

Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

Grand Master: H.E. Don Francisco de Borbon Graf von Hardenberg GCLJ



The COVID-19 Pandemic

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.

September 2020

This booklet has been compiled by the Public Relations & Communications Committee on behalf of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem from material provided by individual jurisdictions. The full texts may be found on the international website at www.st-lazarus.net/en/covid-19

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September 2020





In Marbella,
August 28th 2020

The past six months have been both challenging and encouraging for members of the Order in every continent and country. No one has been exempt from the impact of the pandemic, which has affected individuals within all our jurisdictions. This has prompted each of us to respond through the gifts of money, time and expertise, in the manner most appropriate to each of our personal and local circumstances.

The International Newsletter has highlighted the responses made by the Order in batches over the past five, rapid-fire issues and I am really grateful to the Public Relations and Communications Committee team for producing these updates. However, it is only appropriate that we should be able to view them in a consolidated manner and this publication, which is a compendium of all the responses received to date, seeks to achieve this. I am greatly encouraged and truly grateful to all of you for your contributions. They have reinforced the values of our Order and its relevance to our society.

As we move into the next phase of this pandemic and, eventually out of it, I do not want us to go backwards and to regard what we have undertaken and achieved as unusual and short-lived. Rather, I want us all to see the great potential of our Order to do good, to realise where we are and to help those within our society who are less privileged and in greater need.

As mentioned in my April 2020 letter to the jurisdictions, the 2020-2021 Hospitaller Flagship Project will be COVID-19 relief efforts. In this exceptional situation, the base consolidated fund for these efforts was €10,000 from the Order's Hospitaller Fund and €10,000 from the Order's General Reserve Fund. A campaign will be promoted through social media, the website and other media to raise donations for worldwide projects. Locations with people in the most need will be targeted to provide medical facilities with supplies and equipment that are currently not available to them.

The initial project funded by the Order was awarded to the Ávila Healthcare Complex in Ávila, Spain. The Order provided much needed coronavirus diagnostic tests and supplies to treat those infected with the virus. Items were also provided to increase the safety of hospital staff in direct contact with COVID-19 patients.

Thank you so much for what you have done and continue to do. As we move forward, we must not lose our new-found motivation.

Atavis et Armis!

Francisco de Borbón von Hardenberg

The L Grand Master



FOREWORD

The pandemic which broke earlier this year has proved to be a catalyst which has galvanised members across the world to respond to the need on their doorsteps in an unprecedented manner. Never, since its expulsion from the Holy Land, has there been such a positive overflowing of kindness, sympathy, action and prayer from Lazarites in all continents to support victims, relatives, medical professionals and those suffering from social exclusion and economic deprivation.

In recent issues of the International Newsletter we have posted synopses of those actions reported to us. The full version of these reports can be found on the international website. Meantime, we thought it appropriate that the comments published should be combined into a compendium as an historical record of the response of the Order to the situations occurring because of the pandemic.

Too often we play down the work of our Order. To many it seems moribund and formal. What could be further from the truth over the past six months? Members have given freely of their time and money and have donated generously to the worthy causes and instances of desperate need which have been identified in the areas of their local Commanderies. As our Lord and pattern said –

“I assure you that whatever you did for the humblest of my brothers and sisters
you did for me.”

It is this which marks us as different from those who have responded solely through a social conscience. We do it because He has inspired us to follow His example when He lived among us, and we do so as His hands, feet, eyes and ears responding to the cries of others in need.

I hope that this outburst of activity will be the springboard to a continuing and expanding programme of social engagement within our local communities.

Onward and upward!

Norman Hunter Rose KCLJ



Facemasks from around the world



The Americas

Grand Priory of America

Across the USA, a range of new initiatives has been set up by Commanderies and individual members, alongside ongoing charitable activity.

When the Commandery of the West was made aware of an urgent need for basic infrared thermometers to take temperatures of potential COVID-19 patients at the St. Anthony's Foundation clinic in San Francisco, they responded immediately with a substantial grant. The clinic cares for the primarily homeless individuals residing in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. The foundation provides up to 2,000 meals daily, clothing and social services resources, and provides basic medical care in the clinic.

The Hawaii Cadre has been particularly active in supporting programmes to feed and care for the homeless, especially in Waikiki, as well as providing essential equipment such as facemasks and hand sanitiser for those in need.

A donation from the Grand Commandery of the South has provided funds to purchase food supplies to feed the staff of West Jefferson General Hospital for at least a week, through *Resque*. This organisation's purpose is to feed first responders in the wake of natural disasters along the Gulf Coast, such as hurricanes and floods. They believe the COVID-19 pandemic crisis meets their objectives.

In the Midwest, the local Commandery has made grants to several local charities which provide services to those negatively impacted by economic loss. The Women's Care Center provides counselling to pregnant women and offers education classes and other support. The Tree House is committed to supporting victims and survivors of sexual and physical abuse, services which will be needed more than ever after the pandemic, while Walworth County Food and Diaper Bank is in emergency mode serving more people than ever.

Southwest Commandery is supporting the Houston Food Bank, and offering practical support to elderly residents as well as providing prepared food to local hospitals and first responder stations, while the Atlantic Commandery is focussing on support for St. Patrick's Cathedral Fund's Community Outreach Ministries Fund in NYC.

Mexican Delegation

The Mexican Delegation has been working hard to support the two leprosy clinics of Morelia and Irapuato and the associated convent of nuns who provide clinical services to patients. With the help of delegation members, a supply of medication used to treat Chronic Upper Respiratory Disease was delivered to the clinics in case it was needed to augment clinical care due to COVID-19 infections. Also, a large van of cleaning supplies was donated to the centres.

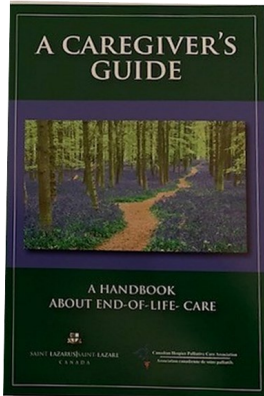
The Mexican Delegation Commander's spouse has been making and selling jewellery to support the purchase of food, cleaning supplies, cloth masks and other needed domestic consumable materials. To date, over 200 packages of materials for the leprosarium patients have been purchased.



Finally, the nuns in Morelia have been making masks for children and families in their communities to help slow the spread of the virus in the community.

Grand Priory in Canada

Despite being socially distanced by the sheer geographic size of the country, members of the Grand Priory in Canada have been able to continue with our mandate of service during the past four months.



As our primary focus has been the provision of funding and resources for hospice palliative care & end of life care, the scourge of COVID has meant that both our online Home Care Giver's support programme and our publication 'A Caregiver's Guide' have been much appreciated by families throughout the country. The practical information has helped many families as they navigate end of life in these unprecedented times.

We have continued to support hospices throughout the country with monetary donations as their fund raising efforts have been severely restricted. Several members and the Acadia commandery in particular have facilitated the donation of iPads to hospices and long term care facilities. Our members in BC have provided funds to one of the most badly affected homes in that province for patient support items and other commanderies have chosen to purchase and donate PPE to hospitals and long term care facilities. We have a significant number of members working on the frontlines and are grateful that each of them has remained healthy.

Individual members of the Grand Priory have contributed in various ways via our Small Acts of Kindness programme. Following on the idea of Loving Thy Neighbour, members have delivered food hampers, sewn and delivered masks, cooked meals or spent time calling neighbours, friends and members as a daily or weekly check in. Even the Grand Prior has been knitting up Twiddlemuffs for use by dementia patients in long term care facilities.



The programme is intended to bring awareness about the Order and recognize those serving. Our pins in French and ones in English are being made now and will be used to recognize folks who have done a small act of kindness and introduce them to the work of the Order in their community.



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)

Europe

Grand Bailiwick of the Czech Republic

The Grand Bailiwick of the Czech Republic is taking an active role in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, through its members and members of merit.

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



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.

Grand Priory of Finland

A state of emergency has been in force for more than two months in Finland, but restrictive measures are gradually being relaxed.

About half of the members of the Grand Priory are over 70 years of age, so it has been a priority in Commanderies and Delegations to ensure that their safety nets are in order and to provide assistance if necessary. An important thing for the elderly and lonely members has been emotional and spiritual nearness and encouragement as well as the opportunity to talk to someone. They have been grateful for these opportunities – we need each other and personal contacts are important to everyone.

Members have also been in contact with war veterans, and the national Prelate sent a message to all our members in early May.

Sadly, one member of the Grand Priory has died as a result of coronavirus.

Grand Priory of England & Wales

In common with others around the world, the members of the Grand Priory of England & Wales have been active in a variety of ways during the current lockdown. Commandery chaplains have arranged on line liturgies; members have acted as NHS Responders; housebound members have offered their services as administrators for local charities; almoners have spoken by phone or Skype to members confined at home during the lockdown. In many areas, links with local hospices and other charities for those affected in one way or another by the wider impact of the pandemic have been strengthened in response to local needs.

Over and above all this local activity, commanderies have continued with their regular charitable activities, both in the UK and overseas, and several larger projects have been undertaken in response to clinical appeals.



The Commandery of Wales has raised funds to provide a second 3-D printer and consumables for a PPE face shield project run by the Cardiff High School PTA. To date 8,100 face shields have been fabricated and distributed to NHS front line staff and care homes. The second phase of the Commandery of Wales PPE appeal helped fund 'Scrubs for All'. Red Dragon Flagmakers of Swansea have redeployed their flag making skills to fabricate clinical scrubs for doctors, nurses and care home workers. The Commandery has funded the supply of PPE face shields and scrubs for the Nazareth House Care Home in Cardiff. King Offa Commandery has provided similar PPE kit for the Nazareth House Care Home in Northampton.

In London, the Commandery of London & Westminster is supporting an appeal from the Little Sisters of the Poor, who run 2 care homes in the capital. The funds raised will enable the provision of oxygen concentrators to help support breathing in those with Covid-19 who are in the home and not hospitalised.

The Commandery is also supporting the work of Solidarity Britannia Food Bank. Based in East London, the food bank has been set up to help those who are especially vulnerable at this time.



Hereditary Commandery of Rurich

The St. Lazarus Hereditary Commandery of Rurich e.V. bought around 20,000 hospital face masks and donated 50% of them to people in need in Germany, Italy and Spain at the beginning of April. These masks mainly went to childrens' hospitals and institutions for the elderly.

The other 50% are still available for whenever they may be needed.

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; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Revd. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead)

Grand Priory of France

Across the country, members of the Order have been encouraged to respond to the call for blood donation issued by the French Blood Establishment. Both clergy and lay members have also made themselves available to listen to single or sick people who find it difficult to bear the current situation of confinement and to whom they offer help and advice. Each commandery has also undertaken specific local projects.

The OSLJ's Charities Association of the Grand Priory of Alsace donated 900 litres of hydroalcoholic gel to the Obernai and Sélestat Hospital Group. Count Christian d'Andlau-Hombourg, Grand Prior, personally handed over the bottles of gel to the medical team at the hospital in Obernai.

Faced with the shortage of medical equipment in Corsica, members of the Commandery there undertook to have protective masks made at the rate of about sixty per day, by a friend of the Order. To date, 800 masks have been distributed free of charge to those who wished to receive them, including the staff of the "Alzheimer's Consultation" in Ajaccio.



Also noteworthy is the initiative relayed by many media, notably the France 2 television news, of Father Georges Nicoli, priest of the church of Notre-Dame de Lourdes in Bastia and Chaplain of the Commandery of Corsica, who displayed, on each of the now empty seats of his church, a photograph of each of his parishioners.

Under the banner of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Strasbourg a number of students have become "Squires of Charity, Hope and Faith". They have been going to meet homeless people in the street to give them a parcel with a meal that they themselves have prepared (Charity), sharing a little of their story (Hope), and speaking to them about God (Faith) by giving them a cross or a medal, with only a mask and gloves as weapons.

Humanitarian Grand Priory Europe (GPEU)

The GPEU has acted on a clear message - "Wear masks and protect others - Then the others will protect you!"

With this in mind, they have distributed and published a description of how to manufacture a protective hood for nursing staff and emergency medical workers against coronavirus infection. The volunteers of the CoroNO-team wrote the document with drawings and measurements in German and at the same time had an international version created in English. The description was prepared to be viewed on the publicly accessible Internet pages of the Order and made available for free download.

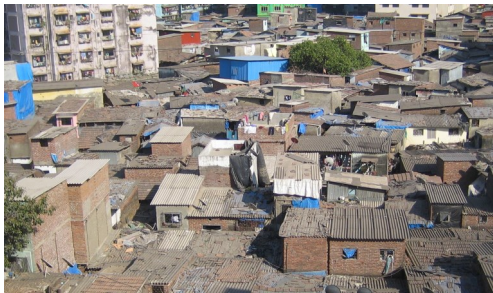


All Lazarus homes of the Lazarus-Hilfswerk (GP-EU) (in care and support facilities and retirement homes) have remained free of the virus, through early introduction of infection control measures - shortly after the first Corona cases in Germany became known.

Grand Bailiwick of Germany

The Grand Bailiwick of Germany has continued to support its long-term international projects in China, India and Kenya, where coronavirus is having a serious impact on daily life and on the ability of medical professionals to care for leprosy patients.

From the beginning of January 2020, it was no longer possible for project partners in the village of Ngaisai, near Guǎngdōng, to provide special leprosy wound treatment. Foreigners had to meet special requirements during this period. They were no longer allowed to leave their village, and in the meantime they devoted themselves to other tasks. They tested new materials for specially made shoes and prostheses for leprosy patients, carried out maintenance work in the leprosy workshop and at water sources, and renovated kitchens, roads and paths. Necessary additional hygiene equipment in this time of coronavirus could be procured only through donations from Germany.



The situation in Maharashtra State is characterised by the highest number of Covid-19 positive cases, approaching five thousand. The situation in the capital Mumbai is extremely worrisome. With its slums, the megalopolis of Mumbai has become a hotspot of the corona pandemic in India. Since the end of March, strict measures have been in place to limit the spread of the virus. The treatment services of the Bombay Leprosy Project (BLP) were nevertheless continued by the leprosy centre initiated and supported by the Grand Bailiwick of Germany, in order to prevent interruption of the leprosy treatments as far as possible.

From mid-March on, the association *Ausbildung statt Abschiebung (AsA)* – the name meaning “Education instead of deportation” – in Bonn also had to keep its doors closed in order to protect the health of the youths, volunteers and employees. Nevertheless, the top priority remains: to support all of the 186 registered underage refugees via telephone calls with and without video, chats and other social media. A large proportion of these are connected via digital learning formats, especially since quite a few are about to take an examination – for the school leaving certificate or the completion of vocational qualifications. “Education instead of deportation” is a humanitarian imperative and has been financially supported by the Grand Bailiwick for many years.

In Kenya, the government has instructed hospitals to expand isolation and intensive care units as a precautionary measure against the further spread of the disease. However, this also means that other patients are more likely to stay at home and present only in case of emergency. Fewer patient numbers mean less income for the daily operation of the St. Matia Mulumba Mission Hospital in Thika. The hospital, expanded with HDZ funds in recent years, has once more received donations from the Grand Bailiwick in order to be able to purchase additional protective equipment for the hospital staff during the coronavirus period.

Grand Priory of Sweden

The Order of St. Lazarus in Sweden has for several years supported the Fountain House Foundation, an organisation which helps individuals suffering from mental illness.



The core concept of the Fountain House Foundation is to identify and improve the mentally sound qualities of individuals suffering from mental illness and try to heal them through work in the community. The members participate voluntarily in the activities of the foundation and contribute according to their own ability. The aim is to break their social isolation, structure their daily lives, provide them with the opportunity to work with meaningful tasks; important aspects which ultimately make the members part of the community and strengthen their self-esteem. All kinds of tasks are included in the daily operations of the Fountain House Foundation and they are carried out by the members themselves. These are chores such as cooking, cleaning and running the reception etc. Membership of the foundation is voluntary and free.

The first Fountain House was founded in 1948 in New York City by a group of former mental patients. The ambition was to create an alternative to traditional psychiatric care and focus on the healthy



qualities of the members of the foundation. The initiative to open a Fountain House in Sweden came from Lis Asklund, who managed to obtain funds to open a comparable organisation in Stockholm in 1980. Today there are 13 Fountain Houses in Sweden and over 300 in the world.

One person who has paid special attention to the work of the Fountain House is our brother Andreas Eraybar, who in recent years has succeeded in collecting more than 800,000 Swedish krona (approximately 80,000 Euros) on behalf of the Fountain House in Gothenburg, Sweden.

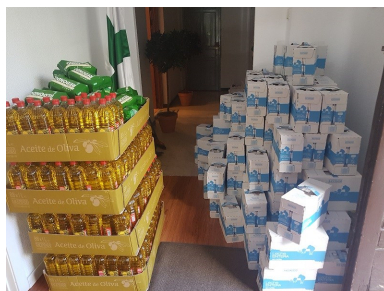
The organisation has approximately 1,000 members in Gothenburg. The collected donations support some of the most vulnerable in the city, namely the homeless and those who are risking homelessness. The foundation runs a project called "Keep your home" whose purpose is to prevent evictions and find accommodation for this specific group. This project prevents no less than seven evictions every month. In 2019 the project helped 48 families to keep their homes.

Grand Priory of Spain

The Grand Priory of Spain is currently working on a national food bank, distributing non-perishable food and basic hygiene products to people who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. The name of the campaign is “*Comer es lo primero*” (Eating comes first). The national food bank is located in the back office of the Grand Priory of Spain, where the Magistral Seat is based. We have fitted out our headquarters with shelves and created a food storage room; all the furniture was donated by the company Leroy Merlin through one of our members, and we have also been grateful to receive a very significant donation from a major company that owns supermarkets all around the country (*Mercadona*). The donation consisted of 2.6 tons of basic food such as legumes, rice, pasta, oil and milk.



The situation in Spain is critical. According to experts the economic recovery and therefore job creation will not happen for at least three years and thousands of families are already lacking the basics to survive. The goal of the campaign is to keep the food bank open for at least a three-year period. After that, the feasibility of keeping it open will depend on social needs and the donations of sponsors.



The exceptional situation we are experiencing is very changeable and requires new approaches, with a single objective: To do whatever it takes to fulfil the basic needs of those who are most vulnerable. Francisco de Borbón y Escasany, Duke of Seville, President of the Spanish Foundation of Saint Lazarus and Grand Master Emeritus recently stated:

“Coronavirus has not been just a health catastrophe. The economic and social business network has suffered damage along with the entire Spanish society. Thousand of families have no income to this day and this is why The Grand Priory of Spain decided to work on this aid campaign and made it an absolute priority.”

The *San Lázaro Foundation* has also arranged a donation of 9,000 blankets from the airline supply company, *Kaelis Group*. The blankets have been distributed in different lots that have been distributed various recipients:

General Hospital of Valencia: 4,000 blankets

HM University Hospital in Torrelodones (Madrid): 2,000 blankets

Our Lady of the Americas Parish (Madrid): 650 blankets

Sisters of the Poor. Asylum in Ronda (Málaga): 200 blankets

Daughters of Charity, Virgen Milagrosa School of Málaga: 100 blankets

Sponsorship Parish of San José de Madrid: 50 blankets

Various parishes in Madrid distributed by Father Juan: 2,100 blankets



The Andalusian Commandery is also managing the purchase of medical supplies for the *Costa del Sol Hospital in Marbella*, for the *Carlos Castilla del Pino De Córdoba Health Center* and for the *Health Delegation of Málaga*, to be distributed to the emergency department in Málaga.

In another initiative, and thanks to the crowd funding campaign led by the Grand Master, the Hospital de Ávila Hospital Nuestra Señora Sonsoles de Ávila received almost 1.000 COVID-19 quick tests and medical supplies to apply to respirators. The microbiologist and the deputy director of management of the hospital thanked the Order of Saint Lazarus for their generous contribution. Dr. Jose Enrique Alés, the head of the oncology service at the hospital, said: “Disposable equipment must be changed after each use so these are essential pieces which are quickly consumed and we need a large amount of replacements to be able to use the respirators.” The tests were delivered by Genomics, a company with a significant presence in Spain since 2003, which has previously provided these tests to other Spanish hospitals.



Grand Priory of Italy

A solemn ceremony entitled The Day of Gratefulness took place on 28 June in Madesimo (very close to Sondrio, Lombardia Region) The event was promoted and organized by the Grand Priory of Italy. The population of neighbouring municipalities also participated, and the significant presence of local, civil, military and religious authorities was greatly appreciated.

It was an important and historic event, with the aim of expressing deep and heartfelt thanks to those European and non-European countries that, in the worst period of the pandemic of COVID-19, provided logistic-operating and sanitary support to the Italian nation.

Amongst those present were the Consuls and Representatives of the nations involved, a large delegation of the Grand Priory of Italy of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, a delegation of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM) and (CISOM), together with members of the Catholic Church and the Orthodox community.



A Holy Mass was celebrated followed by a convivial moment (agape) during which the Grand Prior of Italy H.E. GCLJ Gen Carabinieri (c) Dr. Basilio Viola handed over the commemorative certificates.

This splendid and memorable day concluded with a religious service celebrated by representatives of different religions, in front of the renowned giant statue of our Lady of Europe at Alpe Motta (2,050 metres).

Videos of the day are available for viewing at the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8OBD4yTOo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYQxfFdAILE>

Priory of Belgium

The port of Antwerp is the second largest port in Europe. In 2015 about 14000 seagoing ships came into the port. The Reverend Marc Schippers (ChLJ) has served since 2002 as port chaplain in Antwerp on behalf of the *Sailors' Society* and the *United Protestant Church in Belgium*.



Seafarers' life can be hard. Many seafarers come from developing countries. Often they serve eight months or more on board. After a couple of months' leave they go to sea again as they consider it the only way to properly support their families. Loneliness and homesickness are common problems. Adjusting to family life and then readjusting to working life on board is not always easy.

Seafarers' life can be dangerous. Time is money so the vessel has to move fast. Fatigue is a big problem. Cargo and mooring operations, if not conducted well, may lead to serious, even fatal, accidents. Exploitation, delayed salaries and bullying occur regularly. Piracy remains a threat to vessels in several maritime passageways.

During the current pandemic, many ships are quarantined in port for long periods, leading to even greater stress for the seafarers, who are unable to work or to return home during this time.

The seamen's missions and their chaplains are doing their best to take care of seafarers' well-being, practically (e.g. by providing free transport and communication facilities) and spiritually (e.g. by organising worship services and providing a listening ear to the concerns and worries of seafarers).



Grand Bailiwick of the Netherlands

During lockdown, the Grand Bailiwick has continued its charitable work.



The Colombia food aid project was initiated by the son (Willem) of one of our commanders, Corien van Dorp. Colombia, like everywhere else, suffers from Covid-19 and is in a lock down. There is a lot of poverty in Colombia, especially in and around the city of Medellin in the slums. There are entire neighbourhoods there that fall outside the administration of the city and therefore also outside all the help that is offered. Hunger and poverty are great – in one district of 25,000 people, as many as 15,000 are hungry. Donations of food have been made, working with the charity institution San Luis.

Additionally, in the Netherlands most of our members take care of one or more family members who have an illness and or are elderly. Some members take care of family on a 24 hour a day basis, adapting their own lives to care for others. Almost all of our members are caring for their elderly neighbours and those who live alone or are ill - looking after them, shopping for them, contacting them by phone, walking their dog or bringing them a warm cup of homemade soup.

And sometimes 'nearby' may be some distance away, even in this small country.

Priory of Norway

The Priory of Norway is quite small compared with other jurisdictions in Europe, both in size and number of members. However, we have a strong and dedicated body of members who contribute with their time and effort in different ways.

As at March 2020 – the Headquarters of the Priory of Norway is now situated in Trondheim. This was the wish of our Prior Emeritus Tom Martinsen who wanted the Order more closely connected to our national Cathedral – Nidarosdomen. The Nidaros pilgrim centre is also the information centre for the St. Olavs Way - Pilegrimsleden to Trondheim.



The Commandery of St. Eystein is very much involved – and strongly supported by the Priory - in its work as hosts for pilgrims reaching Trondheim. The pilgrims come from all over the world and it will take each pilgrim 32-34 days of walking from Oslo to Trondheim. St. Lazarus hosts will welcome them as they arrive. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, our St. Lazarus hosts have not been as active this year as last year, as the number of pilgrims has decreased. However, a small group of brothers has continued this work despite the pandemic.

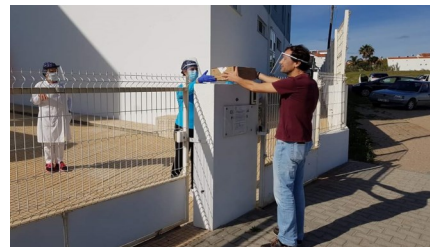
Unfortunately, the Covid 19 pandemic has had a very bad impact on projects and activity within the Priory of Norway. All planned social and project activity -including planned Investitures- has been cancelled as advised both from national health authorities and from our Order.

Nevertheless, planning activity goes on. Within the St. Laurentzius Commandery, the book project of collecting and distribution of books for kindergartens of Oslo (North/East district) is still going strong. The same goes for the Linderud Mansion project. This is an estate under the umbrella of the Akershus Museum. Like most museum projects containing historic buildings, there is always a desperate shortage of funds for maintenance of buildings and surroundings. The Priory is currently involved in restoring the cast iron gates and entrance to the museum. Plans and contacts are kept updated.

Within the St. Eysteinn commandery, the Order will also plan and assist the Salvation Army as guides during the Christmas collection for needy individuals in the area.

Grand Priory of Portugal

Since the beginning of the pandemic the Prior of Portugal has kept in touch with Members of the Order in Portugal, sending regular update e-mails offering emotional support to all and reminding them that no one is alone. The Senior Chaplain in Portugal also sent an Easter message to all Confreres and Consoeurs.



In parallel with this, we have contributed 100 reusable protective masks, donated to the professionals of the *Associação Reformado e Idoso Vila Nova de Milfontes*, a home for the retired and elderly, following a fundraising initiative.

We also agreed a protocol with the Diversified Robotics Nucleus (NErD) of the University of Aveiro, in the North -Center of Portugal that fabricated dozens of individual protection visors that were also donated to the same retirement home.

Further work on these initiatives will continue as needed.

Grand Priory of Malta

During the pandemic, social and other gatherings have been curtailed, leading to a reduction in opportunities to arrange fund-raising activities to support the Grand Priory's Hospitaller Fund. Action to address this problem has included:

- Increasing the Hospitaller fund proportion collected from annual oblations
- Inviting donations from members and potential sponsors
- The sale of books published by the Grand Priory

In addition, members have been engaging in practical activities to support their local communities and those in need. Notable amongst these is the work to support the Foodbank Lifeline Foundation and Dar Papa Frangisku, through fund-raising and the donation and collection of long-life foodstuff.

A number of individual members have served the community by giving their professional healthcare services in a range of roles including doctors, nurses, care workers and pharmacists. The Grand Priory has issued an electronic certificate of appreciation to all healthcare personnel.

The Grand Priory has also sought to support its members - especially those who are elderly or infirm - during the difficult lockdown period, through the use of on-line media, especially the Jurisdiction's Facebook page.

Very recently, members and friends were delighted to be able to join together for an enjoyable post-Covid lock-down event held with strict adherence to the rules of social isolation to maintain personal and family group safety. The event served not only to re-start the social calendar of the jurisdiction but also as a fund-raiser for Dar Frate Jacoba. A donation of Eur 500 was given to the establishment which is an educational institution catering for youths encountering social difficulties, offering a family atmosphere to these young people coming from difficult social backgrounds. In the spirit of St Francis, it also embraces strict rules of respect for nature and sustainability, running the associated farmland using permaculture.



Southern Hemisphere

Priory of Zimbabwe



We are encouraged to note that despite the Priory of Zimbabwe being woefully short of members through a significant number who were not being able to return to the country after an international lockdown, the remaining few have managed to hold 'social distanced' prayer meetings and also to distribute food parcels to elderly folk.

"In a country seriously afflicted with political uncertainties, ongoing factional violence, a shattered economy, widespread poverty and unemployment as well as one of the few leper sanatoria left in Africa, the challenges of

undertaking meaningful humanitarian work are enormous," says Prior Brian Heathcote.

But true to their vows, the few members of the Order currently in Zimbabwe soldier on to do what they can and are to be commended for their efforts.

Grand Priory of Australia

As winter approaches in the Southern hemisphere, members of the Grand Priory of Australia have been working with local and national charities to address a wide range of needs related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Support for the homeless, jobless and vulnerable has been a particular focus, with both South Australia Commandery and Tasmania Commandery opting to support the work of Anglicare, amongst other projects.

Over many years the Queensland Commandery has been a significant supporter of the work of the Mission to Seafarers at the Port of Brisbane. This support by Commandery Members, through hands-on volunteering there on Sundays plus ongoing financial support, has been a feature of Commandery activity. The seafarers' plight has worsened over the first months of 2020 as their strict onboard isolation, poor communication opportunities and inability to travel home has exacerbated already strained working arrangements. A number of international initiatives have begun to address these problems, and St Lazarus has assisted through the supply of Care Packs containing shampoo, soap, toothpaste, entertainment items such as games, puzzles, cards and very importantly internet credit & phone cards.

Until 2019 the Mission was led by Board Chair Captain David Ellis OAM MNSC CLJ, the Commandery Herald, who was recognised for his dedication with the Order of Australia (OAM) "for service to seafarers through charitable initiatives and to the community" in this year's Queen's Australian Birthday Honours Awards. David was honoured to be presented to HRH The Princess Royal, President of the Mission, on a recent visit to London.



The Green Cross Project Inc., is a semi-independent charitable arm of the Order of St Lazarus in Victoria. Many of the Victorian Commandery members are also involved with the charitable work of the Green Cross Project. In the midst of the emerging coronavirus crisis (March 2020) the charity formally

launched its third charitable outreach bus with a new health services partner - Monash Health. Some of the existing buses (which are converted former Metro vehicles) are being used as mobile GP clinics, which provide COVID-19 testing for disadvantaged people in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs.



The Commandery in Western Australia has provided assistance to Just Manna Incorporated, a charitable body and outreach service, during the COVID-19 crisis. Just Manna is a not-for-profit organisation, which has been in operation since 2006. Originally it was set up to serve refugees newly arrived in Australia and has expanded to serve all those in need in the broader

Australian community. Just Manna aims to provide direct relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, disability or helplessness including financial and non-financial assistance to people in Australia.

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)

Grand Bailiwick of South Africa - Western Cape Commandery

In line with the Order's centuries-old mandate as Hospitallers, the Western Cape Commandery has allocated significant funding and has had a direct hands-on involvement (insofar as legislation allows) to provide desperately-needed humanitarian aid in the form of protective masks and food parcels to people made vulnerable to the pandemic or its devastating backlash on already impoverished communities.

"I'm aware that many of our members are individually also doing what they can to alleviate these most urgent problems in whatever way possible," said Grand Bailiff in South Africa, Tamra Capstick-Dale. "The Western Cape Commandery however decided to dig deeply into its fund reserves to work with partner donors and a major wholly transparent distribution network to ensure that every cent is wisely used and will get maximum benefit to those most in need in these troubled times."

The hundreds of food parcels being distributed are designed to feed a family of four for a month, while masks are being made and distributed in partnership with a company producing these from excellent quality cloth offcuts previously destined for landfill. For every mask bought by the Commandery, another is given to an exposed child or elderly person in one of Cape Town's many disadvantaged communities.



A further initiative by the Commandery has greatly improved the visibility of our Order in many jurisdictions around the globe. Using WHO specifications, striking masks bearing our green cross on the left cheek have been hand-crafted on order and dispatched to Commanderies in Canada, Scotland,

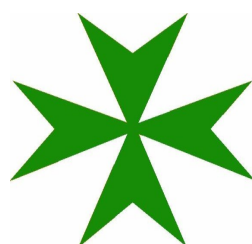


Ireland, England and Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, Malta and elsewhere in Europe. To date, a total of 730 masks have been produced, with more in the pipeline.

This project has also provided a vital source of support to an otherwise unemployed skilled tailor (an active Associate of the Order) and his assistants under lockdown rules in South Africa, as well as the first income in months for an elderly disabled veteran and his wife who run a small at-home embroidery business.

The majority of the surplus funds that have accrued to the Commandery from this mask project has been used to support an emergency relief 'blankets, clothing and food' effort for the Holy Cross Children's Home that was recently severely damaged by fire. This facility for abandoned, abused and orphaned children under five is situated in a chronically marginalised community.

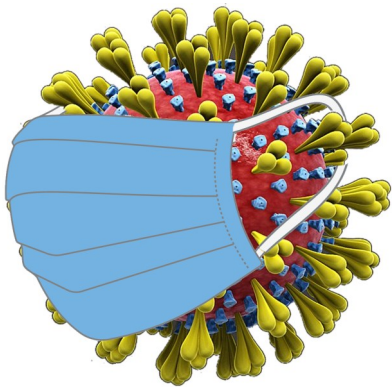
The donated funds were matched through partnership with the Rotary Club of Kirstenbosch and members of the Commandery mobilised quickly to deliver a significant quantity of own-sponsored donations of vital blankets and kids' clothing to the Home.



The International Hospitaller Project 2020

In 2017, at the Hospitaller's meeting in Sicily, it was agreed that there would be value in identifying a project of international significance, that the Order could support. Prior to this, a voluntary levy of 5 Euros had been collected from participating jurisdictions for use in funding unspecified projects. It became clear that greater transparency was necessary if the flagship project was going to achieve widespread acceptance and for this reason it was decided that every two years, the Hospitallers from each jurisdiction would vote on one of several nominated projects. It was also decided that the top polling project would receive funding for two years (or as appropriate for up to two years).

In 2018 nine nominations were received and the subsequent vote favoured St Louis Hospital in Jerusalem. The Hospital had received substantial funding from the Order in the past and for this grant



round had submitted a proposal for the purchase of air-conditioning equipment. Despite numerous attempts, the Order was unable to contact the hospital management and receive assurances regarding dispersal of funds. For that reason it was decided that the funds would be applied the second top polling project of 2018, which was St Anne's School in Riyak, Lebanon.

The two year cycle of the initial Flagship funding round has now been completed and the Order will soon call for nominations for projects to be funded during 2020 -2022. This timeframe has coincided with the advent of Covid-19, which has had and still continues to have, a devastating effect on the world's population.

Pleasingly the Order has already been active in providing support for the prevention and treatment of infections, and also in providing assistance to those affected by the disease. In support of this a total of 20,000 Euros has been transferred from the Order and from the Hospitaller Fund (which is separate from the funds received for the Flagship project).

In view of the international crisis associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed that the 2020 Flagship project would focus on relief for those affected by the disease. It is evident that the acute phase of the disease will pass. Despite this, there will be long term sequelae relating to the major effects the disease has had on the economies and indeed the social structures of countries. It is anticipated that in the next few months nominations for the funding of Covid-related projects will be called for and that the most worthy of these will again be selected by the jurisdictional Hospitallers.

Professor Brett Delahunt

Grand Hospitaller



The Prayer of the Order

O God, who has chosen us to be an Order of Knights under the blessed protection of Saint Lazarus, grant that we, in full devotion to you and abounding in neighbourly charity, may show ourselves invincible against the enemies of the Cross, remaining faithful unto death, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen