

March 2020



# SAINT LAZARUS®

The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

**From the Ecclesiastical Grand Prior**

## Dear Brothers and Sisters

As the coronavirus pandemic progresses, I urge you to remain firm in faith, firm in hope and active in charity.

As citizens, we are invited to take every sensible precaution by the health and political authorities, to avoid the risk of contagion.

As Christians, we are also called to respond to the Covid-19 epidemic in the "light of the Gospel" and to intensify our prayers. This means knowing better the face of God to whom prayers are addressed. The God we Christians believe in is a Father rich in mercy who takes care of every child, who is close to misery and suffering, who does not chastise but forgives, who does not want the death of the sinner, but who converts and enlivens. Our God is the God of life and resurrection, so we must not be afraid, because he will not abandon us, even in times of illness and death.

A mature Christian faith does not ensure us a peaceful life without difficulties, but provides us with a new concept of life that gives us the strength to face our existence in the certainty that nothing can separate us from the love that Jesus Christ has for us. The faith that is expressed in prayer has its own strength, through which we can entrust ourselves to the Lord to free us from evil and help us fight disease, aided by the skill and knowledge of scientists and doctors.

Jesus Christ identified himself as the man who suffers, suffering himself, to go further, to overcome evil and death. Jesus is the Good Samaritan who takes care of the tragedies of our humanity. He asks those who believe to do the same by making themselves close to those in need.

Everyone who stops to attend to the suffering of another, whatever that suffering may be, is a good Samaritan. Everyone sensitive to the suffering of others, and who is moved by the misfortune of his neighbour, is a good Samaritan. A good Samaritan is, therefore, ultimately the one who brings help in suffering, of whatever nature it may be. A good Samaritan is each and every member of our Hospitaller Order.

The crisis provoked by the spread of the coronavirus can offer an opportunity to us as members of our Order to bear witness to the strength, care and concern that arise from an experience of faith convincingly embraced and lived.

I greet you with affection and assure you of my remembrance of you all in prayer.

+ **Michele Pennisi**

**Archbishop of Monreale and Ecclesiastical Grand Prior**

*This is an edited version of the EGP's letter, which may be read in full on the website at [www.st-lazarus.net](http://www.st-lazarus.net)*



## A message from the Grand Chancellor



“May God keep you safe in the palm of his hand and guard you against this worldwide crisis and all other adversity. May the prayers of Our Lady and Saint Lazarus give us strength and be the wind beneath our wings in all of our endeavours.”

In light of the deepening worldwide coronavirus crisis, we are already hearing from Jurisdictions that investitures and meetings have been postponed or cancelled. Please be advised that delivery of insignia will suffer serious delays. For the time being, it will be impossible for insignia to be shipped and further transport by plane is very problematic due to many countries' borders being closed. Accordingly, no further insignia shipments will occur until the coronavirus crisis has abated. In case of questions on insignia orders and deliveries, please contact our Vice Grand Chancellor (Finance), H.E. Chev. Sijt de Boom at [sdeboom@planet.nl](mailto:sdeboom@planet.nl).

For those Jurisdictions that still plan to hold investitures and meetings, we strongly encourage postponement or cancellation of them to avoid unnecessary health risks. The Grand Chancery is willing to assist and respond to any problems involving the functioning of Jurisdictions. We also request that hospitallers communicate with local membership by emails, telephone calls or the postal service to keep in touch and especially learn of health related issues on the coronavirus issue, since many of our members are in the high risk category for contracting the virus.

Also, we ask that no further requests to hold investitures be made until this worldwide crisis is well under control. There is entirely too much of a health risk to approve requests.

On behalf of the Governance Working Committee, we trust all of you are staying safe and healthy and not taking unnecessary health risks. When possible, please offer assistance to the elderly, ill and those living alone who may need our help to weather the extremely challenging weeks and months ahead. May God keep you safe in the palm of his hand and guard you against this worldwide crisis and all other adversity. May the prayers of Our Lady and Saint Lazarus give us strength and be the wind beneath our wings in all of our endeavours.

Confraternally yours,

*Marny Gilluly*

**Marny Gilluly, GCLJ**  
**Grand Chancellor**



## Atavis et Armis!

Our Order was born out of adversity. On the one hand the fight to retain Jerusalem in Christian hands; on the other the plight of those so engaged who contracted leprosy and were outcasts from Middle Eastern society. In part, the cycle has now gone full circle – not for the first time.

All of us are currently deprived of much physical contact; offices are either closed or staff are working from home; restaurants, bars, cinemas, theatres and art galleries are closed; food is in short supply due to panic buying; care homes are struggling and the elderly are increasingly isolated because they are prohibited from going out and are fearful of becoming infected if they venture out and because relatives, who themselves share the same fears, are unwilling or forbidden to visit them.

So where does this leave us and our Order? It takes us back to our roots. This is not the time for

us to close down because the activities which we have come to love cannot take place. Rather it is the time for us to re-evaluate what our Order stands for, what it can and should do and what is our personal commitment to helping this to happen.



In the Anglican Communion, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have issued a joint statement encouraging us to think about the Church 'in a different shape', focusing on prayer and community service. Surely, that is as relevant to us. We must show our colours as those who help others.

This involves getting our hands dirty, rolling up our sleeves and putting others before ourselves.

At local level, we can organise ourselves to offer help to those who are housebound – not just our members – in practical ways, through offering to go shopping, keeping in contact by phone or social media and being there if they need help or take ill, by providing supplies to those who can no longer afford them because their jobs have been terminated (even if temporarily) and in many other ways.

In saying this I am mindful that the position and restrictions in individual countries differ according to governmental considerations of the prevalence of the virus and the containment of its spread among their citizens. Where severe restrictions are in place we may only be able to help by giving to those who are charged with the care of others.

Behind this must be prayer, as our Ecclesiastical Grand Prior has reminded us. It is that which inspires us and gives us the courage to take action following in the footsteps of our Lord and of St Lazarus. This is what each of us can do faithfully each day, praying both in specific terms for our local communities and in general terms for those charities and organisations which are stretched beyond measure at this vital time.

It is that to which we are called as Confreres and Consoeurs within our noble and Hospitaller Order.

*Norman Hunter Rose*





# SAINT LAZARUS<sup>®</sup>

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## Prayers for use during this time of international concern

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### A prayer from the Ecclesiastical Grand Prior, + *Michele Pennisi*

Father of infinite mercy, lover of life, in the uncertainty of this time, full of darkness, and in this moment of concern and anguish for the spread of the virus in many countries of the world, we turn to you with the trust of your children. Never before have we felt so clearly that we belong to a single human family, despite the fear of contagion affecting our social relationships, and the pursuit of individual interest at the expense of the common good.

### 2 prayers for others



We live in the presence of God our Father.

We bring into his presence, in the name of the Lord Jesus, those for whom we pray.

Our prayer for them and for ourselves is that we may come to know his love more surely, to trust him more deeply, and to realise the presence of the Holy Spirit within us all, ever at work healing, strengthening and guiding us in all our ways. Amen

*(Guild of Health)*

O God of love and power, we come to you for those who are ill in body or mind, and for those who are cast down and sad.

Tell them in the midst of all their pain and anxiety that your name is Love; and since you ordained that your own will needs our cooperation, use these our prayers.

Turn our caring into their courage, our solicitude into their succour, our faith into their will to get well; though Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Revd. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead)*

### A prayer for ourselves

Gracious and Holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate on you and a life to proclaim you; through the power and the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*(St Benedict)*

