015 publication: Tuomas Hoppu: "Saint Lazarus in Finland 1974–2014". General information about the Order, its history and purpose, international structure, decorations, etc., can be found in the 2020 special edition of the Lazarus magazine, issue No. 103, "Guide for New Members." The purpose here is to provide an overview of the activities of the Grand Priory of Finland during the decade 2015–2024.*



by Marja Kyyhkynen DCLJ



International developments also influenced the work of the Order in Finland. The new Grand Master of the Order was installed in Madrid on May 5, 2018. He is the 50th in order: Don Francisco de Borbón Graf von Hardenberg. His predecessor, the energetic and well-liked Don Carlos Gereda y de Borbón, Marquis of Almazán, passed away due to a serious illness in 2016.

The Grand Prior Emeritus, Chev. HE Matti Vuoria GClrLJ, as Finland's representative, has been a key member of the Order's central administration and, through his offices as Grand Custodian and Grand Refendary, has played a decisive role in clarifying and strengthening the Order's legal status.

During the decade, the legal status of the entire international Order of Saint Lazarus was reviewed and reinforced. The statutes were also updated, allowing greater local influence for national jurisdictions (Grand Priorities) where needed.

In 2016, a new uniform was approved for the Order. The old and new uniforms may be worn side by side during a transitional period, estimated at approximately 10 years.

## Leadership of the Grand Priory of Finland

Grand Prior Chev. HE Aarne Koskimies GCLJ stepped down in autumn 2015 and was succeeded by Dame HE Helena Pesola GCLJ as Grand Prior. She has led the Lazarus knights in Finland throughout the current ten-year period.

Thanks to Helena Pesola's long leadership experience, the Grand Priory of Finland was strengthened, and its operations became more clearly defined — despite the global COVID pandemic of the early 2020s. Membership increased, charitable work remained stable, and all international and national obligations and payments were fulfilled on time.

Thanks to Helena Pesola, Finland has achieved a broader local decision-



*In the small photo, Grand Master Don Enrique de Borbón y Borbón pins the official badge of the Order of Saint Lazarus onto the chest of newly appointed member Erkki Tuorma in 1975. In the large photo, 50 years later, Don Enrique's grandson, Don Francisco de Borbón Graf von Hardenberg, listens to Erkki Tuormaa's speech.*



making authority — allowed by the Order's statutes — than many other countries, especially regarding promotions and awards.

## Leadership of the Grand Priory of Finland 2015–2024

**Grand Prior:** Dame HE Helena Pesola GCLJ

**Prior:** Chev. HE Berndt von Veh GCLJ

**Chancellor:** Dame Marja Kyyhkynen DCLJ (2017–2023), Chev. Otto Virtomaa KCLJ (from 2024)

**Spiritual Director:** Prelate HE Sakari Lehmuskallio EGCLJ

**Inquisitor:** HE Chev. Christer Boije af Gennäs (–2020), HE Chev. Erkki Tuormaa GCLJ (2020–)

**Registrar:** Chev. Jaakko Solja KCLJ (2017–2023), Chev. Henrik Ramste KLJ (from 2024)

**Treasurer:** Chev. Ralf Bäckström KCLJ

**Editor-in-Chief of Lazarus Magazine:** Chev. Pekka Lehmuskallio KLJ

**PRO:** Elina Tiainen CLJ

## Delegations and Commanderies

The number of regions remained at nine. During the period, the Delegations of Saint Olav and the Holy Cross were elevated to Commanderies by decision of the Grand Prior. Both have been active, and the membership of the Commandery of the Holy Cross grew significantly during the past ten years.



### Commandery of Saint Lawrence – Helsinki and surrounding areas

*Commander: Eljas Tiihonen KLJ (until 2017), Turkka Hovila KLJ (2017–)*

The focus has been on supporting the Grand Priory with various meeting arrangements. All autumn meetings have traditionally been held in Helsinki, organized by the Commandery of Saint Lawrence.

The “Candlemas Concerts” in February raised funds for charity. However, organizing them became unsustainable, so the “Christmas Coin Project” is now carried out mainly through personal donations, directed via church diaconal work to both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking parishes.

Joint summer trips, for example to heraldic sites, remained popular before the pandemic. Art exhibition visits and summer gatherings in maritime settings strengthened community spirit.



### Commandery of Saint Mary – Turku and surrounding areas

*Commander: Stig R. Blomqvist (–2018), Kari Antila (2018–2022), Janne Annunen (2022–)*

The traditional “Turku Drug Ambulance” operation had to be discontinued in the 2010s. The old vehicle owned by the Finnish Grand Priory was donated away, thereby removing the responsibilities.

The Commandery increasingly focused its charitable efforts on supporting low-income families at Christmas through gift cards distributed via church diaconal work.



### Commandery of Saint Olav – Åland Islands

*Commander: Göran Hansen (–2021), Stig Dreijer KLJ (–2022), Patrick Donner KLJ (2023–)*

The Delegation of Saint Olav was elevated to a Commandery in 2019 due to increased membership and active operations. Chev. Göran Hansen had led the Commandery with a steady hand for decades.

Summer gatherings in Åland have been unforgettable experiences. Close internal relations and extensive charitable work are characteristic of the members of this Commandery.



### Commandery of the Holy Cross – Tampere and surrounding areas

*Commander: Henrik Ramste KLJ (–2018), Jari Andersson KLJ (2018–)*

The Delegation of the Holy Cross was elevated to a Commandery in 2022. It had gained many new members and had very active operations. Jari Andersson stated at a meeting of delegates and commanders: “*There’s practically a queue of people wanting to join the Order.*”

Charity funds are raised through concerts and collections. The Commandery has a dedicated meeting room, “Room of the Holy Cross.” Donations have supported youth psychiatry, low-income families, victims of the war in Ukraine, disabled athletes, and more.



### Delegation of Saint James – Vaasa and surrounding areas

*Delegate: Timo Sairo*

Charity funds are mainly obtained through personal donations and distributed via church diaconal work. The delegation meets regularly.



### Delegation of Saint Andrew – Kouvola and surrounding areas

*Delegates: Eero Korhonen (–2020), Jouko Leppänen (2021–)*

The Delegation faced difficulties during the pandemic. The Spring Knight Days, which they had organized, had to be canceled in both 2020 and 2021. The third event, in spring 2022, was long-awaited and memorable, thanks to a rich cultural program and a splendid gala dinner.

The delegation aims to organize a summer gathering annually with the Delegation of Saint Nicholas. Charity funds go to low-income families and mental health work.



### Delegation of Saint Christopher – Jyväskylä and surrounding areas

*Delegates: Erkki Fredrikson (–2019), Olli Piirtola (2019–)*

The special feature of this delegation is its ability to direct significant donations to charity. Birthday and other congratulatory funds have supported the Christmas Coin Project via the Orthodox Church’s diaconal services to help low-income families.

## Delegation of Saint Nicholas – Lappeenranta and Imatra

Delegates: Heikki Roilas (~2017), Jorma Luoma KLJ (2017–)

Charity funds are traditionally used for Christmas gifts for low-income families in Imatra. The delegation has also supported music school students. Traditional summer meetings are held with the Delegation of Saint Andrew.

## Delegation of Saint Margaret – Oulu, Northern Finland

Delegates: Pirkko Hyrynkangas–Järvenpää CLJ (2017–)

The delegation has remained quite small. Annual donations are channeled via the Hailuoto parish to support low-income families and the elderly.

## Membership Development of the Grand Priory of Finland 2015-2024



## Charitable Activities

The most important mission of our Order is to help, in a Christian spirit, the sick, disabled, elderly, and others in need. During the years 2015–2024, the focus areas of the Grand Priory of Finland have been: supporting low-income families with children, the elderly, the ill and disabled, preventive drug work, support for a leprosy hospital, and participation in the international Order's so-called "flagship projects." The total annual amount of charitable aid distributed by Finland has steadily increased, reaching over €42,000 by the end of 2024.

Supporting low-income families with children has been the central form of aid across all Commanderies and Delegations. Members have actively participated in this work in cooperation with church diaconal services, mainly by providing gift cards to families before Christmas. Funds have been raised through various events or personal contributions from members.

Support for the elderly and war veterans has been provided in cooperation with veteran and war invalid associations as well as church diaconal services. The aim has been to improve their quality of life in everyday situations.

Preventive drug work continued until 2022, in the form of collaboration with Customs' drug detection dog program. Sponsored dog Dani retired in 2017 and received a statue at Helsinki Airport in honor of his successful service. The Grand Priory later supported the training of a new dog, Peppi, but the Customs sponsorship program ended in 2019.



2017 Helsinki.



2017 Lappeenranta.



2018 Oulu.



2017 Porvoo.



2018 Helsinki.



2019 Mariehamn.

Efforts to support children and youth in substance-free lifestyles continued through educational outreach in schools.

Further support has been directed to children with cancer, individuals with mental health challenges, and young athletes with physical disabilities.

Among international efforts, the most significant has been ongoing support for a leprosy hospital in India. Additional aid has gone to victims of the war in Ukraine, a children's home in South Africa, and a hospital in Jerusalem.

## General Assemblies of the Grand Priory

The principle is to hold two general assemblies (known as *Knight Days*) each year. These are the most important gatherings for members. They include Investitures (admission of new members), promotions, and the presentation of decorations.

The autumn meeting is usually held in Helsinki and organized by the Commandery of Saint Lawrence. The location of the spring meeting rotates, depending on which Commandery or Delegation is hosting.

In addition, the Commandery of Saint Olav traditionally organizes a summer gathering in Mariehamn, Åland. These often include investitures as well. Church services are held in different churches around the island, giving participants over the years a rich experience of Åland's medieval churches.

## Spring Knight Days / Autumn Knight Days:

- 2016: Jyväskylä / Helsinki
- 2017: Lappeenranta / Porvoo
- 2018: Oulu / Helsinki
- 2019: Mariehamn / Helsinki
- 2020: Cancelled (COVID19) / Helsinki (limited to 70 people)
- 2021: Cancelled (COVID19) / Helsinki
- 2022: Kouvola / Tampere
- 2023: Vaasa / Helsinki
- 2024: Jyväskylä / Helsinki



2021, 2023 Helsinki.



2020 Helsinki.



2022 Tampere.



2022 Kouvola.



2021 Mariehamn.



2023 Vaasa.



2024 Jyväskylä.

The global COVID19 pandemic in 2020–2021 also greatly affected the activities of the Grand Priory of Finland. All major gatherings were prohibited, and travel was limited. As a result, the Spring Knight Days organized by the Delegation of Saint Andrew had to be cancelled two years in a row.

The 2020 Autumn Knight Days in Helsinki were held in a restricted format, limited to new members and those being promoted, with only 70 participants allowed. Attendees at the investiture in Uspenski Cathedral wore black face masks. A group photo from the event is a lasting memory.

The third attempt to hold the event in Kouvola in spring 2022 was a great success. The two-day program included formality, culture, a beautiful setting, and a large number of participants who thoroughly enjoyed a magnificent dinner and socializing at Kymin Villa.

### Decorations and Heraldry

Detailed information about the Order’s decorations and insignia can be found in the *Candidate’s Guide*.

Additionally, the international “*Handbook of the Order of Saint Lazarus*” was published in 2017, authored by Richard Payatt (International Quartermaster General), Michael Ross (Grand Officer of Arms), and Professor Charles Savona Ventura (Grand Archivist and Historian).

The book presents the Order’s decorations and insignia, instructions on their use, and details about the new uniform approved in 2016. The Finnish summary is found in the *Guide for New Members*.

Finland has decided to adopt the gala uniform model; other models introduced in the book are not considered suitable for local conditions.

The book also includes a review of the Order’s history and heraldry. Heraldry is an essential part of the Order’s tradition. It is expected that each member who becomes a Knight or Dame will have their own knightly coat of arms promotion. This requires that each member obtains a personal heraldic arms, which, with the addition of insignia and decorations, is turned into a knightly coat of arms upon investiture or promotion.

In Finland, we follow a clear and simplified heraldic style in line with national tradition. This is reflected in the design of the coat of arms used by the Grand

Priory, which has been approved by Grand Herald Michael Ross.

During the ten-year period, 15 new knightly coats of arms have been created. In addition, several personal coats of arms have already been registered with the Heraldic Society of Finland, awaiting the investiture of their bearers.

Helena Pesola’s coat of arms was selected as “the most beautiful of the year” when it was accepted into the Finnish Heraldic Society’s register in 2015.

### International Relations

Joint meetings are regularly organized for Grand Priors and the leadership of jurisdictions to discuss current issues.

The international historical academy of the Order, *Sankti Lazari Ordinis Academia Internationalia*, organizes events presenting the latest historical research on the Order. The Academy also aligns its meetings with other international events, such as the Order’s 800th anniversary celebrations in Gotha in summer 2023.

The Grand Priory of Finland regularly receives invitations to European investitures. Representatives from Finland most frequently attend events in neighboring countries, especially Sweden. Marja Kyyhkynen most recently represented Finland when a new Grand Prior was installed in Sweden in autumn 2024.



H.E. Chev. Kenneth P. Moritsugu GCiRLJ installed the new Grand Prior of Sweden, Chev. Lars Vigerland KCLJ into office on October 5, 2024. Between them Maria Kyyhkynen DCLJ.

### Outlook for the Future

As of spring 2025, the global situation appears so serious that all forms of material and spiritual support that the Order of Saint Lazarus can offer are critically needed. At the same time, it can be said that the Order’s mission of promoting Christian unity and drawing from tradition provides its members with security and a strong foundation of values to help withstand the challenges ahead.

## "Jesus Wept" – A Message of Empathy and Hope

The shortest verse in the Finnish Bible consists of two words: "Jesus wept." These ten letters carry a message more profound than one might initially think. This brief verse reveals much about the Lord whom Christians follow.

This short verse indicates that Jesus felt empathy and identified with the suffering and mourning of humans. He showed through His emotions that His friend Lazarus was important and dear to Him. Jesus' empathy and His weeping gain a particularly deep meaning when we remember who Jesus ultimately is according to our Christian faith. He is not merely God's messenger, a great teacher, or an admirable example. Jesus of Nazareth was God Himself, born into the world as a human to demonstrate as clearly and tangibly as possible what God's love is.

Jesus' weeping reveals that the Almighty God is not indifferent to what happens to us humans and how we experience life. This incarnation of God and His life as a human form the basis for our trust that God knows exactly what it is like to be human and what we go through—our life situations, joys, and sorrows.

Jesus' weeping and the resurrection of Lazarus are excellent examples of what makes the Bible's narratives so compelling that they are revisited time and again. These stories depict various phases, experiences, and emotions of human life in a timeless manner. Even two thousand years ago, people mourned their deceased loved ones. Both the Old and New Testaments' descriptions of people's joys and sorrows, achievements and disappointments, resentment and bitterness, kindness and mercy, despair and hope—all aspects of humanity—demonstrate that the fundamental questions of human life have remained the same through the millennia. The Bible's portrayals of human life provide an opportunity to approach even those aspects and emotions—the shadowy and dark sides of life—that we might otherwise prefer to avoid.

The events at Lazarus' tomb lead us to themes of suffering and death, perhaps the most challenging aspects of human life. Suffering is often considered a problem to be solved, either by ending the suffering or by finding an intellectual answer to ease its endurance. Physical pain, as well as mental and sometimes spiritual anguish, can become obstacles for some in believing and relying on God. Why does God allow suffering? Why does the Almighty not intervene in situations where people experience pain and distress in various ways?

One attempt to endure and understand suffering is to examine it as an intellectual problem awaiting a solution. Identifying the causes of suffering can help in some way when considering whether the suffering is caused by human cruelty or natural processes. It is not insignificant whether suffering results from human cruelty in torture chambers or the destructive force of a tsunami on the

seashore. Similarly, one can consider whether suffering is of a permanent nature, such as an incurable disease, or gradually diminishing or even temporary.

A common religious attempt to understand suffering is reflected in the question: What wrong have I done to deserve this suffering? For what am I being punished? This question torments many who are in the grip of pain and loss. From the perspective of Christian faith, one could respond by reminding that we Christians believe Jesus has already suffered all possible punishment warranted by human sinfulness. This is what we mean when we say Jesus atoned for our sins. He suffered on our behalf. This is the ever-relevant message of Good Friday. Suffering undoubtedly halts us and often forces a reassessment of our life's value hierarchy, but it is not a punishment for individual sins.

Suffering can be rationalized, and one can attempt to find understandable reasons for it. Rational reasons can sometimes be found, but intellectual insights do not truly eliminate suffering. Physical and mental pain persist. It could not be otherwise. Suffering cannot be confined to just one area of life; it affects the whole person. This becomes particularly evident when dealing with death.

At Lazarus' tomb, the longing caused by death was strongly present. It is easy to empathize with Martha and Mary's grief when their beloved brother Lazarus had died a few days earlier. Jesus came to meet the mourning sisters and confront their sorrow, and then He wept. Both Martha and Mary expressed their thoughts and grief in a very human way: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Perhaps there is a slight tone of reproach in the sisters' statement: Why didn't Jesus come in time? Regret always carries a hint of guilt or blame. "If only he had been more careful, he would still be alive." "If only we had reached the hospital earlier, he would be alive." "If only I had arrived sooner, he would still be alive." Grief is connected to the complete sense of powerlessness that arises from the realization that what has happened cannot be undone. Death is so final.





*The Order listens to Archbishop Tapio Luoma's sermon.*

Except that, according to Christian faith, death is not final. In the Gospel narrative, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead in a very simple manner, just as God created the world. He merely spoke the word, and it happened: "Lazarus, come out." The Easter message is powerfully presented in the story of Lazarus. Jesus Himself rose from the dead on the third day after Good Friday. Lazarus, however, died again and awaits, along with others who have been laid to rest, the moment when the risen Jesus calls the dead to life.

Dear congregation, the way Jesus encountered not only Lazarus but also his sisters Martha and Mary is central to the mission of the Order of Saint Lazarus. As we celebrate today the 50th anniversary of the Grand Priory of Finland of the Order, it is fitting to return to the roots and the ideological foundation of the Order. The most important aspect of Lazarus and his close ones' experience was Jesus' way of confronting their life circumstances, their loss, and their grief—the suffering that befell Lazarus and his sisters. The Gospel's mention of Jesus' weeping speaks of empathy, the ability to place oneself in and identify with the suffering person's situation. It speaks of openness to face the questions of the suffering person and the desire to find some explanation for the heavy experiences. It is precisely these aspects—empathy and taking the suffering person seriously—that the Order of Saint Lazarus is known for.

Empathy, the genuine encounter with another person, brings the light of Easter into lives shrouded in dark and somber tones. That light brings relief and comfort; it gives hope and courage. It is the light of Jesus Christ, our Lord, which shines through human actions to those who suffer. In bringing this light of resurrection and hope, the Grand Priory of Finland of the Order of Saint Lazarus continues to have an important and significant role. May Almighty God bless the Order and strengthen you to shine the light of empathy and humanity in this world.

## Turku and its Cathedral

The Hanseatic League, a commercial alliance of German cities, had invigorated trade in the Baltic Sea ports, including Turku. Finnish leather and fish were shipped abroad, while goods such as salt, textiles, and luxury items made their way into Finnish homes. German merchants settled in the area, initially forming the majority of Turku's bourgeoisie. In 1249, Dominican friars arrived from across Sweden and founded the Dominican Monastery of St. Olaf, which became permanently located on the slope of Kaskenmäki in the 14th century. The Cathedral School – Finland's first school – which trained priests, had already been established in the late 13th century.

According to current estimates, the city of Turku was founded between the years 1280 and 1300. Around the same time, Turku Castle began to be built as an administrative stronghold for the Swedish crown. The city grew gradually, and by the end of the 14th century, Turku had an estimated population of 800 to 900 inhabitants.

Near what was then the center of Turku, a church standing on the hill of Unikankare was consecrated as a cathedral on June 17, 1300, when the bishop's seat was moved from Koroinen, a couple of kilometers away, to its current location. On the following day, June 18, the bones of Saint Bishop Henrik were ceremoniously brought from Nousiainen to the cathedral in a translation feast. The Catholic cathedral's patron saints became the Virgin Mary and Saint Henrik.



*Turku Cathedral is the mother church of the Lutheran Church of Finland, and the country's national shrine.*



*The order gathered for an ecumenical service. Our prelate Sakari Lehmuskallio delivered the opening words.*



## The Grand 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Grand Priory of Finland of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Turku, 26 April 2025

The Grand Priory of Finland celebrated its 50th anniversary in Turku on 26 April 2025 with a distinguished gathering of over 100 participants. Turku holds special significance for the Grand Priory as its spiritual home, being the location of the first investiture and ecumenical service in 1975. The celebration was honoured by the presence of the Grand Master, H.E. Don Francisco de Borbón Graf von Hardenberg GCLJ.

The festivities began with an ecumenical service held in the Turku Cathedral. The sermon was delivered by Archbishop Tapio Luoma. The Grand Priory's ceremonial procession both opened and concluded the service, adding a solemn and festive touch to the beautiful devotion. In his sermon, Archbishop Luoma emphasised that empathy and the genuine encounter with another human being bring light into lives shadowed by darkness. Light brings relief

and comfort—it gives hope and courage. With these words, he extended his blessing and strength to the Order in its work.

The anniversary dinner was held in the grand hall of the Turku Volunteer Fire Brigade House. The City of Turku was represented by Protocol Chief Mika Akkanen, who brought greetings on behalf of the city. During dinner, guests enjoyed superb musical performances by pianist Mikko Heininen and guitarist-singer Luis Herrero. In her welcome address, Grand Prior Helena Pesola reminded attendees that continuous development of our activities is key to the vitality of our Order in the years to come. Our mission remains necessary, and our strong values and sense of community guide us in continuing our work amidst the challenges of the world.

The anniversary address was delivered by H.E. Chev. Matti Vuoria GCiRLJ, serving as both Grand Referendary and Grand Custodian in the Grand Magistral Council. Greetings were also conveyed by Referendary Andreas Rademachers KCLJ from the Grand Bailiwick of Germany.



The Grand Master attended the statutory spring meeting and delivered his greetings.



Grand Prior Helena Pesola and Prior Berndt von Veh presented the Grand Master with a commemorative medal.



Happy chatter and reunion. The Commandery of St. Mary, led by its Commander Janne Annunen, organized a memorable event.

### This jubilee year's special donations

Russia's brutal war has disrupted the lives of children in Ukraine and caused severe damage to their well-being. 7.5 million children are in need of help. The Grand Priory of Finland donated €5,000 in emergency aid to support Ukrainian children's education, healthcare, and future security.

Another €5,000 donation was directed to the Ghandhiji Seva Nikitan leprosy hospital in India, a long-time recipient of our charitable support. Each year, around 100,000 people in India still contract leprosy. Support is needed both for prevention and for helping those already affected by the disease.

During the evening, guests also had the opportunity to make additional voluntary donations in support of Ukrainian children, which raised over 2100€.

Our members say that working for the good of others gives life a deeper meaning.

In the autumn, we will continue our charitable activities, focusing especially on low-income families with children through our Christmas Coin campaign, says Grand Prior Helena Pesola.

Elina Tiainen CLJ



### Commemorative Medal of the Priory of Finland 1975

A medal has been minted by the Priory of Finland to commemorate the Congress of the Order in Turku, Finland, in May, 1975.

The medal shows His Royal Highness the Grand Master Prince Don Francisco Enrique de Borbòn y Borbòn, Duke of Sevilla, and the medieval heraldic emblem of the Congress town of Turku, a "A" for Aboa; (Turku in Latin) and four little fleurs-de-lis, which here conveniently stand for the Borbòn fleur-de-lis, too.

The reverse shows the Coat of Arms of the Order. Among the text can two heraldic emblems be seen: a Maltese cross for the Order and a heraldic rose for the Republic of Finland.

The sculptor was Herald Olof Eriksson, KLJ, a well-known Finnish heraldic artist and designer of several historical and other medals. The medal measures 70mm in a diameter and has been minted in a limited edition of 465 ex. in bronze.



## The ceremonial speech of Matti Vuoria

Dear Grand Master,  
Dear members of the Order, esteemed guests,

Today we are honoured to gather in celebration of an Order whose origins reach back over 900 years – to a time when, in the heart of Jerusalem, the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus was founded to care for those afflicted with leprosy and others in need. From that distant past to this present moment, the legacy of the Order is one of Christian values, compassion, and a deep sense of social responsibility.

The Order has been active in Finland for over half a century. Established in 1974, the Grand Priory of Finland has engaged in charitable work, especially in alleviating social vulnerability. Its activities have included participation in anti-drug initiatives, supporting hospitals and care facilities, and promoting the treatment of epilepsy. Our mission – rooted in a centuries-old tradition – remains as relevant and necessary today as ever.

Our Order is united by an ecumenical conviction, a commitment to act across denominational boundaries, and a belief that Christian faith must be lived through deeds – through compassion, community, and moral responsibility. Membership is not merely an honour but a duty – a call to serve. And it is worth remembering that although our history gives us a distinguished foundation, the Order is not a relic of the past but a living institution whose values and mission remain profoundly meaningful in our own time.



Dear Grand Master, we are deeply honoured by your presence at our celebration. With gratitude, we recognize that the Grand Masters of our Order have strongly supported our work in Finland. Your grandfather, Don Francisco de Paula Enrique Borbón y Borbón, Duke of Seville, commissioned Chevalier Curt Ulfstedt in 1974 to initiate the activities of the Order in Finland by establishing a Commandery here. Only a year later, the Grand Master arrived in Turku at the head of an influential delegation. In the city's historically significant cathedral, an ecumenical service was held on May 24, 1975, in conjunction with the Investiture. It was officiated by the Prelate of the Order in Finland, Metropolitan Johannes of the Greek Catholic Church, Roman Catholic Bishop Paul Verschuren, and Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Karl-Erik Forssell. Turku was the right choice for the celebrations, having been the second most important city in the Kingdom of Sweden for centuries.

The medieval Bishop of Turku, Magnus Tavast, was consecrated in Rome in 1412. He also made a pilgrimage to Palestine and is buried in Turku Cathedral. His foster son, Olaus Magnus, served as rector of the University of Paris from 1435 to 1436 and maintained close ties with the Vatican. I mention these historical details to illustrate how important the centuries-long connection to our shared



*Protocol Chief Mika Akkanen brought greetings on behalf of the city of Turku.*



*Marchal Bengt Engblom KLJ ensured the smooth running of the event. Musical delight was brought to the celebration by pianist Mikko Heininen and guitarist-singer Luis Herrero. A warm greeting was delivered by our guest Referendary Andreas Rademachers KCLJ from the Grand Bailiwick of Germany.*





*Grand Referendary and Grand Custodian Matti Vuoria speaks.*

European Christian cultural heritage is for us Finnish members of the Order.

After your grandfather, your father – our 48th Grand Master, Don Francisco de Borbón y Escasany, Duke of Seville – visited Finland during our 25th anniversary celebrations and again in 2002. Now Grand Master Emeritus, he remains a great friend of Finland. Your predecessor, the 49th Grand Master, Don Carlos Gereda y de Borbón, Marquess of Almazán, visited Finland and Turku in 2010 and participated in the Grand Priory's 40th anniversary in 2015.

Dear Grand Master, you have served as the 50th Grand Master of our Order since 2018. I have had the privilege and opportunity to observe your energetic leadership and can state with certainty that you have visited jurisdictions of the Order on every continent and in more regions than any of your predecessors. We are grateful that under your leadership, the Order has weathered the COVID crisis and demonstrated resilience in the face of Russia's attack on Ukraine and the continuing war. The challenges facing the Order are not diminishing. The post-World War II global trade liberalization and multilateral cooperation are now facing serious threats. As you operate actively on both sides of the Atlantic, you are well-positioned to maintain and strengthen the unity and internal cohesion of the Order in these trying times. We, the Finnish members of the Order, extend our full support to you.

The history of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Finland is distinguished and successful. There are many reasons for this. Finland and the Finnish people have fought for their existence for centuries. Since our independence, we

Finns have viewed ourselves as a frontier outpost of the West. Finland is one of the few European countries that has retained universal conscription. When the Order's operations began in Finland, many of those appointed to leadership roles had experienced war and participated in it. To Finns, the dual role of the Order – Military and Hospitaller – is both understandable and natural. Rules must be followed, and the orders and instructions of superiors must be observed. However, in the Finnish view, the most important qualities are the loyalty and fidelity of the Order's members to the Grand Master. We fulfil our obligations and do not engage in internal disputes within the Order or our own Grand Priory.



The establishment of the Order's activities in Finland came at a historically opportune time. Despite heavy losses, Finland preserved its independence and defended against the Soviet attack during the Winter War with honour. In the 1970s, Finland, while still emphasizing its neutrality, began its participation in European economic integration, opening new avenues for deeper connection with the broader Western European value community beyond the Nordic countries. Through our membership in EU and NATO we have now completed our journey. Independent and allied.

The Order is open to members of various Christian denominations. Therefore, Metropolitan Johannes, who was later appointed Archbishop of the Orthodox Church of Finland and held widespread respect, served as Prelate of the Grand Priory of Finland for over thirty years, significantly strengthening the visibility of our Order in Finland. It is important to us Finns that both men and women have access to membership and roles within the Order. The leadership of the Grand Priory of Finland has sought to develop our activities in ways that reinforce both the status of the Order in Finland and Finland's role within the Order. HE the Dame Helena Pesola, who has led the Grand Priory with great success since 2016, is the seventh person to hold this office. Together with the other senior leaders of the Grand Priory, she has managed to recruit a growing number of young members into our ranks.

In my own life, the most important lessons I have learned have come from those who served as my superiors within the Order. One such mentor was HE Chevalier Heikki Sysimetsä, who served as Prior of Finland beginning in 1980 and later as Grand Prior from 1987 to 1995. I received my first assignment in the Order upon becoming a member in 1980, when I was appointed Sysimetsä's aide-de-camp. Sysimetsä was a wise and strong natural leader, with a remarkable ability to resolve conflicts and navigate difficult situations. He developed the operations of the Grand Priory in a manner that harmonized the best elements of patriotism and Finnish identity with the international nature and protocol of our Order in a sustainable way. It has been a solid foundation on which to continue.

Today's celebration is both a tribute to the past decades and their builders, and a pledge to the future – a future we shape together in the spirit of the Order, faithful to its tradition and calling.

*Matti Vuoria GC1r1J, GCLJ, GCMLJ  
Grand Referendary and Grand Custodian*



# educo

The best expert and partner in people leadership.  
educo.fi



# oras invest

orasinvest.fi

*At the festive dinner, we enjoyed a delicious Lazarus pastry prepared by Curt Lindqvist CLJ for dessert. As the evening drew to a close, many wished to have a group photo with the Grand Master. On Sunday, the program included a guided tour of the art exhibition at the Turku Art Museum, led by Jaakko Ossa.*



## Promotions and changes in membership

### Promotions

Otto Virtomaa KCLJ, Janne Annunen KLJ, Bengt Engblom KLJ  
Markku Salminen ChLJ, Teemu Hankamäki CLJ,  
Tommi Laukka CLJ, Elina Tiainen CLJ

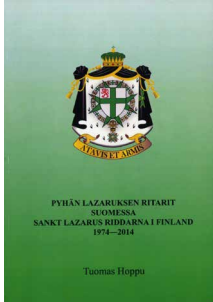
### New members

Commendery of St Lawrence: Jussi Tuovinen MLJ  
Commendery of the Holy Cross: Soile Pellinen MLJ, Pekka Pellinen MLJ



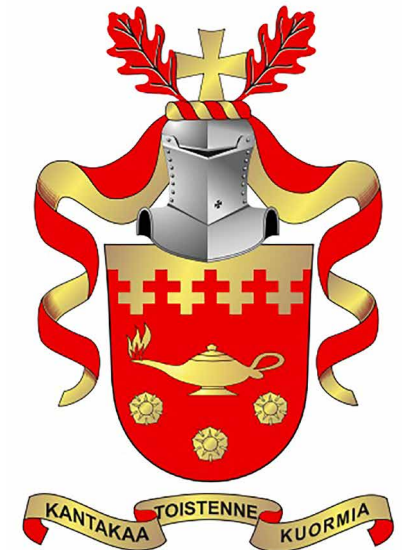


[www.kiilto.fi](http://www.kiilto.fi)



The history of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Finland is available in commanderies and delegations, as well as at national Knights' Days.

**price  
30 €**



*Motto in English:  
"Carry each other's burdens."*

*The coat of arms is owned by Mauri Sompa.*

Our warmest  
congratulations to  
the Grand Priory of Finland.

Parhaimmat onnittelumme  
Suomen Suurpioraatille!



**VAATTURI  
LIKE**  
MIIA VIRTANEN

- Lazarus uniforms
- Tailor-made suits
- Made-to-measure suits
- Clothing repairs and alterations
  
- Lazarus univormut
- Räätelipuvut
- Mittapuvut
- Korjaus- ja muutostyöt

Puolalankatu 4, 20100 Turku  
+358 50 4327 227 +358 2 2500 007  
[www.vaatturiliike.com](http://www.vaatturiliike.com)  
[miia.virtanen@vaatturiliike.com](mailto:miia.virtanen@vaatturiliike.com)

# Nurturing Finnish Feet Since 1995

30  
mills 1995-2025

Everyday life rests on your feet.  
That's why foot wellness is the foundation of an active,  
good life.

With 30 years of experience, we know the challenges  
Finnish feet face.

We offer proven, tested solutions for foot care –  
beloved Mills Lambswool and carefully selected  
products from around the world.

As a Finnish family business, we know how to match the  
world's best health products to the unique needs and  
challenges of Finnish feet.

We promote foot wellness through prevention and care.

mills

mills.fi