



August 2020

SAINT LAZARUS®

The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

The International Newsletter

Reflections from the Ecclesiastical Grand Prior

June 1 is designated National Relief Day in Italy. Established in 2001, it promotes the culture of relief from disease, not only for those who are coming to the end of their life path, but also for all people who have physical and moral suffering. The theme of relief has a biblical origin. In Psalm 40 the Psalmist writes "The Lord will support him on the bed of pain; you will give him relief in his sickness."

This Day is promoted by the Ministry of Health and the Conference of Autonomous Regions and Provinces and supported by the Italian Bishops' Conference and many religiously inspired health facilities. The Association of Italian Catholic Physicians has highlighted its special significance this year "in the dramatic juncture of the coronavirus epidemic with the heavy loss of life accompanied by the terrible experience of loneliness experienced by the sick, their families and all the health workers many of whom, especially in the medical professions, have paid with their lives for their dedication to the care of the sick". Pope Francis, too, has expressed his appreciation to those who show their commitment to care for others and especially those who, in this pandemic, have given their lives.

Relief can be achieved thanks to new and increasingly effective drugs and therapies, but also through the personalisation of medical care, that is, through care and attention, tenderness, closeness, support and love which can be delivered by healthcare staff, volunteers and priests, but also to family members who suffer and ask for comfort and closeness. This personalisation of the entire care pathway involves the transition from the "cure from the disease" approach to "taking care of the whole person", focusing on the primacy of the individual and their quality of life and not just the disease.

The tragedy of this pandemic, in which it was impossible for relatives and even hospital chaplains to be physically close to sick people to avoid contagion, has highlighted the vocational profile of the health profession as a pillar and foundation of conduct aimed at a service made available to humanity, the expression of a need for justice and also, for those who profess the Catholic faith, of charity. The new "good Samaritans" who have taken care of the sick and their families have made an important contribution to the personalisation of medicine in this pandemic.

+ *Michele Pennisi*

Archbishop of Monreale and Ecclesiastical Grand Prior

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Foodbanks and COVID tests—news from Spain

As reported in our previous newsletter, *Comer es lo primero* (Eating comes first) is the new project developed by the Grand Priory of Spain in response to the economic crisis unleashed by COVID-19. The Chancery office in Madrid has just received 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 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.”



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.

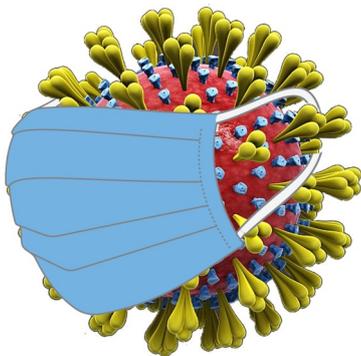


From the Grand Hospitaller

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



Day of Gratefulness in 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.

This historic event aimed to express 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=y8OBJd4yTOo>

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

FESTA PATRONALE SANTI PIETRO E PAOLO
Madesimo 28 giugno 2020
GIORNATA DELLA GRATITUDINE
DAY OF GRATEFULNESS

Programma :

Ore 10.00
Santa Messa dedicata ai Santi Pietro e Paolo Patroni della Parrocchia di Madesimo, segue saluto all' autorità e ringraziamenti delle nazioni che hanno collaborato all'emergenza COVID-19 in favore dell'Italia.

Ore 12.00
Banzo conviviale presso il ristorante La Sorgente

Ore 16.00
Presso la statua di Nostra Signora d'Europa, all'Alpe Motta (mt. 2050) momento di affidamento delle nazioni.

Info : Florio 338040920



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.



COVID-19 masks make our Green Cross visible

An initiative by the Western Cape Commandery in Cape Town at the southern tip of Africa has – during these ongoing, devastating Covid-19 times - 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.



Three members of the Western Cape Commandery with their distinctive masks

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.

STOP PRESS

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 severely damaged by fire this last weekend. This facility for abandoned, abused and orphaned children under five is situated in a chronically marginalised community.

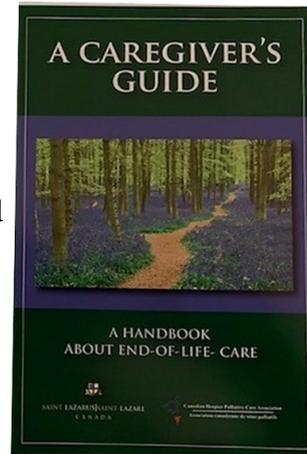
The donated funds were matched through partnership with the Rotary Club of Kirstenbosch and members of the Commandery mobilised quickly to deliver a significant quantity of own-sponsored donations of vital blankets and kids’ clothing to the Home.



Canada and COVID—Small Acts of Kindness

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 some way 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 others in its name. Our pins in French and 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.



Practical Christianity

Editing recent newsletters has been a fascinating experience, as we read of what Jurisdictions round the world are doing to help to alleviate the effects of COVID-19. It is truly amazing and humbling; and Jurisdictions take it in their stride. They see what they are doing as simply what should be done.

Reading the Financial Times recently, I came across reference to the Nordic “Law of *Janteloven*”, which states that “you are not to think that you are anyone special”. How appropriate for the self-deprecating attitude of Jurisdictions at this time. St Paul, writing to Roman Christians in the first century in that highly hierarchical society, expressed the same principle. He also defined Christian ‘love’ in similar terms, and it is this that we have seen in action over the past months.

The role of our Chaplains has been highlighted during this time as they have celebrated virtual Masses from their churches, prayed for the sick and dying and comforted the sad, lonely and bereaved. Within Jurisdictions and Commanderies they have been a bedrock of faith in a troubled world.

Our Almoners, too, have found their role and relevance increased as members turn to them for comfort and support and they, in turn, have developed a wider role within their communities offering practical care and assistance and organising others to widen this to those forgotten or excluded by society. They are truly unsung heroes.

Elsewhere in this issue we focus on the new Hospitaller Flagship Project through which we shall be seeking to raise large sums to assist in COVID-19 related projects across the world, especially where we are already engaged in leprosy work.

As we begin to look to the future we realise that society has changed and that our Order, in its turn, is also changing (or should we say returning?) to a more caring, concerned organisation, focusing not only on raising money through charitable giving but on engagement at a local level with those who need us most.

Returning to *Janteloven*, we have proved that we put others ahead of ourselves, we do not boast about individual accomplishments nor are we jealous of others. Rather, we give without counting the cost seeking no reward other than knowing that we do His will through our Order.

ATAVIS ET ARMIS!

Norman Hunter Rose KCLJ

***“We are all angels with only one wing. Only when we come together
can we fly.”***

Luciano de Crescenzo (Italian film director)

With thanks to HE the Chev. Charles Savona Ventura