



ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, KNIGHTS HOSPITALLER
Under the Constitution granted in 1964 by his late Majesty King Peter II of Yugoslavia

THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD

PRO FIDE, PRO UTILITATE HOMINUM

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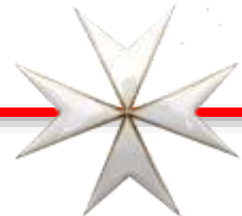
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**A MESSAGE from
H.E. THE LIEUTENANT-GRAND MASTER**

**Dear Brethren of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitaller – OSJ (Malta),**

With each issue of 'the Herald', OSJ(Malta) is continually reaching a further milestone. The first was passed in October 2005 when the concordat was signed at the International Headquarters in Valletta, Malta.

Since then OSJ(Malta) has been besieged "by sudden floods and flow of waters." From nearly all quarters OSJ (Malta) has been savagely attacked mostly by those who, while evidently belonging to another organization, failed to display that quality of chivalry which was expected of them. As they could not use the strong arguments and truths of history, they resorted to 'throwing mud' while keeping themselves hidden. Much was done and written by individuals through involuntary misinterpretations, inaccuracies, oversight or through pure lack of historical knowledge.

But notwithstanding all the diversity OSJ(Malta) has

managed to pull through, gracefully and with God's Grace which has been the only source of perseverance and which has helped us to exercise CHARITY in the full sense as expected from Christian Knights and Dames.

Out of this savage vortex OSJ(Malta) has emerged, like tempered metal, stronger than ever. Truly we may assert with a measure of certainty that "nothing better proveth the excellence of this soil and temper than the (...)





(...) abundant growing of Charity".

"The Herald" has grown from the 'excellent soil' of the Pories and Grand Pories of our Order to continue to fight, whenever necessary, in defense of OSJ (Malta) to serve as a means of communication between members of the Order; to serve as a link in the chain of Pories in Europe, in America and in Australasia; to give news of activities being achieved by Pories of the Order in general.

The aim of OSJ(Malta) as an international Order, is to defend Christianity, to be active in the charitable field; and to live in peace with other Christian Orders particularly those who present themselves as our adversaries. In the words of the well-known historian of the Order, Professor Donald Harrison Smith: "*Would it not be more desirable to help thy brother's boat across the stream and lo!, thine own has reached the shore?*" This is the language of an Indian proverb which blends into the Christian ethics.

Yours in Christ & in Saint John,





Nathan the Wise

In Lessing's play *Nathan the Wise*, the Muslim sultan Saladin and the Jewish merchant Nathan discuss the three Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and Nathan tells this parable:

In ancient times there lived an Eastern fellow who had a ring, a priceless artifact received from a dear hand. The stone was an Opal, which shed a hundred lovely colors and further had a secret power to make its wearer pleasing in the sight of God and all mankind when worn in faith. What wonder that never would this Easterner allow the ring to leave his finger, that he took steps to ensure its stay within his house forever? Namely thus. He left the ring to one son whom he loved the most of all and firmly fixed it that this son in turn would give the ring to that son he most favored and so on down; but always would the dearest by virtue of the ring alone and not his birth, become the house's prince and ruler.

So, the ring passed from son on down to son until it reached a father of three sons, each boy equally obedient as his brothers from none of whom the father, consequently, could turn away his favor. Yet from time to time now this, now that youth, now the third would be alone with him and as the sole recipient of his overflowing love would come to seem the dearest of the three and worthiest of the ring. The father's generous weakness led him thus to promise it to each. And so, things went, all very well, but then death could not be put off. The pious father is in an awkward place. It pains him now to wound two sons who trusted him completely by leaving them with nothing. What to do? He sends in secret for a master jeweler and orders two more rings; they must be copied exactly from the first, not sparing effort nor trouble nor expense to make them right so that they cannot be distinguished from their model. This (...)





Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

(...) the craftsman does and brings the new rings to the father: all are quite impossible to tell apart. With joy the father calls the sons, and singly blessing each one of them, on each bestows in private his special ring, and dies.

Scarce was the father dead, then comes each brother with ring in hand, and each one wants to claim his due. Investigations, arguments, complaints, are vain: which ring was right could not be proven. The squabbling sons brought accusations; each one testifying and swearing to the judge that he'd received the ring directly from his father's hand. As so he had! Each claimed that he'd been told he'd be the heir - and this was no less true! - his father had assured him and could not be accused of any mischievous intent; indeed, before a son could find his father, his loving parent, subject to suspicion, the doubt must fall instead upon his brothers, be they in other ways beyond reproach. They were surely guilty of a dirty game conspiring to commit a fraud against him. He must avenge the act, expose the traitors. The judge said: If you can't produce your father to clear the matter up for me forthwith, I will provide direction from the bench. Do you think

I'm here to guess at riddles? You expect the ring to grow a tongue and tell us? But wait! You've just said that the real ring has this miraculous effect of making its wearer loved by God and man. That must decide! The two rings that are false would fail to have that power! —Well now; which of you is most loved by the other two? Speak up! You're still? The rings work backward only, and not outward? Each one loves himself alone the most. Oh, so the three of you are all deceived deceivers! None among these objects is genuine. The real ring, perhaps, went missing, and, to cover up the loss of one the father settled on a plan to replace it with three others. And so, the judge continued, if you don't want my advice, my verdict now is: Case dismissed !

But my advice would be, to take the matter as it lies. As each of you received his ring directly from his father so let each firmly hold that ring to be the true one. Possibly the father now preferred to end the tyranny of having a single ring within his house! - and to be sure; he loved all three of you, and equally, in that he would not disappoint two brothers to favor one above the rest - Well, then! Let each one, freed of prejudice, strive toward the goal of an uncorrupted love! Let each who has a ring take up the challenge of bringing his stone's hidden strength to light! May he succeed with gentleness of spirit with heartfelt toleration and forbearance good deeds, and deepest confidence in God! And should the stone begin to show its powers at work among your children's children's children Then when a thousand thousand (...)





(...) years are over, I'd ask you to approach this bench again. Some wiser man than I will sit in judgment and render a decision! Go!

Through the history the three Abrahamic religions – the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims – have hated each other, because the two other religions can't be true. As Christians we believe in our faith, believe that it is the truth, but we can't prove it – IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE! Jesus has told us that we must show our faith in love to our neighbor, that is in the love to our neighbor that we love God. But our neighbor are not only the Christians but every human being standing in front of us. Thus, our love must also be tolerance.

The parable of the three rings is not only an academic discussion of abstract ideas. It has also a deep human aspect. The background of the discussion between Saladin and Nathan is, that a young Templar has saved Nathans's daughter Recha, and the Templar has fallen in love with her. In the end of the play, we are told that Recha is not born as a Jew, but she was a Christian child and all alone, and Nathan had taken care of her and raised her as a daughter; the Templar was not born as a Christian, but was an illegitimate son of one of Saladin's brothers, but raised by a Christian as Christian. Our identity as human beings does not depend on our national or religious affiliation – Jews, Christians or Muslims – or if we belong to the Catholic church, the Orthodox church or one of the Protestant churches. I can say: I am a Christian, but my neighbor is first and always a human being.

God bless you.



Nathan the Wise



Rev. Niels REFSKOU, KJSJ,
Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Council.





**The highest form of
knowledge is empathy,
for it requires us to suspend
our ego's
and live in another's world.**

Plato





JOSEPH, THE SILENT SAINT



For 150 years, Saint Joseph has been the patron saint of the universal Church, and in commemoration of this fact, Pope Francis has declared this year to be a year dedicated to Saint Joseph. In the previous International Herald we enjoyed the first part of the reflections. Here goes part two:

Joseph, Pure Love

Yes, there is still room on our palette for another colour. It is the colour of the pure love that he radiated. And with that, he is sometimes called the protector of families. During the Synod on the Family, Pope Francis put forward the family of Nazareth as a model and placed it under the protection of the Holy Family. In the corridors, we sometimes heard the comment that it is difficult to speak of a real family in which the mother remains a virgin, the father is just a foster father, and the husband and wife live together as brother and sister. It

encourages us to think deeper about family life, building a family, marriage as a sacrament, and the love that is present in a family. But his example of pure love also tells us something about consecrated celibacy.

Joseph is indeed asked to start a family in special circumstances and to be a family man. But by responding favourably to God's request that he take Mary his wife into his home, he shows what needs to be at the heart of every marriage, and that is love. It is from and with the keynote of love that he takes up his double task: being a husband to Mary and being a father to Jesus.

(...)





(...) The love of Mary manifests itself in the highest and most purified form that love can assume: a restrained love, a love in which one completely subordinates one's own well-being and pleasure to the well-being of the other. In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict describes God's love for man as an erotic love that is completely purified and stripped of every form of egoism, of every urge for power, possession, or pleasure, and that has only the good of the other in mind and thus rises to the level of Agape. In turn, man is called to purify his erotic love in such a way that it too reaches the level of Agape and finds its highest pleasure only in the total respect for the other and in the promotion of his well-being. Is it not this love that should grow in every marriage and form the solid basis of close mutual loyalty? Joseph, in his restrained love for Mary, shows us what true marital love is, and we dare to call it erotic love, but, as Pope Benedict describes it, as a love that is increasingly purified and humanized until it reaches the level of divine love, of Agape, the true source from which all love springs. And, at the source, the water is always pure. Marital love must always be embedded in God's love for man; it should be its reflection, its sacrament. It is precisely this divine love translated into human love that elevates marriage as a sacrament. It is God himself who enters marriage with his love.



The totally purified love of Joseph also brings us to consecrated celibacy to which priests and consecrated persons commit themselves. This too should always be a reflection of divine love with the special characteristic that it is a love that is not limited to one person but that unfolds towards many, in fact towards everyone without distinction as the commandment of love suggests. One becomes like an overflowing vessel from which the love one has received from God is widely shared with others. Choosing consecrated celibacy as a consequence of the special vocation one receives does not mean abstaining from love, on the contrary. It becomes a life in which one opens oneself to God's love above all else, in order to let it shine forth in the world and to all with whom one comes in contact.

We could say that Joseph lived both the love of marriage and consecrated celibacy in a radical way so that he could be a true example for both states of life. The fact that both states of life are in crisis today may prompt us to turn to Saint Joseph in order to find support and encouragement through his intercession in all the setbacks, trials, and temptations that one may encounter on the chosen path of life. Joseph remains for all of us the example of faithful love, because his (...)





(...) love was so totally purified, stripped of all the egotism that often plagues and darkens our love.

Joseph was also called to accept paternity of Jesus. It was not paternity as a result of procreation to a purely human paternity. He is therefore called the foster father, a term that is somewhat misleading because one would think that it was a 'false' paternity. In the eyes of the Law, Jesus was indeed the son of Joseph by virtue of the formal matrimonial bond that existed between Mary and Joseph. Paternity can never be limited to a purely physical matter, the result of conception in a sexual act. Paternity is received and assumed the moment one accepts the guardianship of the child. One becomes one's brother's keeper in a special way (cf. Gen 4:9), yet here as a substitute for God himself on earth who is Father to us all. Paternity should therefore always be a reflection of the divine Paternity that we receive from God himself.

Jesus grew up in a family where love was experienced in a divine way and was able to fully open up to the divine love that was present in him and that took human form. The family of Nazareth, with Joseph as its backbone, was a school of love for Jesus. We should hope that today, too, families may be, become, and remain true schools of love. I remember the quote on an engraved platter in our living room at home that, loosely translated, read: "Only there can love live, only there is life sweet, where one quietly and effortlessly does everything for each other." This was certainly a phrase fitting for the family of Nazareth.

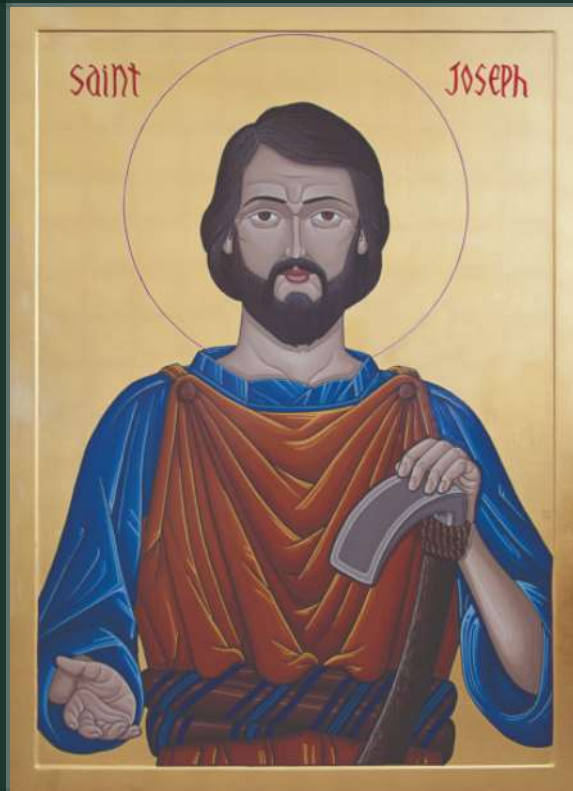
Joseph, the Worker

Yes, we do have some colours left, and this time we choose the colour of labour. Joseph is described in the Gospel as a carpenter, but perhaps he was more of a small building contractor and a craftsman who helped rebuild the town of Sepphoris, 6 km from Nazareth. Many craftsmen were needed for the reconstruction and so one can assume that Joseph helped to rebuild the city, as did Jesus. Tradition also mentions that the house where Mary was born was in Sepphoris. Carpenter, builder, craftsman: the fact is that Jesus did not grow up in a family of scribes, but in a family that lived on manual labour and worked for its daily bread and at the same time contributed to the reconstruction of society. This fact in itself calls for a greater appreciation of manual labour and an appeal not to regard it as inferior to the supposedly nobler intellectual labour. It also invites us to have a greater personal and social appreciation for the many who, through simple, often hidden or routine work, ensure the smooth functioning of social life. It is for the worker (...)





(...) to see this aspect and always place his work in this broader social perspective and for the community to fully appreciate this, as well. Joseph took care of his family with his work. With the work he did, he helped build the community, but also the smaller community, his family, for which he was responsible.



This brings us to a broader reflection on the meaning of labour and also how the Church has developed a true theology of labour since the end of the 19th century. While the first actions and interventions of the Church were mainly aimed at improving the living and working conditions of workers, a second movement saw a greater focus on workers' rights. Priests such as Joseph Cardijn would stress the value of labour as such and would strive to ensure that Christian principles were respected in the workplace. With a movement such as Young Christian Workers, Cardijn strived for labour, any form of labour, to be seen as a path to holiness. The promotion of better working conditions, with respect for the rights of workers and the emphasis on the deeper meaning of work as such remain the major focal points within the social doctrine of the Church and continue to be objectives to be pursued in many places. Just think of the starvation wages that are still paid in many places around the world for labour, making it impossible for families to escape the vicious circle of poverty. It threatens the health and the upbringing of family members, and sometimes there is not even enough to put proper food on the table every day.

In the family of Nazareth, labour had, besides its immediate economic role, a significant educational role. It was the place where Jesus found his father daily and was introduced to the great virtues of life through common labour. Hard work, justice, service, solidarity are virtues that form the true ingredients of a work ethic, and even more so, that can fully blossom through work and radiate into other areas of life. Through work, one follows in the footsteps of

the Creator himself and one continues what one received as a task at creation. As a craftsman, Jesus and his father Joseph were allowed to transform raw materials provided by nature and cultivate them into usable material for (...)





(...) the benefit of mankind and the wider community. Is that not entering into that great event of creation and continuing it so that at the end of the day God may say that it was very good? Jesus learned from his father Joseph to respect creation and to discover in labour a way to give meaning and fulfilment to his life. After all, having and performing work is an important area of life that provides a framework for people to give meaning to their lives. It is precisely by participating in the continuation of creation that one enters into the divine dynamic of creation and discovers the profound meaning of life.

Through his work, Joseph teaches us to appreciate all the work we do and to see the workplace as a blessed place to grow in holiness. At the same time, it reminds us that each person is called to use the possibilities that they have to provide for themselves through work, and at the same time to contribute, directly or indirectly, to building up the community. It used to be a pious custom to hang an image of Saint Joseph in the workplace. We rightly call him the patron saint of workers, and no one more than him had the opportunity to meet Jesus himself in work.

Joseph and a Happy Death

Just as we learn nothing about Joseph's birth and youth, the Scriptures tell us nothing about his death. Yet we want to add a colour to it. Considering the fact that there is no immediate mention of him when Jesus begins his public life and he is not there for the wedding at Cana, we may assume that he died during the period when Jesus was still at home in Nazareth. That then became the reason to assume that Joseph died in the company of Jesus and Mary. Could one imagine any better company for a believer to die in the arms of Jesus and Mary? Joseph was given the additional title of patron saint of a happy death. Joseph is hereby invoked to be allowed to die in the blessed company of Jesus and Mary, just as he did, and to be led to the Father in heaven by them. Joseph, who became

Jesus' and Mary's companion during his life, was able to be in their company at the moment of his death, even in a physical way. If we really make Jesus and Mary our companions in this life, then we, like Joseph, will experience their presence in a very special, though spiritual, way at our death, when we cross over to eternal life with the Father.

Jesus is the one who will actually take us to the Father, as it was so strongly expressed by Paul: "We do not want (...)





(...) you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thes 4:13-14). It is Jesus himself who, in death, brings us to the Father in his resurrection. Joseph had the great privilege of physically seeing Jesus at the moment of his departure from this life, and he looked forward with hope to the moment when he would be brought with his Son into the resurrection. For Joseph, the resurrection was still a hope for the future, for us it is a certainty through our faith in the resurrection of Christ. Our hope of eternal life becomes a real certainty through our faith in the resurrection. And it is precisely this that we may cherish in our lives, so that our death is no longer a terrifying event but the crossing over to our final destination in God, in God's love. That is, what some call, becoming a friend of death. And then, like Saint Therese of Lisieux, we will be able to cry out at the moment of our death: "I am entering life."



A happy death, which we as believers can grow towards, is completely different from euthanasia, which some people nowadays label as a happy death. Euthanasia cuts a person off from life; a happy death, which we as Christians profess, opens the way to full life. Joseph's happy death is a death at peace with oneself, with one's neighbour, with God, and with all of creation. One is prepared to rejoin the original harmony in which we were created by God and to which we are called again in eschatology. It is the harmony that we feel deep within us as a longing, but which has been broken and darkened by sin. To this harmony we are called, into which we will ultimately be able to enter beyond our death.

As Christians, we are invited to pray that we, like Joseph, may die in the company of Jesus and Mary. How meaningful is the Hail Mary prayer, at the end of which we pray that Mary would pray for us even in the hour of our death, knowing that the hour of our death is perhaps the most profound moment of our lives? In our prayer, we ask that

Mary, in this ultimate moment, would bring us to Jesus and Jesus to us, that he might bring us with him to the Father in the resurrection. Just as we often call upon Jesus and Mary during our lives so that the evil one may depart from us, so too may we do this in the hour of our death. With them, we can then invoke Joseph in a special way, so that the evil one will not lead us into doubt and cause us to sink into mortal fear. When Jesus and Mary are present, there is no room for the evil one, and we will be freed from the fear of death and from all forms of doubt and darkness that might beset us. (...)





(...) Let us therefore pray to Saint Joseph that we may prepare ourselves for death, as the safe harbour of our life, where we will begin the crossing to eternal life. If we were to think about death only for a moment every day, this thought would gradually become part of our life and lose its threatening character. Our strong belief in eternal life will, on the one hand, profoundly affect our life here on earth, but it will also greatly increase our longing for eternal life. Saying goodbye to something that is familiar will always be painful, but this pain will certainly be eased if we can face this unknown with great confidence.

Joseph, Patron Saint of the Church

With a final brushstroke, we would like to acknowledge Saint Joseph as the patron saint of the Church. It was in 1870 that the Blessed Pope Pius IX proclaimed Saint Joseph the patron saint of the Church. At that time, the Church was going through difficult times during the whole process of the unification of Italy. It more than needed the protection of a father like Saint Joseph. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of this event, Pope Francis, at the end of 2020, proclaimed a year dedicated to Saint Joseph in his apostolic letter *Patris Corde, With a Father's Heart*.

Actually, we could consider Joseph as the protector and guardian of the very first Church that the family of Nazareth formed around Jesus. The family of Nazareth was like a prelude to the Church in which Joseph receives the task and mission to guard, guide, protect, and defend this small Church of which he himself is part. It is this task and mission that he is now asked to take further for the benefit of the whole Church. When the Church, as the mystical body of Christ here on earth, asks him to do so, he cannot but accept it with his inherent faith, righteousness, and obedience.

Any work of evangelization and of building up the Church is first and foremost the work of the Holy Spirit. However, we can entrust its realization and success to Saint Joseph and place it under his special protection. Many have experienced in the past how a new church community could grow and endure in very difficult circumstances through the intercession (...)





(...) of Saint Joseph. He continues to take on the leading and protective role he once had in the family of Nazareth and now also in the universal Church.

On its journey, the Church, like Joseph, must continually ask itself what the Will of God is. It must beware of going its own way, and must continue to show the faithful the way to God, even when many other paths present themselves. Just as in a family the father and mother complement each other in raising their children, so too the Church must be both father and mother to its children, the faithful. It is both Mater et Magistra. As a father, a master, it proclaims its teachings with clarity and, at a time when far-reaching secularization can cause a certain relativism, the Church, with its teachings, remains a beacon to which many can turn. Together with Mary, who then adopts a pastoral and compassionate attitude as a caring mother and, with God's gentle mercy, is with her children in their weakness and shortcomings, Joseph will help the Church to find the right words to let the Gospel resound as a joyful yet exhorting message in today's world.



YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH
December 8, 2020 – December 8, 2021

In our time, the Church is persecuted in many places, and believers suffer persecution and accusation, to the point of mortal danger. It is as if, at the time of the Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem, a prophecy was spoken that Jesus' presence in the world would become and remain a sign of opposition. Since then, persecution over the name of Jesus has never ceased. The story of Joseph, who had to flee to Egypt with Mary and the child because of the first Christian persecution, has repeated itself countless

times, even until today. Joseph, therefore, remains the special protector of the Church that suffers persecution, and many who had to leave their country because of their faith may call on him as their special protector. He accompanies them in their flight, shares their suffering, and keeps alive in them the hope that one day they will be able to return to their homeland.

Joseph is also the model of a servant Church, a Church that is servant to the Word of God, which was made alive and tangible in Jesus Christ. In all that the Church says and does, Jesus always remains the only reference, just as Joseph dedicated his whole life to the service of Jesus. Every moment in Joseph's life is mirrored in today's Church, and the Church (...)





(...) can continue to look to Joseph in its pilgrimage on earth. The Church, like Joseph, must always turn to God in prayer to know his Will, while acknowledging the signs of the times. It was in the deepest silence of prayer, in a dream, that God appeared to Joseph through an angel to make his Will known. Prayer remains the only way for the Church to discern God's Will. The Church, like Joseph, can make all kinds of plans, but in the end it will only obtain the right answer in and through prayer. Meanwhile, the Church moves forward, sometimes oppressed, sometimes fleeing, reviled by many, but always carrying the message of the Gospel, just as Joseph was the bearer of Jesus all his life, the guardian and protector of the treasure entrusted to him.



There have been many times in Joseph's life when he did not know where the next step would take him. But he walked on, trusting that God would show him the right way and continue to do so. That was his strength and the result of his unconditional trust in God. May this also be the strength of the Church in these times, and of us believers in and with the Church. Let us pray in the words of Pope Francis with which he concludes his apostolic letter.

*"Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen."*

**Frazer René STOCKMAN, KSJ,
Superior General, Brothers of Charity**



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Despotism may be able to do without religion, but democracy cannot.

Alexis de Toqueville





REPORT: PRIORY of the PACIFIC, Veterans Actions, St. Francis Commandery

Summer 2021

In this challenging time of the Covid-19 pandemic and more than 500 fires burning in California with 1,830,307 acres burned thus far several of the Veteran Charities that the St. Francis Commandery supports have suspended their operations in 2021 because of Covid restrictions and poor air quality. However, the restoration of the WW II yacht Clover continues in the Marina in Glen Cove, California. The restoration is directed by retired Naval Aviator Terry Moran who has more than 12 veterans and several volunteers to assist in the rebuilding of the yacht. St. Francis Commandery has been a continuing supporter of the project and significant progress is being made. Clover will be sailing on San Francisco Bay in the fall season. In June, Clover held an open house to thank the veterans, volunteers, and contributors to the project. Chevalier C.P. Barnes and Chevalier Biz Obley attended the event and were thanked by Mr. Moran for the Commandery contributions to Clover. Ranger Road, another veterans charity that the Commandery supports, continued to offer several programs to wounded veterans including a sailing program on the Bay in conjunction with the St. Francis Yacht Club. Other programs offered include sky diving, scuba diving, and physical fitness events. Ranger Road was vetted by Commander Keith Turner, Chevalier Gordon Hess, and Chevalier William Chadwick who will also be involved in a coming sky diving event to be held in Davis, California. This active charity has more than 100 veterans (...)

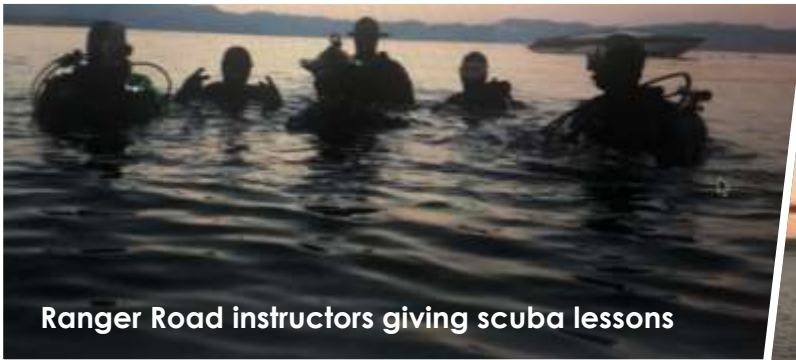




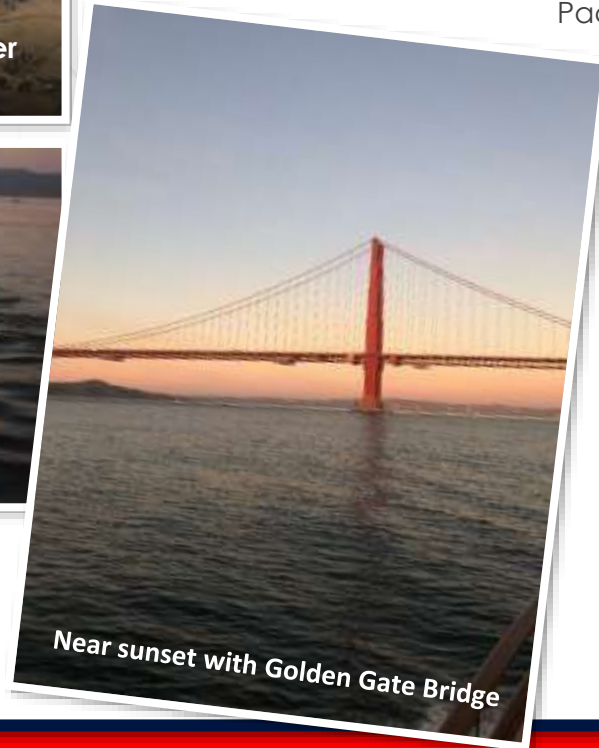
CHARITY: VETERANS ACTIONS, St. Francis Cdry, Priory of the PACIFIC (USA)



Two veterans sky diving over California in a Ranger Road event



Ranger Road instructors giving scuba lessons



Near sunset with Golden Gate Bridge

(...) involved in their events.
Several small luncheons were held by the Commandery – outside In the fresh air while Covid restrictions were relaxed. Today, masks and proof of a vaccine shot are required to eat inside a restaurant or cafe.
We are all praying for an end to this pandemic and for all of the victims to recover and return to a normal life.

Yours in St. John,

Biz Obley, KJSJ.
Prior,
Pacific Priory (USA)



CALL FOR CONTENT



WE WANT
YOU

for The International Herald !

Make yourself heard, from all OSJ units. The more in these times, we **DO** want to know how you are doing over there on our motto *Pro Fide, the pro Utilitate Hominum* !

Send in your contributions in Word format and in Jpeg pictures soon for the next **04/2021 edition to lambrechtnot@skynet.be, by the end of NOVEMBER** to come, at the latest.

MANY THANKS !





**Zevenkerken Abbey, Bruges (B), June 27th,
2021: Meditation seminar by Chev. Jean
BASTIAENS, KGSJ, deacon.**

Part I

How are you ? How am I doing? What do we want to remember about the corona crisis?

1. How are things? A question that sounds different today ! It's not a courtesy question anymore... How great was/is the loneliness among the people ? The tragedy of the dying... Coping with the loneliness ? How many people suffered from depressive feelings and did not know how to cope with them ? We recently got the book by fellow-brother Marc Calmeyn to reflect on this: *Depression is human. Illuminating our dark side differently* (Pelckmans Publishers). ('Depression is not a disease...'), We have seen that we can also take inhumane measures out of fear and regulation, leaving people to fend for themselves on their sickbeds or deathbeds in total isolation. You would be depressed by less ! How are you? A question which remains...

2. We encountered boundaries: of what we wanted to realise but could not... Of what we wanted to plan... Of what we wanted to share... There was a break in our pattern of living... (how did it feel, how did I react ?) How does it feel to live with 'less' ... a very evangelical call !

3. We had to rethink our way of doing things and partly reinvent our way of doing things ('habits'). Entrepreneurs learned new strategies... (being flexible, adapting to new circumstances, even if they suddenly presented themselves – but this was not possible for everyone !), We were sometimes able to reach new target groups... We learned to work online... (and to see that we did not need hours of meeting time for each decision...), Family and friends found their way to video calls... For some people, the space in the agenda and the silence suddenly became a blessing. The hectic life just stopped (that which nobody could achieve, corona did). Some experienced this as a relief – what happened to me ? (...)



The
speaker





(...)

4. We realised how fundamental we are as physical beings, people who need physical contact. Touching and being touched: something that plays such an important role in the Gospel with Jesus. I am thinking of the woman in Luke 7:36-50 who visits Jesus in the house of Simon, a Pharisee friend of Jesus... The word 'tenderness' ('tenerezza'), which Pope Francis is so fond of using, takes on a new meaning here... We have also realised this when celebrating the Eucharist, or rather: not celebrating it. What does that mean, 'This is my body for you'? And what does it mean to be and receive the 'body' of Christ, and that in the time of corona? I will come back to the celebration of the Eucharist shortly.

5. We discovered how important people's mental well-being is. The importance of meeting: in the truest sense of the word. The importance of 'dialogue': speaking to each other, exchanging, interacting, letting something new grow out of dialogue! Martin Buber: 'I don't have teaching; I have a conversation!' The encounter between an 'I' and a 'You': and what can happen when this encounter is authentic and personal! An encounter can become a revelation...

6. We have been thinking about what we mean by the word 'freedom'. There were people who took to the streets to protest because they felt 'their freedom' was being restricted. Is freedom being able to do what I want to do? Or is freedom always oriented towards the other: giving space to the other so that they can exist and deriving my own freedom from that? Does freedom not arise precisely 'in relation'? In the sight of the Other? (Levinas)

7. We have found that the Belgian governments do not see any substantial link between people's mental wellbeing and the role played by philosophies of life. In almost no other European country are philosophies of life so pushed into the corner as in our country. For a long time, only 15 people were allowed to congregate in immensely large and high church buildings – in practice, that meant zero – while people in full trains and small compartments were allowed to make a two-hour journey to the sea... Philosophy of life has to do with meaning: with giving meaning to my daily existence, with space for reflection, taking distance, catching my breath. But our governments have not wanted to see this, and hardly anyone has acted against the bias in this regard. This fits in with the modern ideology that religion is purely something of people's private lives. (...)





(...)
8. We have experienced first-hand how true it is that we live in a globalised world. What happens in China or Great Britain, or India is directly related to our situation here. We knew this, but now it has suddenly become much more definite. Or perhaps we were only half aware of it: the extent to which visible and partly invisible networks of large companies, for example, influence the economic and social order of this world and create distorted situations, such as: unfair working conditions, dumping of waste of all kinds, financing of armed conflicts, making local production processes impossible through unfair competition or dumping of cheap products, and so on. We actually knew it, but we often pushed the insights away from us because they were too powerful. Now it is clear in our minds again: we are part of a global network, with many positive consequences, but also with negative implications in terms of security, the environment and social exploitation.

9. We have seen the iron law confirmed once again: it is always the less fortunate who suffer most in a global crisis. People who lose their job and live in apartments that are far too small, causing family violence to rise sharply. Poverty initiatives sometimes came to a complete standstill. People with a very small network of contacts who got lonely. Small entrepreneurs who had just started and seen their investments evaporate. Artists and cultural organisations who saw their income and their projects collapse. It also showed how vulnerable the young people are and how difficult it was (is) for them to live with imposed boundaries.

10. In short: the corona era has held up a gigantic mirror to us. No one was spared. And all of us have had to face the vulnerability of our model of society, of the other, and our own vulnerability.

Many say: let us return to the old normal as soon as possible. To what we were used to. Others say: never waste a good crisis! What can we learn from this crisis? What pain points did the crisis expose (such as obvious pain points in care, in the way residential and care centres operate, etc.)?

- What do I learn for myself from this crisis period ?
- What would I like to remember ?
- To what turning point do I feel compelled or called ?
- What do I want to do differently from now on ?



**St. John the Baptist,
appropriately present
on the altar**





(...) These are questions that each of us should ask ourselves, and we should discuss the answers with each other – in a learning process.

Part II

1. What spiritual resources can I fall back on in a crisis ?

2. How will we shape the heart of our Christian existence – celebrating the Eucharist – in the future ?

In a second movement, I want to look at the consequences this crisis can have on our faith, our way of being church, and our way of being 'Order of Saint John'.



1. In a crisis, people fall back on the 'reserves' they have built up, in this case, the spiritual reserve (in the Gospel of Matthew, it is called 'the treasures you have gathered in heaven – not on earth'). Will my faith endure when the prevailing church structure of going to Mass on Sunday and meeting and working with fellow believers at other times suddenly disappears ? How *personal* is my faith, how much has it become part of my being and my existence? How do I look back on this ?

2. Twice now, we have not had a common Lent (a time of 'going to Easter together'), and we have not been able to celebrate the Holy Week, Easter or Pentecost together. Yet, these are the most essential moments in the church year. What has it done to me and to us ? Some say: yes, we have lived through the crisis as one big Lent. Desert time. Then I ask: have we repented? Has it been an apprenticeship ? Biblically speaking, every desert time must be an apprenticeship.

3. We had to fall back on the personal strength of our faith. Can I also pray alone, in my own 'inner room', as the evangelist Matthew calls it ? Can I, even without encouragement from others, immerse myself in faith texts, spiritual literature, literary texts that testify to deep humanity? Do I stand on my own two feet as a believer, and do I take responsibility for giving this a concrete form ?

4. Can we also form 'house church' again ? That is, to celebrate and live our faith in the context of a small circle of (...)





(...) friends, family and guests? Christianity originated as a network of house churches: the synagogue on the Sabbath, the house church on the first day of the week. Later, in dominant Gentile communities: the house church on the first day of the week & other gatherings (praying, learning, serving) – they did not have their own 'Church buildings'. The essence of this is: it must be possible to experience faith on a small scale so that there is spontaneous interaction, active involvement and co-responsibility. The Pauline communities of the 1950s (and later) of the first century were charismatic communities: they did not only share bread and wine, but they also shared each other's concerns and hope and joy, they shared each other's lives. The two belong together essentially: the sharing of bread and wine AND sharing my and your life. Again, the question arises: How are you ?

5. In the middle of the corona crisis, monk Benoît Standaert OSB wrote an open letter encouraging people to form HOUSE CHURCH. He saw in it an opportunity to rediscover the oldest Christian form of gathering and celebrating the liturgy. The 'house church' and the larger community that regularly gathers to celebrate the Eucharist are not opposites but presuppose and complement each other. In the New Testament, especially in Paul's letters, there is frequent mention of such 'House churches': one gather at the home of someone who has a large enough house to accommodate, say, a group of 15 or 20 people. So, it is not just a family affair: it is an open community where people who share the same faith welcome each other. Also (apparently independent), women often organised house churches in their own homes (like John Mark's mother, like Lydia or Chloe, etc.!).



**Zevenkerken Abbey,
Bruges (B)**

6. And what about that larger community that comes together to celebrate 'Eucharist'? The French monk François Cassingena - Trévedy OSB recently wrote a brilliant article on celebrating the Eucharist AFTER the lockdown. His thesis is: we should celebrate fewer Masses, celebrate less Mass, and celebrate the Eucharist more. The author is of the opinion that we have made too much of the 'Mass' as a consumer service, a ritual that we have come to worship as such, instead of allowing ourselves to be led by that ritual into the mystery of love and fraternal communion to which that ceremony grants access. It is not about the Mass as a 'service', but about the Eucharist as a celebration, a place where (...)





(...) those who come together have something to celebrate. We have, in the past, tended to reduce the mass, says the author, to a consumer service, a 'thing', 'to something one does, holds, uses, earns, possesses'. The idea that we have a 'right' to 'the Mass' – as some French groups have interpreted it to the courts –is, according to the author, a misconception. The Mass is not ours. The idea of 'having a right to the Mass' may have arisen at a time when everything was 'the Mass', an excess of Masses that were 'services' but not celebrations. So, what is the essence of a Eucharist? Firstly, the Eucharist is not about 'something' – a ritual, a custom – but about 'Someone'. But not only that, the Eucharist is also about 'Us'. This is expressed in the two interrelated expressions that together represent the mystery of the Eucharist:

- 'This is my body' (Mt 26:26) and
 - 'Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.' (1 Cor 12:27).
- When we 'take communion' (the Latin word 'communio' means 'communion'), we receive the body of Christ in a twofold way:
- We receive Christ who gives himself to us, who gives himself for us, with whom we want to associate as 'friends' (and not as 'servants');
 - We receive the participation of the community of believers who are gathered here, the body of Christ.

That is why the one who offers communion does not say: 'the' body of Christ - because then it seems that we should only look at what is offered to us ('the host'). No, it is said: Body of Christ ! It is both Christ and us !

Church Father Augustine puts it this way (Sermons 272): 'Be what you see and receive what you are!' Cassingena says: 'Perhaps we should look for the institution of the Eucharist also in these words of Jesus: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."' (p. 83) But then, the two dimensions of the Eucharist - 'Christ and us' - must really mean something and be related to each other. I quote again from Cassingena: 'The Eucharist is personal and living Food, God and man, food of our life in communion with Jesus, the man of God. The Eucharist is Presence, Action, with all its 'social', earth-shattering and revolutionary consequences, with all the humanity that flows from it. This cannot be expressed more powerfully than the Gospel of Matthew does: "Truly I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did to me."' (p. 83) Or also: 'The most joyful intimacy with Jesus cannot exist without an extremely demanding solidarity with 'the brothers and sisters' of Jesus.' We are coming out of a time of over-consumption of 'the Masses', says Cassingena. The corona crisis has made us aware of this once again. Now that the (...)





(...) churches are opening their doors again, we need to do things differently. We must leave behind the Mass with all its self-evidence, and we may celebrate the Eucharist – more spread out over time. The role of the priest also changes: after all, he is not the one who 'performs', the Eucharist, but a mediator: 'he is one who cares for the Eucharistic life of the people of God, in the actual celebration of Caritas, charity, of which the Eucharist is the sacrament.' (p. 86)



The Eucharist is not a given but a highlight in the lives of people who travel together and give the Gospel hands and feet in care and responsibility. In the offertory – the application of the gifts – we bring ourselves and our community into the Eucharist: 'Make it a source of eternal life for us', says the priest about these gifts. Let us not come empty-handed when we celebrate the Eucharist together.

The oldest indication of the Eucharist is 'the breaking of bread (in Luke and Acts). Cassingena: 'The breaking of the bread says something about the 'fragility' of God and of ourselves.' (p. 89) It says beautifully what Eucharist is.

Cassingena hopes that the period of lock-down and suspension of public celebrations has made us realise the difference between 'routine and a true Eucharistic celebration'. As members of the Order of Saint John, it is certainly a challenge to think about this further in our commanderies and shape it ourselves.

I have come to my **conclusion**.

The corona crisis has made a breach in our lives and in society. The crisis has shaken us, and we have started to look at the obvious with new eyes. We are slowly leaving the crisis, although we will have to live with another 'normal' for some time to come. Socially,

the crisis has exposed many problems. We must not shake off the learning process we have gone through but must do something with the insights we have gained. In that sense, it could be an exciting time!

Cardinal De Kesel recently wrote a book about letting go of the obvious. His book is entitled: 'Faith & Religion in a secular society'. Like Cassingena, Cardinal De Kesel advocates a new awareness of what we are as a church community in a secularised society. Christian religious culture is over and will not return. We should not mourn this and accept it positively. We can be open to the modern era and secular society and participate fully in them, but as people with a strong consciousness, the consciousness of belonging to Christ, to the People of God ('Body of Christ') and to the Church, which is a sacrament of unity and love for the world. The 118-page booklet is written in an accessible way, readable for you and me. I think that this book, too, can help us think (...)





(...) about the question: what our world can look like AFTER the corona crisis. And what kind of a Church has a real future in that world ?

The Order of Saint John, as a community of committed believers, is, of course, not outside society. At the level of the commanderies, we should take time for ourselves to exchange what corona has done to us and how we evaluate its impact on society and the Church. Does it also affect the order as such? Do we need to change our focus in the future ? How can we understand the Pro Fide character of our order in such a way that it also becomes a spiritual service to society today? Because people are hungry for authentic spirituality, for fresh and innovative ways of forming community, sharing life and drawing from the source from which all life springs. How can the twofold mission of Pro Fide and Pro Utilitate Hominum sound even more strongly as an appeal to the man of today: we may be human, in all our vulnerability, and from that vulnerability take part in the power of the Living One, who gives us life and renews our life every day, if only we will open our eyes and ears and approach that life with open hands.

Thank you for your attention.



Jean BASTIAENS, KGSJ,
Deacon, Dr. in Theology
Director Bible House
Zevenkerken Abbey.

Translation: Inez VERMEULEN, DSJ.



Chev. deacon Jean Bastiaens & Chev. Prelate Eric Petré leading the devotions

Three highly recommended titles for thinking through aspects of the corona crisis and its consequences, with a view to a different future:

1. François Cassingena-Trévedy OSB, Living Bread. From sacred company to Eucharistic revolution, in: Benedictine Magazine 2021/2, p. 79-90
2. Cardinal Jozef De Kesel, Faith and Religion in a Secular Society, Halewijn 2021.
3. Marc Calmeyn, Depression is human. Our dark side exposed, Pelckmans 2021.





**Mightier than
the waves
of the sea
is His love
for you.**

Psalm 93:4





**Synchronize your watches !
next SOVEREIGN COUNCIL:
APRIL 23rd, 2022.**



***** SAVE THE DATES ! *****

The Petit Conseil, in consultation with the Ecclesiastical Council and our Lt-Grand Master H.E. Paul M Borg, has the pleasure to announce that the coming **Sovereign Council** will be held on Saturday **23rd April 2022**.

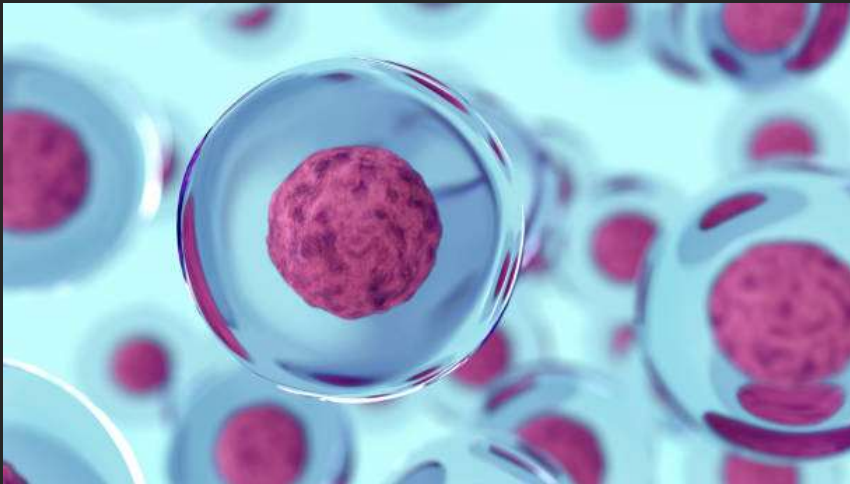
The Petit Conseil meeting will be held on the 21st & 22nd of April.
The **Ecumenical Service** will be held on Sunday **24th April**.
Meetings **location**: Victoria Hotel/the Palace, Sliema, Malta.





REFLECTIONS on The need for a 'POST-SECULAR' CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN BODY

Commerce in human eggs for IVF and for the production of embryos for stem cell research has become an important part of the global trade in human tissue. Feminist moral philosopher Donna Dickenson rightly claims that bioethics has failed to pay sufficient attention to the dangers egg trafficking involves for women, not only with respect to health hazards, but also with respect to exploitation and loss of dignity.



In this reflection I would like to go deeper into what she calls the objectification and commodification of the human, and particularly of the female, body. The loss of religious and metaphysical convictions with respect to the dignity of the

human body seems to have led to a radical devaluation of the body: in our secular times, it is almost reduced to a commodity. This attitude is exacerbated when it is combined with the activist search for mastery and perfection (also of human nature) that seems to dominate contemporary culture. The obsession with the body and its perfection (see e.g. Carl Elliott's *Better than Well. American Medicine Meets the American Dream*, New-York & London, Norton & Comp., 2003) leads paradoxically to an extreme denial of the dignity of the human body.

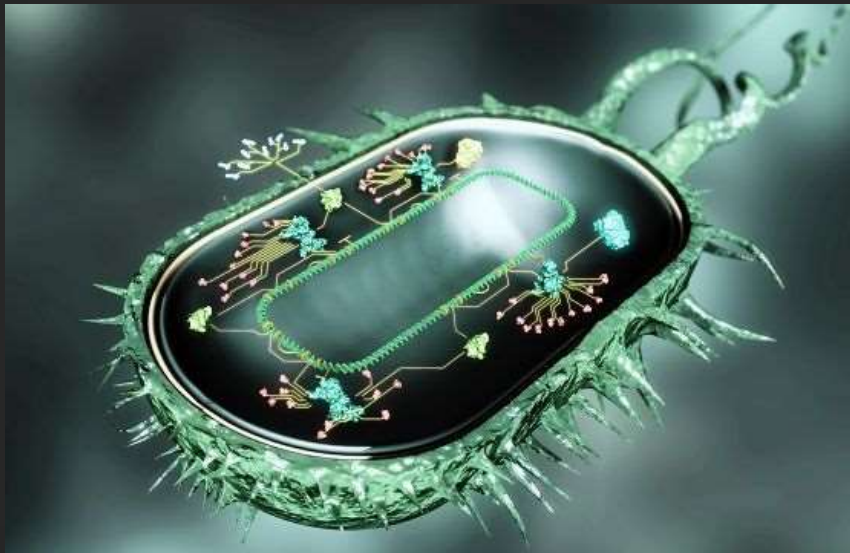


Dickenson is not of the opinion that the end of massive religious adherence must inevitably mean the end of the common belief in some sort of inherent dignity (...)



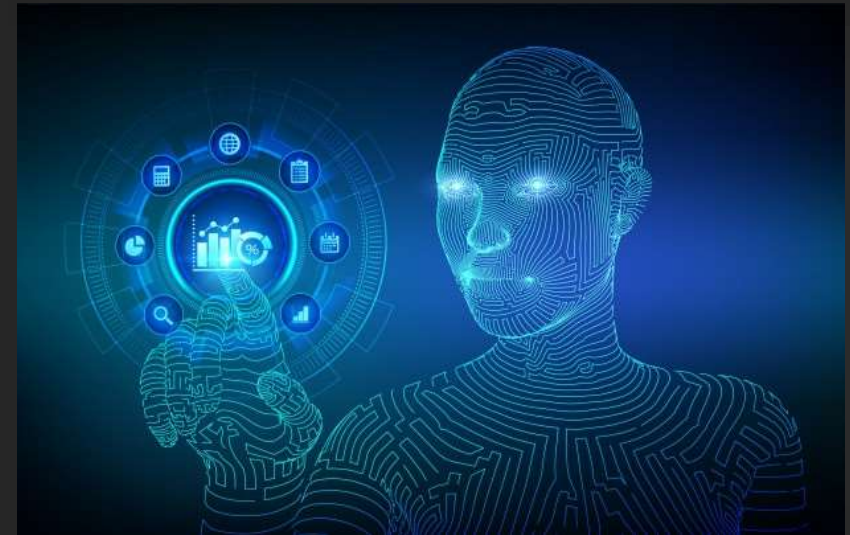


(...) or sanctity of the human body. Also for non-religious people, it is possible - and even essential, morally speaking - to adhere to a post-secular, non-reductionist notion of the human body and of its dignity. Of course, as modern individuals, we are perfectly capable of viewing the human body in a scientific way. Over the centuries, science itself has



evolved into techno-science and in this form it affects more and more the world of human relations. The scientific view of the human body is now strongly intertwined with far-reaching medical and technological interventions in the body (such as transplantation of body parts and tissues, and the implantation of all sorts of technical device). However, even modern individuals cannot really live within the framework of the scientific vision of things on its own. Inevitably,

they also live in what philosophers like Wittgenstein have termed the 'life world'. In the world as seen by science people, animals, natural things appear simply as combinations of organic or material elements, the internal structure and causes of which can be understood in such a way that on the basis of these insights they can be re-fashioned and reproduced 'mechanically'. The communal life world, on the contrary, is a world in which people,



animals and also (many) things have special relevance and worth, making them significant and important to us in multiple ways (personal, social, aesthetic, ethical, erotic, religious, etcetera).

The inevitable participation in a life world implies of course that also modern individuals have a double (...)





(...) relationship with the human body. The body is both *Körper* and *Leib* (Edmund Husserl's distinction): it is both the object of the scientific-technological view and the 'object' of our ethical, aesthetic, erotic attitudes. Even completely



secularized people in Western Europe normally accept that the human body is not an object that can be used for purely instrumental purposes alone. This is not because the human body is the property of the subject to whom it belongs and who can use it at will (this was the Cartesian view). The human body, even though a body like all other bodies, is at the same time the person ("I do not only have

a body, I am my body"). The human smile, although in a sense nothing but the result of neurological and physiological factors, is to us at the same time the revelation of the incarnated human spirit (Roger Scruton). Human bodies therefore have an inherent dignity. Even bodies of comatose, demented or severely handicapped people



have dignity, should not be killed, wounded, raped or used in any way. Even dead bodies or human remains are not reducible to what scientifically speaking they clearly are: decaying organic matter. To consider them as only that, is horrible and evil.

The problem is of course how, in concrete life, to combine the two incommensurable, but at the same (...)





(...) time inescapable views and attitudes: how to balance the scientific-technological view with our (religious and/or moral) sense of the dignity of the human body (and of some of its parts). It is this problem that dominates the domain of biomedical ethics, or at least a good deal of it. Medicine is one of the domains in life (that is in the life world) in which the two radically different views cannot but impinge upon each other. Precisely because we care for



our loved ones and their lovely bodies in distress, it is necessary to use the bio-techno-science of present-day medicine – but only within certain ethical constraints.

It is of course absurd to reject all 'instrumentalization' of

bodies or body parts in toto, but the alternative can and should not be outright commodification. What is required is an appropriate use of the organs and tissues of the human body in the context of and from the point of view of respect for the human body and the human person. This respect is hardly possible without the existence of ethical attitudes and of the appropriate acts and rituals able to express and give form to these attitudes (such as care, and burial or cremation).



In order to counter objectification of the human body and (some of) its fundamental parts (in casu female eggs), Dickenson proposes to revitalize the language and logic of gift relations known from anthropological and sociological studies (e.g. of Marcel Mauss). She is not completely against any medical use of body parts; but she rejects trafficking and merchandising. The human body and its significant parts are *hors commerce* (as also European (...))





(...) law stipulates). Only free and gratuitous donation of egg cells in order to help other women with fertility problems is ethically acceptable. (Further question: what about donation for research purposes?)



In line with Dickenson's proposal, I think it is high time to again consider the human body as a gift coming if not from God or the gods, at least from nature and previous generations. The reproductive capacities of the female body in particular should be treated with great respect. This cannot happen if reverence for nature and gratitude for its gifts is given up and if we no longer cultivate capacities of wonder for the gift of life. Perhaps it is time to resurrect some 'femi-

nine (and other) mystique'. A thorough scientific understanding of the complexities of life and childbirth can and should go together with the experience of wonder and the respect this results in. It is not surprising that our attitudes towards the new born are tied up with rituals such as name giving – a ritual performing the transformation from natural offspring into child belonging to the human family. The mystique in question can and should



encompass a view of nature itself and of human generations as 'meaningful' or 'wonderful' in a way that cannot be captured by scientific insight. Again it seems undeniable that also secular people are still capable of such a view – a view containing for example awareness of the significance of the family relations to which (...)





(...) they belong. These relations constitute some sort of 'mystical body' extending over time and incarnated in the biological lineage.

A lot of fuss is being made today about fundamentalist religious attitudes to the female (or even male) body. Why not make at least equal fuss about the objectification and



commodification of the female or male body (and its parts and tissues) in the context of present-day medicine and market? Religious attitudes to the body can be extreme (as we know from history and cultural anthropology), but the rampant instrumentalization and commodification of the human body is in a sense at least as 'fundamentalist' (indeed 'scientistic'), incapable of understanding or recognizing the meaning and value of the human body. What is needed is not the rejection pure and simple of



religious views on the sanctity of the human body, but the understanding of the deep insights often involved in these views, as well as the framing of an additional, 'post-secular' vision of the dignity of the human body recognizable by everyone, religious and non-religious people.



Herman DE DIJN, CGSJ
Prof. Em., Philosophy dept.,
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Dagmar Commandery, The Nordic Priory: Coat of Arms, Investiture and a social Summer Convention

The Coat of Arms of the Dagmar Commandery

By Chev. Preben Sloht, KGSJ, Herald of Arms, Vice-Commander.

In 2020 Commandery Dagmar, Denmark, could celebrate its 50 years anniversary. Commander Kim Aabo Christensen, CGSJ, therefore raised a wish for a coat of arms for the Commandery Dagmar.

As Herald of Arms, I started studying the background for our history and the Nordic Priory's Coat of Arms and Flag, which we all know.

This was developed at a meeting at the Finnish Commandery in the early 1970s and was unanimously approved by the participating members from the Nordic Commanderies. On July 26th 1992 it was approved and authorized for use by the Nordic Priory by Roy d'Arms, OSJ, Rev. Robert de Caluwé.

The winged heart on the yellow background symbolizes the width of our social activities and charity. Our work is, like a bird, not bound by any borders.

To retain the connection to the Nordic Priory, it was decided to preserve the division of the shield as well as the two Maltese Cross in 1 and 4 and then use the Dagmar Cross in 2 and 3.

The story behind the name Commandery Dagmar is raised at the creation of Commandery Aros in 2010. Chev. Karsten Fledelius, KGSJ, suggested then, that the Danish Commandery (in daily speech known as Dagmar) changed name to Commandery Dagmar, to continue the use of the name.

The historical reason for continuing the name Dagmar is, the connection to Queen Dagmar of Denmark, to the city of Skanderborg and the Danish princes Dagmar who became Empress Dagmar of Russia, named after the Late Queen Dagmar. Commandery Dagmar ties to the Russian Grand Priory, from which the branch of our order is continued.

The national relic, the Byzantine Cross, was found, while excavating Saint Bendt's Church in Ringsted in 1695 and used as the symbol of the Danish Commandery. The jewelry was (...)



Nordic Priory Coat of Arms



Dagmar Commandery
Coat of Arms





(...) transferred to the Royal Art Chamber, as it is believed to have belonged to King Valdemar the Victorious' wife: Queen Dagmar.

Known worldwide the Dagmar Cross connects to Denmark.

Investiture, June 19th, 2021 (Photo's: Dame Sussi Flores Aabo Christensen, DGSJ, Chancellor, & Lotte Terp, Forum Donati)



Master of Ceremony Preben Sloht and Aspirants Joan Sloht, Kirsten L. Nielsen and Sven-Erik Magnussen.

(...) On a sunny Saturday – the 19th of June 2021 Commandery Dagmar held Investiture. Sadly, the pandemic prevented our invited guests from Malta, Belgium, Norway and Sweden to participate.

We hope they will participate in our Investiture September 2022.

As always we gathered at the Skanderborg Slotshotel in Skanderborg. Knighthood, 3 aspirants, Forum Donati and guests. After coffee and Danish *pastries* we walked to Skanderborg Castle Church where the ceremony would take place.

The ceremony consists of a sermon, opening according to the Rite and then the ceremony of the Knights vow and receiving the Knighthood.

We admitted three new members to our Knighthood, so Commandery Dagmar now consists of 41 Knights and Dames in our ranks.

Enjoy the pictures on the next page ! (...)



Sword Carrier Chev. Aage Terp and Commander Kim Aabo Christensen





General REPORT: Dagmar Commandery (DK)



Priest Heidi Torp, officials of Commandery Dagmar and new Dames and Chev.



Entertainment during the Gala Dinner



The ceremony of signing into the Roll of Arms



Smalltalk between the courses





Joan Sloht, Aage Terp, Preben Sloht and the author having fun preparing breakfast for our Commandery



Breakfast in rainy weather – the mood is high

Summer Convention August the 28th 2021

(Photo's: Dame Sussi Flores Aabo Christensen, DGSJ, Chancellor)

Every year Commandery Dagmar holds a Summer Convention. Normally we visit a church or two and a cultural monument, a cultural building or a historical monument. But the overall purpose is to create a strong companionship and community in our Commandery. We do indeed name our Commandery "our little family!"

Normally the Summer Convention is placed in June – on the Saturday closest to the birthday of St. John the Baptist (24th of June). This year the Convention was held in august. The time frame for our activities has this year been a bit changed due to the pandemic. Vice Chancellor and Sword Carrier, Chev. Aage Terp (KSJ), had planned a trip to Roskilde. A small team of us started early in the morning to create breakfast for our participating members of our Commandery gathering from all over in Denmark. We prepared rolls and brewed tea and coffee and had a lot of fun, and we were ready for the "trunk coffee" – an outdoor breakfast.

We had also invited guests from our neighbor units of the Order. Cooperation and brotherhood are most respected put in the forefront by all of us. (...)





General REPORT: Dagmar Commandery (DK)



We met at the parking lot at the Museum for Viking ships. Outside the museum shipbuilders creates full scale models of old Viking vessels. One of the ships – the more than 30-meter-long Sea Stallion – went in 2007 on a trip from Denmark – north of Scotland – Dublin – south of England and back to Denmark.

It was like always a great joy to meet each other again. Then we went to The Church of Saint Ib (in English Saint Jacob). He was one of the disciples of Christ and brother to Saint John. Here Chev. Aage Terp told the exiting story of the church. It was built in the year of 1100, and services were held there until 1808. The church was afterwards used as lazaret for Spanish mercenaries during the Napoleonic Wars. Today it is preserved as a memorial. Then our Prelate Niels Refskou held devotion, and we all song a psalm.



The Sea Stallion



Church of Saint Jacob (Sct. Ibs Kirke)



The Sea Stallion
passes Scotland in
2007





Service by Prelate Niels Refskou



The participants of our Commandery and guests.

After the service we walked to Roskilde Cathedral. Roskilde is an old royal city in Denmark. In the Middle Ages Roskilde had 15 churches and 5 monasteries. Well done for a minor city! The cathedral was built in the 12th century in gothic style. It contains 40 royal tombs, 21 kings and 19 queens. The cathedral is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In the cathedral rest nearly all former Danish kings and queens in their sarcophagi. Even the remainings of King Harald Bluetooth, who reigned in Denmark from 958 to his death in the year of 985, rests here and also Queen Margrethe I, who ruled Denmark in 1375 to 1412. During this period, she was also queen of Sweden and Norway – indeed (...)





(...) our small country was a great power then ! The sarcophagus for our present majesty – Her Royal Highness Queen Margrethe II of Denmark – are also placed here. (...)



Sarcophagus of Queen Margrethe I (1353-1413), Queen of Denmark, Norway and Sweden

Sarcophagus for our present Queen, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II (1940 -), Queen of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroese Islands





General REPORT:
Dagmar Commandery (DK)





The sarcophagi are through the ages constructed in respect for their times of creation. The sarcophagus for Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II are made of glass and rests on three feet – made of Danish granite, Faroese basalt and marble from Greenland, symbolizing the unity of our realm. The shelf is made of French sandstone in respect for her late husband Prince Henrik (Henri Marie Jean Andrè, Count de Laborde de Monpezat), who passed away in 2018, at the age of 84.

A solemn mood spread among us along with humility, and we let the time fly. There were so much to see, that I could have written a book about it. (Lot of people already have). I have chosen to let the pictures tell the story, and I hope you can feel just a little bit of what gripped us.

The convention ended with a late lunch, and we all agreed in, that it had been a great and eventful day.

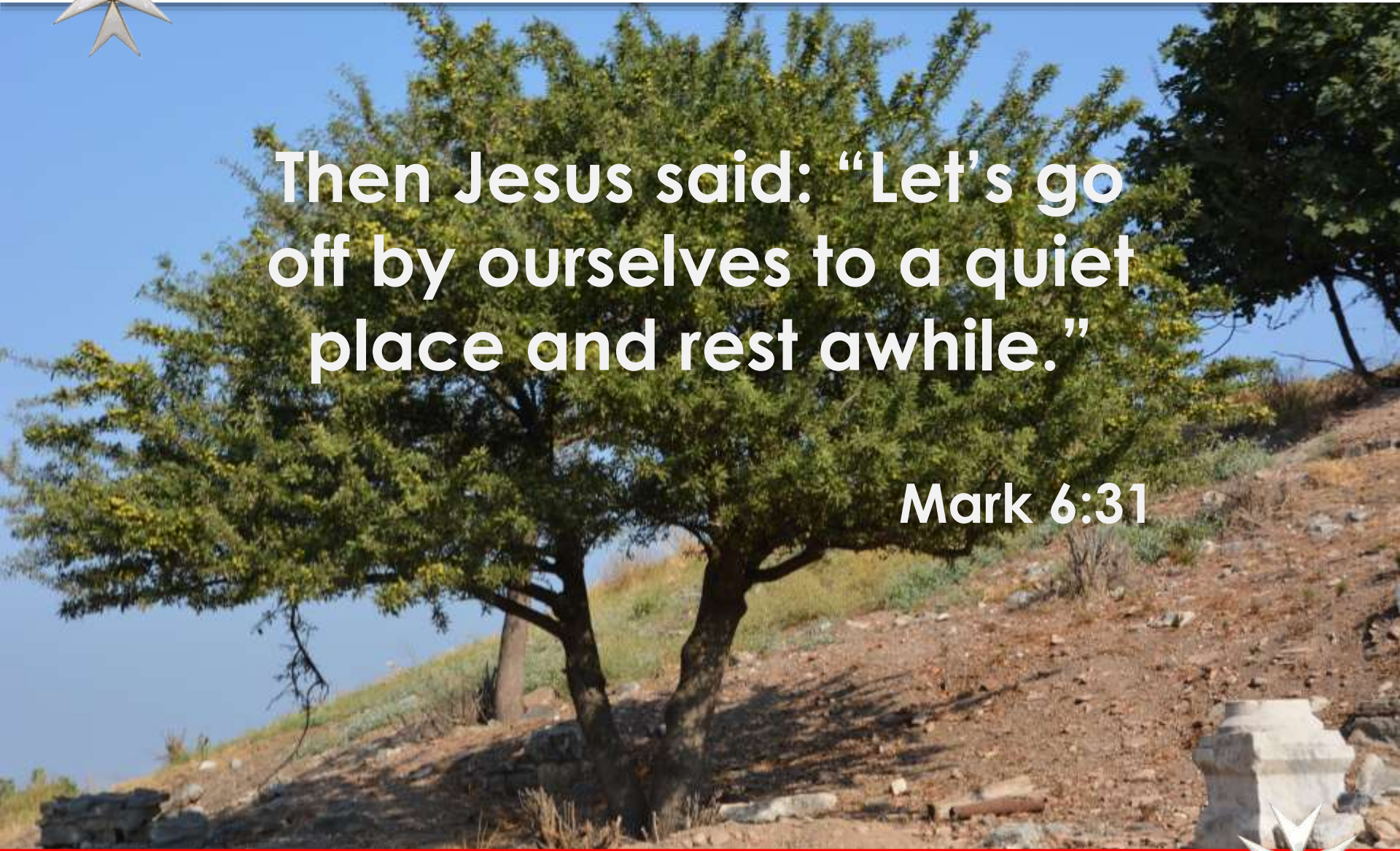


**Preben SLOHT, KGSJ,
Vice-Commander,
Dagmar Commandery.**



**Kim Aabo CHRISTENSEN, KGSJ,
Commander,
Dagmar Commandery.**



A large, leafy tree with a thick trunk stands on a hillside. The ground is dry and rocky, with some sparse vegetation. The sky is clear and blue. The tree is the central focus of the image.

Then Jesus said: “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.”

Mark 6:31



Dr. Fred Anduze (Immediate Past Commander), Thomas McOsker (Aspirant), Owen Bethel (Commander), Scot McChain (Aspirant), Duncan Hurd (Past Commander)

Quarantining on Physical and Mental Health". In addition, they held a "Pinning Ceremony" and welcomed Thomas McOsker and Scot McChain as aspirants.

The Americas Priory: summer Months Spent in Planning and Preparation

With the Global Covid-19 Pandemic seemingly on the wane, the Priory of the Americas spent the summer months planning for a robust schedule of fall activities, albeit localized activities without necessitating travel.

The Commandery of New York and the Commandery of Florida are both planning Investitures for November. These two active Commanderies are ready to return to a full schedule of events and outreach missions...but continue to remain careful and cautious against the backdrop of rising rates of cases of the Delta Variant.

The Commandery of the West Indies has had a very active summer season. In September, they will present the inaugural Jay Hirsch Lecture as Dr. Alfred Anduze (the immediate Past Commander of the Commandery of the West Indies) will address: "The Effects of Social Distancing and



James GAVRILOS, KJSJ,
Prior,
The Americas Priory



REMINDER CALL FOR HELP: ST. JOHN'S VILLAGES BURUNDI
presented for your support by **OSJ INTERNATIONAL**



**SAINT JOHN'S VILLAGES, BURUNDI, Gitega Hills,
BATWA population.**

Together with the previous 2/2021 International Herald, you received the **brochure** about a **Charity project** kindly **supported by and recommended to** the international OSJ-community by **the Petit Conseil**. Initiators are Chev. Marc VAN HUFFEL, KGSJ, and his spouse, dame Jeannette DE JAEGHER. Different organizations - local Burundese, European, international and Belgian - are supporting the project for years and we are appealing on the International OSJ-world to take this multi-purpose project to the next level: this can only be done with your help and support: as an individual member, as a Commandery, as a Priory or Grand Priory. Please be so kind to go through the brochure with attention and goodwill.



**A proud family
in front of their house**

This charity work got the name "**St. John's Villages**" with agreement of all the other participants, because the driving force and all main efforts are absolutely OSJ's. The broad target group are the poorest of the poorest of the population, the least fortunate **Batwa-group**, a pygmee-like people. It is a population that is even not recognized by the Burundese central authorities: human beings who do not exist to the governments' administration, and who are as such deprived of all essential human rights, political rights, legal benefits, support, housing, medicine, schools and general education, ...: anything to give a human being a decent existence and basic certainties, let alone a fulfilling life. Due to the governments attitude, this group is very marginalized and lives in small communities, often in total isolation. A large number of them live in really inhumane conditions on all thinkable levels. A large number of them still house in primitive cabins without any basic comfort, really stone age like. The project focuses on all necessary domains of life (hygiene, housing, healthy home-grown and home-bred food, schooling, self-reliability), to elevate these people to a dignified 21st Century existence. The Petit Conseil kindly dedicated on behalf of the International OSJ Community a sum of 10,000 € to have ten houses built (each house costing 1,000 €): these will all be personalized and named to OSJ Pories and Grand Pories. The Low Countries provided 48,000 € or 48 houses by fundraising, thus totaling 58 of the 100 houses in target. **May we politely invite you to consider the donation of a house and name it to your discretion ?**

HELP US TO HELP THESE PEOPLE ! MANY THANKS IN ADVANCE !





REFLECTIONS on: STRENGTHENING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL IMMUNITY WITH THE POWER OF ATTENTION

We all know the importance of physical immunity. This is our ability to resist disease, have physical strength and stamina, slow down the aging process and heal our bodies from within relative to injuries or chronic diseases. It is indicated by positive health and wellness.

But what is psychological immunity? It is similarly the ability of the mind to resist disease, ward off emotional toxins, endure the dualities of gain and loss, joy and sorrow, attraction and repulsion. It means to have enduring mental strength and stamina, slowing down the aging process for the mind and memory, steady concentration and balanced emotions, without agitation and sorrow. It is indicated by a positive attitude in life, fearlessness, contentment, Self-awareness and creativity.

Just as physical pathogens like bacteria and viruses abound in the external world, so mental pathogens, negative emotions like fear, anger, hatred, greed or desire can enter our minds from the outside. We can become emotionally toxic and infect others as well. Just as there are contagious and epidemic physical diseases, so there are mass psychological disturbances, such as we see in mob violence, dangerous ideologies, war propaganda, or even in disturbed or misleading news or entertainment.



For physical immunity to be strong, we must possess the resilience to face the vicissitudes of nature and handle the stress of hard work or exercise. For psychological immunity to be strong, we must be able to endure like and dislike, criticism, opposition and conflict without losing our calm collected state of mind. We must have the resilience to face the ups and downs in human behavior that can be unpredictable and relentless.

How many of today have strong a psychological immunity? Probably less than those who have a strong physical immunity. This is because we seldom properly nourish, (...)





(...) exercise, train or discipline the mind, like many of us try to do with the body. We let our minds run unchecked and unguided, tied to transient external influences that are seldom questioned as to their value or validity.

There is a simple way to measure your psychological immunity. It is equal to your power of attention. This you can determine by how long you can sustain your attention at will on any needed topic in an observant manner, letting it reveal to you what it is, not reacting with your mind's conditioning or personal opinions.

*Attention is the rarest
and purest form of generosity.*

Simone Weil

Your power of attention is your field of psychological immunity. It creates a shield of consciousness that keeps unconscious forces from coming in. It reflects your control of the mind and ability to remain attentive in the face of negative thoughts, emotions or sensations, the detachment necessary to keep them from entering into your mind and affecting your subconscious.

For psychological immunity we need a meditative mind that strives to be continually aware, not quick to react, and remains centered within even while confronting external obstacles. We need an independent awareness, not one that is dependent upon what others think, feel or say, which is rooted in our own direct perception and the experience of our own consciousness.

Today our power of attention is measured in mere seconds or milliseconds as we are overstimulated, bombarded with media images, computer games, numerous entertainment choices, disturbing news and dramatic sensations, with our minds in a state of perpetual distraction until we are exhausted and fall sleep.

*Energy flows
where attention goes.*

Focusing Your Attention Using Breath Meditation

Let's begin by taking a moment to allow your body to settle (2 seconds). Find a comfortable position that allows your spine to be long but with a natural curve in the low back (2 seconds). You can close your eyes (2 seconds) or keep them open with a soft gaze (...)





(...) downward a few feet in front of you. Let the belly and shoulders relax (2 seconds).

Today I'll guide you through a focused attention practice focusing on the breath, this will help calm your mind and relax your body (2 seconds).

Before we start take a full breath in (2 seconds) and a long breath out (5 seconds). Now allow the breath to find its natural rhythm in and out (10 seconds). Begin this practice by connecting with what draws you here (2 seconds). Maybe it's a wish for greater well-being for yourself and for others. Maybe a desire for some rest and calm (15 seconds). Now bring your attention to the breath (2 seconds). You may notice movement of the abdomen or chest (2 seconds), sensations of air passing at the tip of the nose (2 seconds), sensations in the throat (2 seconds), or a sense of the whole body breathing (5 seconds). Wherever the sensation is most vivid for you, allow your attention to rest there (15 seconds). Breathe in, breathe out (5 seconds). Can you notice the moment the inhale begins? How it continues and the moment it ends? (5 seconds) Can you notice the very moment when the exhale begins? (10 seconds) How it continues and the moment it ends? (5 seconds) Is there a slight pause before the next inhale begins? (10 seconds) Try to keep your attention focused through one complete cycle of breath (20 seconds). See if you can sustain your focused attention on the breath for another breath (2 seconds), then another complete cycle of breath (30 seconds).

When you notice the mind has wandered, just come back to this awareness of the breath (2 seconds) with gentleness, kindness, and without judgement (30 seconds). Allow the breath to be a kind of home base (2 seconds), an anchor for awareness (20 seconds). Thoughts will come (2 seconds) and thoughts will go (2 seconds). No need to push them away (2 seconds) or to chase after them. When the mind wanders, just come back to the breath, come back to this moment (2 seconds), right here, right now (30 seconds). Lets finish this focused attention practice now by taking a full breath in (2 seconds) and a long breath out (5 seconds).

Succes !!!



Inez Vermeulen, DSJ,
Intendant
Loon Commandery,
Low Countries (B)





St. Sunniva of Norway: Summer 2021

Ås Maltese Group is visiting Leisure leader Thora Kollenberg at the Radium Hospital before the summer holiday starts.



Mariann Arstal and Heidi Østli from Thoresen Biovital AS receiving Diplomas for their good contribution.

Many of the patients at the Radium Hospital are not Corona vaccinated, and therefore they got restricted contact with their friends and family. In these special times, it's therefore important to contribute and give the patient some encouragement in



Leisure Leader Thora Kollenberg, assistant Tone and Frank from Ås Maltese Group.

everyday life at the Hospital.

We feel blessed to be able to reach out with different kinds of encouragement to the young patients receiving treatment during the summer months. One of our most important contributors to Ås Maltese Group is Thoresen Biovital, this year they gave the young patients different kinds of goodie bags with lovely creams, nail files, makeup, perfume, and lots of small things for dressing-up.

We also want to thank many of the other (...)





Tusenryd...

(...) contributors, that gladly give Ås Maltese Group all the lovely gifts that we can pass on.

Ås Maltese Group has a long-term partnership with Tusenfryd, they give the patients invitations to the amusement park every year. Frank could proudly hand over a bunch of tickets to Thora Kollenberg. These trips to Tusenfryd will give the young patients a positive break from the treatment at the Hospital. We would like to send warm greetings to the people working at Tusenfryd for the helping hand. We know this will give joy and pleasure to a lot of kids.

Vibeke Omberg,
Aspirant,
St. Sunniva Cdry.



Radium Hospital





It is with a deep sadness that many members of OSJ (Malta), including myself read that Chevalier Nicola Di Filippo, Grand Cross of Justice, has at the age of 79 years, passed away to join the Risen Lord.

Chevalier Nicola Di Filippo stands out as one of a generation of Order members who dedicated their lives to the well-being and continued existence of the Order. Chevalier Nicola had served the Order for over 30 years, during which time I have known him to be a Brother, in Christ and in Saint John, of great generosity, always prompt to be of help towards his neighbour. He was, throughout his life, a man of great moral standing, an esteemed professional and a great artist. Nicola even won 'il Nobel per arte'.

Like other confreres who, like him, had passed to eternal life, Chevalier Di Filippo believed that sound dedication based on solid Christian values was a prerequisite for the progress of our Order and that the education of youths was the key to all change not only within our Order but also for the renewal of the world.

Perhaps, during his years of active membership, Chevalier Di Filippo's greatest contribution to the Order are the donations of five oil on canvas paintings which adorn the Throne Room and the Chapel of the International Headquarters in Valletta. An indelible thought, as well as unique, as well a highly artistic - an authentically personal thought destined to cross many generations to come, which is the reason why only artistic expressiveness in all forms can in fact do.

Chevalier Di Filippo's last days had been plagued with a very cruel illness. However even during this most difficult time Nicola never lost faith in God.

God grant him eternal rest.



**Paul M. BORG, OSJ,
Lt.-Grand Master**





I WAS PUSHED BACK
AND ABOUT TO FALL,
BUT THE LORD
HELPED ME.
THE LORD IS
MY STRENGTH AND MY
DEFENSE;
HE HAS BECOME MY SALVATION.

PSALM 118: 13-14





PERSONALIA

International obituary:

Several members in different Pories unfortunately passed away from this life. Our deepest gratitude remains for the achievements and fraternity of all deceased within and beyond the Order. May they all rest in the peace of our Lord; their name liveth for evermore !

Elections and Nominations, Promotions

No messages reached us about nominations or promotions.

COVID TIMES

Depending on national and local decrees and/or based on common sense and evolving 'figures' in these hazardous times, it seems that a form of 'normal life' will develop in the months to come. The Order's national and regional **activities and gatherings, postponed in some occasions several times, stand a chance to finally happen**, and this includes Investitures. We are all more than **delighted with this evolution, pro Fide** as well as *pro utilitate Homi-num*. **Good times are slowly returning !** Depending on the efficiency of the vaccine(s) (campaigns) in different nations and the percentage of people willing to be vaccinated, 'normal life' as we knew it will regain strength and confidence again. Nevertheless it is generally expected that some effects of the covid era will last: parttime working from home, substantial part of the meetings still be done by videoconferencing, ... But it is – God willing - leading to some extent to a more livable society and life again.

SOVEREIGN COUNCIL : let's meet on a.o. 23 April 2022

The **Petit Conseil** will have a meeting by videoconference in **November** to come.

A re-postponement of the **Sovereign Council** was wisely proclaimed from the earlier planned date in November 2021 to **April 23nd, 2022**. Cfr. page 31 of this edition. More detailed information follows, but this message allows you to already save *the date*. Without totally abandoning the possible necessity of a professionally set up videoconference Sovereign Council with electronic votig facilities, we strongly hope that we can enjoy a 'live' Sovereign Council in Malta, thanks to this re-postponement to April 2022: **there's absolutely no substitute for meeting each other in person**; but there is still this digital 'Plan B' up in our sleeve, if necessary. (...)





(...)

DISCLAIMER

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LITTLE WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Arms, I hope you'll **enjoy this 3/2021 edition**, and that our Order can revive to full operational strength in the months to come. Fully resuming of actions and Investitures means that the Order can welcome new Knights and Dames and can grow again in membership numbers, vigor and impact.

My sincerest thanks to all authors who have contributed and are still contributing to our International Herald: without them no Herald at all, reflecting all the Order's good works and high spirits *pro Fide pro utilitate Hominum*. We now rounded the 1.000 pages cape in fact since *yours truly* was appointed as editor: quite an achievement by all these very inspired authors who deliver us food for thought and spiritual energy and guidance, as well as striking examples of action and determination in charitable work !

Keep up the splendid action on both domains of our motto, **and do NOT forget** to send me content in Word and useable pictures in Jpeg or comparable **by the end of November** to come, at the latest, for the Christmas edition !

Gently take care of each other and of your fellow man within and beyond the Order, as you always did ! I wish you all a most pleasing revival of 'normal' life, bearing in mind however the life lesson insights taught by the pandemic.

Yours most sincerely in X° and St-John,



OSJ, Editor,
Benelux Grand Prior

Jan Lambrecht

