



LAZARUS LETTER

December 2020

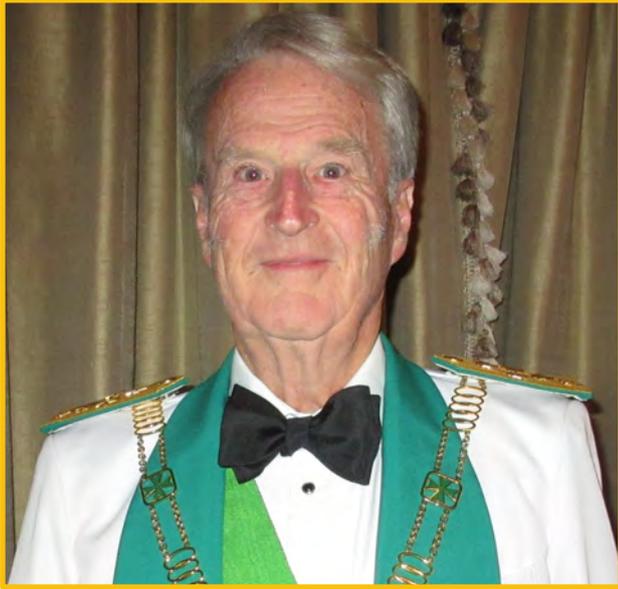
THE JOURNAL OF THE MILITARY AND HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM



Grand Priory of Australia

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GRAND PRIOR'S LETTER



We are coming to the end of a year the nature of which few if any of us expected or could have imagined. What began with horrendous bushfires in the eastern States has finished with some lessening of the restrictions imposed upon us all as the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. I hope the trials and tribulations imposed upon us as a result of the pandemic have not caused you undue distress and that you have remained well throughout this period.

As you all now appreciate the pandemic has materially affected the well-being of the Order, most notably the need to abandon the National Chapter rescheduled for October this year. The next National Chapter is to be held in Melbourne from 13th to 16th May, next year. We can only hope that by then medical science will have beaten the pandemic or at least, the degree of community transmission of the virus in this country remains very low. The decision to hold the Chapter in Melbourne next year necessarily involved the South Australian Commandery changing the arrangements made for the Chapter to be held in Adelaide next year. I take this opportunity to place on public record my thanks to the members of the South Australian Commandery for offering to change the arrangements made by them to host the Chapter next year. The National Council agreed that Adelaide should be the venue for the Chapter in 2022.

Nonetheless, despite the difficulties associated with meeting together both at a national and local level, I am delighted that this has not detracted from our aim of helping those in need. Indeed, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for us to do more. In many cases Commanderies have used the additional need for help to expand their charitable objects. In this context

I wrote to Grand Prior Emeritus Dame Primrose Lady Potter to thank her for the generous gift she made to each of the Commanderies to assist with their charitable work. We can and should be proud of the fact that we have not let the pandemic unduly interfere with our hospitaller aims and objectives.

Although unrelated to the pandemic, the Order has lost two long serving members in the period since the last *LETTER* was published. Sadly, the pandemic has meant that we have been unable to recognise their passing in a way in which they both deserve. On the 13th August my predecessor Grand Prior Emeritus the Chevalier Willoughby Bailey AO GCLJ GCMLJ GCrLJ died suddenly in Geelong. I 'attended' by video link his funeral on the 21st August, which only a limited number of members of his family were allowed to attend. On occasions such as this the changes to our life style brought upon by the pandemic can be very distressing. His service in a variety of roles to the Order in Australia over many years was truly remarkable. As I have written in the obituary published elsewhere in this *LETTER* he did much to advance the cause of Christianity, and thus of the Order, by word and by deed. He was, as the presiding priest said at his funeral, 'a special child of God'. We should now care for Dame Dorothy, his widow.

On the 25th September our immediate past National Chaplain Monsignor Anthony Toms EGCLJ KMLJ died after a long illness. His service to the Order both locally and internationally was likewise outstanding. Chev John Herbig KLJ GOMLJ delivered a eulogy, written by Chev Dr Walter Uhlenbruch AO KLJ OMLJ, relating to his association with the Order. It is also published elsewhere in this *LETTER*. Chev Herbig kindly delivered a message on my behalf expressing our condolences. At his funeral Monsignor Toms was aptly described 'as a loving, wonderful man of God and will be sadly missed by all'. Indeed, he will be missed.

As might be imagined, the international affairs of the Order have been materially affected by the pandemic. The meeting of the Grand Magistral Council planned for September in Madrid had to be cancelled. The International Pilgrimage planned for April next year in Velehrad has also been cancelled. Furthermore, due to delays caused by the pandemic and difficulties associated with the subsequent port explosion in Beirut the international flagship project to which I referred in the last edition of the *LETTER* has had to be abandoned. In its place the Grand Magistral Council has decided that the funds should be directed to the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch's project to restore houses in Beirut. By giving them the flagship project funds, our

GRAND PRIOR'S LETTER *continued*

Order could restore a number of Lebanese people's houses that sustained medium damage in the bombing.

On a very much happier note I am delighted to report that the Grand Master has awarded Chev Ian Chesterman the Silver Cross of Merit in recognition to his service to the Order. During his more than 27 years as a member of the Order he has held office respectively as the Almoner, Treasurer, Secretary and President, of the South Australian Commandery. He was also the Deputy Chancellor of the Grand Priory for six years and later when the then National Marshal had to retire owing to ill-health, he assumed that role for two years. In addition, he did much to establish and until

recently maintained the computerised membership records for the Grand Priory. I am sure you will join with me in congratulating Chev Chesterman on this richly deserved award.

Finally, I extend to you and your family my best wishes for a happy and Holy Christmas. May 2021 bring you good health, happiness and prosperity.

Atavis et Armis.



Chev Hon. Gavin Fielding AM GCLJ KMLJ
Grand Prior

NATIONAL CHAPTER MEETING

MELBOURNE WELCOMES YOU TO THE NATIONAL CHAPTER MEETING
OF THE MILITARY & HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM 13 - 16 May 2021

The National Chapter Sub-committee can now revive the plan for the 2021 National Chapter.

The Victorian Commandery is working through the survey results and now exploring some new innovations for those that might not be able to attend.

Members of the Victorian Commandery are delighted to be hosting at Pullman Albert Park.

Arrangements have been made to visit the Yarra Valley on Thursday (13 May 2020).

Various activities will be arranged to the nearby and CBD attractions. In addition, Free time will enable members to tour Melbourne's CBD distinctive streets with quirky cafes, funky shops and eclectic galleries.

On Friday and Saturday (14 and 15 May 2020), Committee meetings and National Council meetings will be held in a COVID-19 safe way. Equally, the other social activities will observe social distancing. Please note there could be limit on the number of people that can attend, so please book early.



CHANCELLOR'S LETTER



Dear Confreres and Consoeurs,

I sincerely hope that you are all managing the current trying circumstances with as much good health and fortitude as possible. They have been difficult times for us all in many different ways.

Even though our activities have been significantly curtailed in recent months, all Commanderies have been doing their best.

At the national level, the Grand Prior, Secretary General, and myself have been in regular contact on a variety of matters.

Whilst annual Patronal Day activities appear to be proceeding fairly normally at individual Commandery level, it seems unlikely that attendance by the Grand Prior or myself at other than our local Commandery celebrations will be practicable (or sensible) this year.

Anthony Kennedy has been most active in endeavouring to plan for the Victorian National Chapter in 2021.

I am sincerely hopeful that we may be able to proceed with this important national event next year.

The Victorian Commandery has distributed a survey on member attitudes to this proposal, and your early responses would be greatly appreciated.

I have now joined the board of the Foundation, and it is hoped that member contributions might be stimulated. Small contributions mount up, and one possibility might be by way of encouragement of member bequests.

As chairperson of my local parish Finance and Development Committee, I have seen firsthand the enormous difference such gifts can make.

The 40th Anniversary History group is making considerable progress.

Congratulations to Bill Killinger, Bishop Richard Hurford, and all members of the team in this regard.

Annie and I have just visited the museum at Dunwich, on Stradbroke Island, east of Brisbane. It won a recent award as the best small museum in Australia.

The Island is our favourite holiday destination, and we are regular visitors.

In Queensland terms, Dunwich was an early settlement, and the original quarantine station for Brisbane.

Subsequently, it became the location for the Colony's earliest "Benevolent Asylum" - for the destitute and elderly!

The museum featured some works of art by the son of the local postmaster in the early 1900's.

Garnet Agnew never became a major Australian artist, though, I gather, he is represented in the collections of both the Queensland and National galleries.

I knew his name because he was a friend of my grandfather, and I have inherited a small work done by him.

What particularly caught my eye in the museum's displays was a copy of a handwritten letter by Garnet's 7-year-old brother, "Laddie" (Noel), who had just received some gifts from "Ivy and Mrs Slater".

Mrs Slater was my grandmother.

Two days later, Laddie Agnew left Stradbroke forever, to make a short trip across Moreton Bay to Peel Island.

He had been diagnosed with Hansen's Disease (leprosy), then incurable.

He remained there until his death, some thirty years later.

To me, this was a very personal reminder of our Order's origins, and the importance of the good works done by us all today. We can be very proud of our history.

Best Season's greetings to you all at this time, in the sincere hope that 2021 will provide speedy emergence from this year's great challenges.

Confraternally yours,



Chev David Slater AM KLJ OMLJ
Chancellor

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Ms Elizabeth Scrivener OAM CLJ | President



Our members have not ventured out much over these past 6 months, and because of Covid restrictions our annual Fundraising Dinner was cancelled, so we wrote to all our supporters and asked for a donation instead of attending the dinner. The wonderful response we received was so gratifying.

We did gather for an extremely pleasant informal luncheon in October at the home of Jim and Heather Leedman. We were delighted to celebrate Dame Joan Kitchin's 87th birthday with her that day. We were also thankful for a generous donation to L'Arche from the Leedman's on that occasion.

Our Patronal Festival service will be held at Wesley Uniting Church on Wednesday 16 December, followed by dinner at The Commonwealth Club.

Thank you to our supporters

The Order of St Lazarus has been a much-valued and faithful supporter and sponsor of L'Arche Genesaret since 1990.

In addition to raising substantial donations each year through their annual dinner at the Commonwealth Club, members of the Order of St Lazarus faithfully commit to ongoing friendship through regular attendance at Open Prayer, visiting our members and households, and organising an annual BBQ and cricket match

To everyone - best wishes for a joyous Christmas celebration.



Dame Joan Kitchin's 87th birthday Celebration, October 2020



L'Arche annual BBQ and cricket match, September 2019



Jim and Heather Leedman in their home for our informal lunch gathering.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

NEW SOUTH WALES

Chev Martin Dowling KLJ | President



The NSW Commandery has had a very restricted calendar this year. Our major event for the year, our Annual Fundraising Gala Dinner, was cancelled.

Thankfully, we were able to hold a Charity Fundraising Breakfast to raise funds for two special charities; Saint George Hospital University Medical Centre and Kids First Lebanon. Bernadette Azizi was prompted into urgent action after the explosion in Beirut Lebanon that caused mass destruction and loss of life. The two charities were chosen because of their oncology work with children and the ward where chemotherapy treatments were conducted at St George Hospital was completely destroyed. These two charities fit very well with Hospitaller origins of the Order. Bernadette managed to put the event on in just three weeks of extraordinary effort. The generosity of the Lebanese community in attendance, in their support of the homeland, was wonderful to see. More than \$32,000 was raised at the event. All Members of the NSW Commandery are very proud of Bernadette's success.

An excellent video detailing the impact of the explosion on the people of Beirut and in particular St George Hospital and Kids First can be found at the following link: https://www.instagram.com/tv/CDn_b0Dp7_X/?igshid=lpgf0bcvird3

It is pleasing to be able to report that despite the enormous impact caused by the cancellation of our traditional fundraising events, our Commandery still plans to support our traditional charities, Bush Children's Education Foundation, Sisters of Mercy - Mother Teresa Nuns, The Company of the Good Shepherd and Country Hope, with our usual contribution of \$10,000 each. This will see charitable giving for 2020 of \$72,000 and increase of 80% year on year.

40th Anniversary Celebration of the Order in Australia – October 2021

The first mass of the Order was celebrated at St John's Gordon on 17th of October 1981. The NSW Commandery will be holding a National Event in October 2021 to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Order in Australia. This is a significant event in the life of the Order in Australia and the Grand Prior wants to hold a stand-alone event in NSW to mark this milestone. Planning is underway and more details will be forthcoming. It has been difficult to formalise plans during this time of Covid-19 but there is an expectation that this event will proceed in October 2021.

The NSW Commandery is producing on behalf of the Grand Priory a Forty Year History book of the Order in Australia which will be printed early in the New Year. It is being coordinated by Bill Killinger and written by Matthew Glozier an accomplished and highly recognised historian.

We wish all the Commanderies a Happy and Holy Christmas and New Year.



Hilda De Luca, Bernadette Azizi, Pauline and Martin Dowling



REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

QUEENSLAND



Chev Ron Campbell Phillips KOTJ KLJ | President

As usual it's all fun in the sun up here....the 2020 AGM in March saw all the Executive volunteer and retain their positions with the exceptions of Elizabeth "Bissie" Roberts becoming Hon Secretary and myself accepting an extension of a further year as President. The Commandery held 5 meetings during the year, 2 of which were optional Zoom meetings. In September we held our first meeting at our new venue St Augustine's Anglican Church in the "leafy" suburb of Hamilton. In February Members Dame Regina McGuire DLJ OMLJ was promoted to CMLJ and Dame Diane Andrews DLJ was awarded the OMLJ and Fr Harry Reuss OStJ AChLJ was promoted to ChLJ. The 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours saw our Commandery Members Chancellor Chev David G Slater AM KLJ OMLJ awarded the AM and our Herald Capt. David Ellis OAM CLJ MNSC the OAM. We are very proud of them and congratulate them both on their honours.

The total donations received in 2020 amounted to \$50,500 which included a serendipitous generous donation from Primrose Lady Potter AC CMRI DGCLJ DGCM LJ GCrLJ and together with proceeds of our very

successful virtual raffle fundraiser (a week in Dame Gina McG's fab pad in Noosa) and other gratefully received anonymous donations. The monies have been distributed to our charities namely Wedgetail Hospice, Communitify (refugee aid), Trinity Pantry (hungry and homeless), Catholic Psychiatric Care, Second Chance (homeless women), Mission to Seafarers and \$7,000 each to our two Chaplains to distribute to the needy as they see fit.

The Patronal Day Church Service is to be held at our new "home" St Augustine's Anglican Church, Charlton Street Hamilton on Sunday 13th December at 10.30am, with a morning tea to follow at Dame Regina McGuire's home (just down the street) at 6 Charlton Street Hamilton 4007.

My grateful thanks to all Commandery Members for their continuing support and enthusiasm for the Order, despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

Elizabeth Roberts | Secretary

Aside from support to our regular charities (Communitify refugee programme, Catholic Psychiatric Pastoral Care, Wedgetail Palliative Care Retreat, Anglican Trinity Pantry, Second Chance, Mission for Seafarers – care packages), the Queensland Commandery voted to give our Chaplains, Father Anthony Mellor and Father Harry Reuss, \$7000 each, that they might have funds to distribute to specific areas of need within their parish and ministry.

The Very Reverend Father Anthony Mellor, Dean of the Cathedral of St Stephen Brisbane will make decisions about his allocation with St James College, Spring Hill in mind. St James College was the first catholic boys school in Queensland and one of the first three in Moreton Bay, educating children from poor migrant families. In 1893, the Christian Brothers took over the running of the school. Now over 120 years later the touchstones of liberating education, gospel spirituality, inclusive community, justice and solidarity are as relevant at St James College today as they were in 1893. The school is known to be one where all students

are welcome and every effort is made to meet their needs. Now co-educational, St James College is enriched by families of many faith traditions and promotes strong ecumenical and interfaith understanding.

Father Harry Reuss has a parish in the Gold Coast hinterland and is guided in his decisions to distribute his allocation by the 25th Chapter of St Matthew on the Last Judgement, only the day before, particularly verses 35-36: – *'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me'*.

Father Harry set about finding where he could place donations to match these Scriptural imperatives. As Parish Priest of St Margaret's Church Nerang and The Church of the Good Shepherd, Mudgeeraba, Father Harry did not have far too look. Here are some of his 2020 allocations.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

QUEENSLAND continued

School breakfast and lunch:

Over many years' St Margaret's and the Rotary Club of Southport have donated provisions for the children at Nerang High School who for one reason or another arrive at school without having breakfast or a lunch box. Southport Rotarian Elaine Williams and valued member of St Margaret's Church is involved with the Nerang High food program.

COVID-19 lockdown put a full stop to the usual donations and when Father Harry delivered \$1000 to ensure continuation of the school food project, Elaine replied with grateful thanks saying 'Pennies from Heaven. How can we thank the members of St Lazarus'.

The Octogenarian:

This is the 21st Century Australia; Jesus is not with us in person, but in Spirit and in the bodies and souls of his followers. At the Nerang High School an inter-denominational committee provides funds towards the School Chaplain about whom Father Harry is proud to say, has a unique way of connecting with the students and of standing beside those who come from difficult family situations. Mr. Geoff Hay is the St Margaret's Church representative on the inter-denominational Chaplain's committee and Geoff gladly and humbly received \$1000.00 from St Lazarus to continue supporting the Nerang High School Chaplain's (*Chappie*) Ministry.

Scooter girl:

Fifteen kilometers south from Nerang is the boutique Church of the Good Shepherd, Mudgeeraba. Gail is a single mother with two autistic children, well known in the parish as a mother hen to others in similar circumstances and anyone else in need. Her only mode of transport is an electric scooter.

Having known Gail for nearly two years Father Harry has observed her good works first hand. Gail even helps the aged folk with her whipper snipper and gets Father Harry to help cart away their rubbish in the Parish trailer. Father Harry directed \$1000.00 to a special fund to be administered by long time Parish Administrator, Aileen Sinclair and himself to be put toward Gail's good works.

It wasn't long before Gail's electric scooter and her only means of transport, broke down. Silvana Sicuro, an Italian born in Egypt and St Margaret's Mudgeeraba handyman, undertook the repairs. Alas after another month the scooter stopped again. A new electric switch and starter was needed. The scooter was

loaded onto the Parish trailer bound for Southport where the Electric Bike Specialist replaced the worn-out parts. The \$230 repair cost came from the St Lazarus \$1000 fund set up to support Gail's charity projects, in this instance to keep Gail on the road dispensing her acts of useful kindness throughout her local community.

In St Matthew Chapter 26 Jesus is at the home of Simon the Leper, in a beautiful touch of compassion a woman with an alabaster jar of ointment soothingly pours it over Jesus' head; only to be rebuked by the disciples. 'Why this waste' they asked indignantly? Jesus replied, 'Why do you trouble this woman? For she has done a beautiful thing for me; for you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me'.

The Surfers Paradise Anglican Crisis Care:

Sandwiched between the Catholic Church and the Jewish Synagogue in Hamilton Avenue, is St John's Church which for 50 years has provided midday meals, shower facilities and toiletries for the disadvantaged of Surfers Paradise. The Anglican Crisis Care complements the work of the famous 'Rosies'.

The pandemic has put paid to the usual midday sit down meals, so instead lunch boxes are served from 11.30-12.00noon, Monday to Friday with coffee and muffins on Friday morning. The Management very gladly accepted St Lazarus support of \$1000.

Animal Shelter:

Father Harry saw a few raised eyebrows when he informed members that he had placed \$1000 with the Animal Shelter at Southport. As an animal lover who does not have pets, Father Harry nevertheless applauds the work of the Animal Shelter, especially acknowledging the therapeutic nature of animals for those who have been confined to barracks during this 'shut down' year. There is a garden statue of St Francis at the Animal Shelter. Visiting the Shelter with Rebecca Byrnes, their Corporate Relationship and Fundraising Manager, Father Harry sadly witnessed animals that had been abused by their owners and thanked God for the rehabilitation that the Shelter provides for God's creatures both 'Great and Small'.

Back to the Last Judgement of St Matthew 25.35-46 where the King exclaims twice: 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'. vv 4.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

QUEENSLAND continued

Father Harry has yet to place the last two x \$1000 donations but will do so when he discerns any special emergency need before Christmas when we celebrate the Incarnation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Fr. Harry has been heard to remark that if you want inspiration of an Octogenarian Google Polycarp of Smyrna AD 65-155. *'Four score and six years have I served him, and He has never done me injury; how can I now blaspheme my King and Saviour'*



Mission for Seafarers - Christmas care packs



Mary Grimshaw draws successful fundraising raffle (widow of The Very Reverend Arthur Grimshaw dec member)



Animal shelter at Southport . Rebecca Byrnes receives \$1000 donation from Father Harry Reus. Statue St Francis.



Scooter girl Gail. Scootering and assisting people in her community again with support from Father Harry Reuss.



REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Chev Dr Ross Sweet AM KLJ | President

I ended my last report (July 2020) with the words "... We look forward to rejoining our normal activities as soon as possible."

Some six months later, it is still my wish!

Most aspects of the Order's activity in South Australia continue to be affected by COVID-19, but not all.

Grateful appreciation is extended to our Almoner, Micheal Neale, for arranging the "virtual quiz night" which was successful in raising funds but also in maintaining the profile of the Order. Also to our Chaplain, David Thornton-Wakeford, for leading our postponed "Quiet Day".

Nonetheless we were able to meet face to face (with precautions) during this time.

Apart from our concern about the vulnerability of many of our members, our chaplain has been strong in his support of all members with homilies and poetry (of his own and others) regularly circulated. Some of these are contained in this report.

We have maintained pastoral care of all members, particularly our Emeritus members. The steadily increasing number of them is an issue for the commandery. With the recent granting of Emeritus status to Ian Chesterman and Mons. Robert Aitken, we now have 11 Emeritus members, 21 active members and three "postulants" awaiting investiture. This is clearly a challenge for our Membership committee.

We have been able to donate to several charities in the last six months; \$10,000 to "Cure4CF", the research foundation for Cystic Fibrosis, \$5,000 to "Backpacks 4 SA Kids", a charity providing backpacks for disadvantaged children going to school, teenagers who are homeless and for adults moving into accommodation after being homeless, and \$5,000 to "Catherine House", a charity for women with mental health problems, homelessness or suffering from domestic violence.

This was very pleasing, and was, in part, aided by the generous gift from our Grand Prior Emeritus, Lady Primrose Potter AC CMRI DGCLJ DGCMLJ GCrLJ.

Chev Dr Ian Chesterman has been awarded the Silver Cross of the Order for his outstanding service to the order, both in South Australia and Nationally. The Grand Prior refers to Ian's service in his letter. Congratulations Ian for a well deserved award!

November brought the most draconian "lock-down" of South Australia since we first experienced the pandemic. Although it was also the most short lived, it forced the cancellation of our St. Lazarus Feast Day service, including the participation of the Grand Prior and Sue, and our last commandery meeting of 2020.

I wish to thank most sincerely all our commandery members for their patience, understanding and compliance with the constraints of this most challenging year.

Thank you also to those who have continued to care for all members at this time.

I shall close, as I began, by trusting that we may look forward to rejoining our normal activities as soon as possible.

I wish all a happy and holy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Atavis et Armis

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA continued

PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS IN THESE ISOLATING AND UNCERTAIN TIMES

A Prayer:

God of searching and knowing, your people Israel faced famine and wilderness, and your church has known persecution and hardship. Be close to all your children in this time of bewilderment and fear. Make this time of cessation and idleness one in which your Spirit reveals new ways to be together, fresh discoveries in worship, different gestures of care, innovative forms of compassion. Encourage the vulnerable, comfort the impoverished, inspire the anxious and give wisdom to those who govern. Light up our hearts that we may see the abundance of what is still beautiful and true, not be captivated by what is lost and absent, and find new gifts in ourselves and one another. In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, who knew what it meant to be alone. Amen.

JESUS STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND

*A leper came up to Jesus
And kneeling said to him
"If you will, make me whole"
Moved with pity
Jesus stretched out his hand*

*A great storm arose upon the sea
The boat swamped by the waves
The disciples cried out in fear
Moved with pity
Jesus stretched out his hand*

*"My little daughter is near death"
Jairus begged him come and see
People wept and wailed in anguish
Moved with pity
Jesus stretched out his hand*

*He saw a beggar blind from birth
His spit and dirt made mud
God's work would be revealed that day
Moved with pity
Jesus stretched out his hand*

*One Friday the sky turned black
People gazed with awe and tears
"Father forgive" they heard him say
Moved with pity
Jesus stretched out his hands*

*In this dark hour of global crisis
We cannot comprehend the scale
But across the nations of earth- still
Moved with pity
Jesus stretches out his hands*



MAKE YOUR HOUSE A HOME

*An accident confined me to my lounge chair for two weeks
I spent long hours getting to know the space in which I sat
The contents of the china cabinet and paintings on the wall
The family photos full of memories to ponder and relish*

*I would also gaze through the window at our front garden
And watch parrots munching gum blossoms in the trees
The postie making daily rounds on her motor scooter
People walking their dogs and children on roller blades*

*I had lived in that house for seven years and never knew it
Took it all for granted, just came and went and ate and slept
Heavens -I take much more interest in a simple glass of wine
I behold its colour, nose its bouquet, savour its piquancy*

*I know that this is only an earthly tent in which I dwell
That I should not place too much store on worldly things
But I will cherish home and family while I still breathe air
And get ready for that mansion not made with human hands*

David Thornton-Wakeford

David Thornton-Wakeford

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA continued



\$10,000 to "Cure4CF" Ross Sweet, Suzy Dimaline, Margaret Heathcote, Jessica Buckley



\$5,000 to "Backpacks 4 SA Kids" Ross Sweet, Kelly Barker, Margaret Heathcote



\$5,000 to "Catherine House" Ross Sweet, Linda Matthews, Margaret Heathcote

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

TASMANIA

Chev Richard Pringle-Jones KLJ OMLJ | President



Membership

The Tasmanian Commandery has 15 Active members, 2 Emeritus members and 2 Inactive members. Last year, the Tasmanian Commandery commenced a new membership initiative. A number of proposals have been received and there will be follow up with those expressing interest in the membership of the Order.

Cancer Care Coordinator Support - Gibson Ward

The funding of the Cancer Care Coordinator at the Gibson Unit, St John's Campus, Calvary Health Care, now in its fifth year, continued as the major focus of the Tasmanian Commandery in 2020. In September, the Tasmanian Commandery made a further donation of \$5,500 in support of the role, bringing the total of donations in support of the Cancer Care Coordinator at the Gibson Ward to \$49,000.

The Commandery is currently investigating, in conjunction with Calvary Health Care, a process to facilitate the delivery of therapeutic massage to provide comfort and relief to critically, some terminally, ill patients in the Gibson Ward.

Fundraising in a COVID-19 Year

Despite COVID-19 being effectively suppressed in Tasmania, restrictions on gathering made it clear it would not be prudent to plan on holding a fundraising function in 2020. However, the Commandery has ongoing funding commitments and consequently an "invitation to donate" was sent to our supporters using the familiar format of our fundraising invitation as a reminder of the occasion. We were pleased and grateful for the responses received with almost \$8,000 received to date.

Chaplains' Message

There probably has been no year in living memory like 2020. Who would have thought that a virus could take such a grip on the world as the Coronavirus has! So many lives have been lost, so many livelihoods affected, so many futures uncertain. In the course of nine or so months our daily routines have been severely affected and our accepted and established ways of life have come almost to a grinding halt. We find ourselves looking for new ways to live the daily routines of life. We simply have to get used to alternate ways of living and relating. So much that we have taken for granted: gathering in public places, assembling in confined spaces, shaking hands, embracing, eating in restaurants, drinking in bars, attending a sporting event or a musical recital, attending church, must all give way to a much more restricted and cautious way of mingling and interacting. As human beings whose natural inclination is to interrelate and socialise, we must learn to be much more restrained and more discerning.

As Christians who place their faith in Jesus Christ who took on our human flesh and embraced the human condition, we sometimes struggle to understand where God is in such a challenging and confronting dilemma. However, from earliest times God has always been there as our protector and defence.

The words of Psalm 91 remind us that :
No disaster can overtake you, no plague come near your tent: he will put you in his angels' charge to guard you wherever you go.

St Paul in his Letter to the Romans (8:35-36) gives us a similar assurance:

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked.

These prayers from the Anglican tradition are all centered on the current pandemic and may be helpful to us as we try to make sense in these difficult times:

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend to sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake.
Amen.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

TASMANIA continued

God of compassion,

be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness,
be their light; through him who suffered alone on the
cross, but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The following prayers from the Catholic tradition may
also be of help to us as we endeavour to call upon
God in this time of crisis:

1. Most Merciful and Triune God,
we come to You in our weakness.
We come to You in our fear.
We come to You with trust.
For You alone our hope.
We place before You the disease present in our
world.
We turn to You in our time of need.

Bring wisdom to doctors.
Give understanding to scientists.
Endow caregivers with compassion and generosity.
Bring healing to those who are ill.
Protect those who are most at risk.
Give comfort to those who have lost a loved one.
Welcome those who have died into Your Eternal
Home.
Stabilise our communities.
Unite us in our compassion.
Remove all fear from our hearts.
Fill us with confidence in Your care.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten the minds of women
and men of medical science who are working to find
a solution to this viral infection. Guide their research
and help them discover what you provide in creation,
sure ways of control, protection, inoculation, and
healing. Strengthen them in their tiring work and
enrich in them the virtue of hope. Amen.

Appointment new Vice Rector Corpus Christ College, Melbourne

Father Brian Nichols, a chaplain of the Tasmanian Commandery since 2004 and a priest in the Archdiocese of Hobart for 25 years, has accepted the role of Vice Rector of Corpus Christi College, Melbourne. Father Brian, a much loved and respected member of his current Parish of Sandy Bay and of the Tasmanian Commandery will be sorely missed. However, we wish him well in his important new role and trust that one day he will return to Tasmania.

Patronal Feast Day 2020

The Tasmanian Commandery will celebrate the Feast of St Lazarus of Jerusalem on Saturday, 12 December 2020, with a service at Holy Spirit Church, Sandy Bay, followed by dinner at the University Club, University of Tasmania. We had planned to have as our guests, Grand Prior Chev Hon. Gavin Fielding and Mrs Susan Fielding and possibly Secretary General Peter Bennison (who is also a member of the Tasmanian Commandery) and his wife, Julie Read. However, COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented their travel. We trust that 2021 will bring welcome opportunities to bring our Commanderies and members together.



REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

VICTORIA

Chev John Molnar OAM KLJ OMLJ | President



It will come as little surprise to anyone that the planned activities of the Victorian Commandery were postponed this year. This was sad given the extensive planning and preparation that had been undertaken by the executive and the National Chapter Sub-committee. Even though Victoria was subjected to some of the harshest and longest of CoVID-19 lockdowns, we were able to achieve some impressive results.

Sad news

2020 has not only presented new challenges but has also delivered some sad news. In May this year Dame Barbara Hamer DLJ passed away. While she was an Emeritus member for several years, she previously had made a significant contribution as the Almoner and subsequently as the Hospitaller.

Victorian Commandery also lost two more members Chevalier Willoughby James Bailey AO GCLJ GCM LJ GCrLJ and Monsignor Tony Toms EGCLJ KMLJ. Both Tony and Will had made significant contributions to the Order not only here in Victoria, but at the national and international levels. The obituaries on the Order's website summarise their various roles and contributions to the Order. As Commandery President, I will certainly miss their words of wisdom, assistance and support. May they rest in peace.

Fund-raising

Our Almoner, Mrs Robin Richards CLJ, set a fund-raising target of \$20,000 for 2020. By encouraging members to either donate or to make a pledge to help in the Order (in a way that suited them), I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Victorian membership has exceeded this target. Also, over the next 12 months other members have promised to assist the Order in a variety of ways to help with attracting new members and hosting various smaller events.

Support of Hospitaller Projects

Not only was this a pleasing result, it also has enabled the Victorian Commandery to make donations to various organisations. At the October 2020 meeting the following amounts were agreed:

- Anglicare \$16,000;
- Spafford Centre (via Anglican Overseas Aid) \$17,000;
- Green Cross Project Inc \$5,000;
- The Wellington \$12,500;
- St Mary's House of Welcome \$5,000; and
- Donation for the upkeep of the Chapel of Our Lord and St Lazarus - St Peter's Eastern Hill \$1,500.

National Chapter

We are very excited to be hosts to the National Chapter meeting to be held here in Melbourne next year. We have developed a survey this year to help guide our efforts. Clearly our program will need to change to reflect new COVID-19 protocols and requirements. Therefore, the insights gathered will help inform the National Chapter Sub-Committee with its planning. So, I look forward to seeing many of you next year here in Marvellous Melbourne.

Other smaller projects

Despite Victoria being COVID-19 free for many weeks now, this will have a profound impact on our ability to fund-raise for next year. While we are still planning for next year, Victoria is likely to pivot to smaller fund-raising activities (at least for the first half of 2021).

An activity led by our Almoner was the OLI face masks. We were happy to supply over 150 face masks. Not only were masks provided to Victorian Commandery members, but they were also sold to OLI members in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

Finally, there has been a certain amount of innovation occurring within the Victorian Commandery, now with various members happily donating various items to make up Christmas hampers. With many orders taken before the hampers have been finalised, this appears to be another important activity.

Advent Blessings

As we come into the Advent season, I wish you and yours every blessing for a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Safe, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.



Victorian Almoner, Robin Richards worked with the designers to come up with an OLI face mask.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

VICTORIA continued



Monsignor Tony Toms with former Grand Prior the late the Hon Chev Barry O'Keefe AM QC GCSG KC*HS GCLJ GCMLJ



St Mary's House of Welcome volunteer helping to distribute the meals allocated each week during lockdown.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMANDERIES

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



The Reverend Dr John Shepherd AM ChLJ OMLJ | President

The Western Australian Commandery has been fortunate in that restrictions to our meetings and gatherings have not been as stringent as in other cities. We had to miss our April and June meetings, but have now resumed normal programming. At the conclusion of our August meeting, we gathered at the home of our Grand Prior, the Hon Chev Gavin and Sue Fielding, and enjoyed their hospitality.

At our most recent Commandery Meeting we authorised distributions to organisations in special need of support at this time: L'Arche (\$5000), Just Manna (\$5000), Mum's Cottage (\$5000), Christ Church Hardship Fund (\$3000) and Doors Wide Open (\$3000). These distributions were enhanced by the generous contributions of Grand Prior Emeritus Lady Potter and Julian Burt CLJ, for which we are immensely grateful. They will be invaluable in providing assistance to those whose domestic situations has been severely impacted by the current difficult circumstances.

On Sunday 18 October members of the Commandery attended Choral Evensong at St George's Anglican Cathedral. The preacher was our Anglican Chaplain, Fr Peter Boyland.

Because of renovations to the building, the annual St Lazarus service in December relocates from the historic chapel in the East Perth cemetery to Christ Church Claremont, where, thanks to the generosity of the Rector, Fr Peter, we have been holding our meetings for several years.

It would be an understatement to say that the effect of the COVID-19 virus has forced us to reflect on the centrality of community to our Christian faith and the role of the Order in reaching out to those who have become isolated, with little or no contact with anybody else.

From the very beginning, the majority of Christians saw themselves as belonging to a movement that was expressed in groups. They didn't think of themselves as isolated individual believers, existing separately. Christianity

wasn't a do-it-yourself religion which you could pursue on your own. And when the church in Corinth looked as though it might just take the individual approach, Paul landed on them like a ton of bricks. He wrote them a long, disciplinary letter and used the analogy of the body and its different limbs and organs. There could be no body, he said, unless there were more than one member. If there were only one, there would be no body.

I'm not sure how many members you need to make a body, but I'm guessing it would be useful to have a head, a trunk, a digestive system, some arms and legs and some blood pumped around by a heart. The thing is, you've got to have more than one bit to make a body. Unless you're a jellyfish, I suppose, or something like that.

The point is that being alone isn't the Christian way.

A few years ago I was looking through a schedule of conferences to be held in Oxford over the summer, and I saw listed a Conference for Hermits. At first I thought this was against the spirit of the thing, but then, on reflection, it rang true. Our life is meant to be corporate, not individual. We need the corporate aspect of life in community to become fully human. The Old Testament writers regarded loneliness as the greatest misfortune. It was the curse of Cain.

The French-Catholic existentialist Gabriel Marcel once said that the reality of our personal existence can be fulfilled only as we engage with communal life. Outside a community, he said, we can become obsessed with our personal, private needs and ambitions in an introverted, self-indulgent way. It's only within the mutual interaction of a community that we can fully realise our human potential.

These difficult times have helped to highlight for us why the work of the Order of St Lazarus is so important. Our mission of service to the disadvantaged, deprived and isolated in our society is now of the utmost importance.



Members of the Western Australian Commandery gather together outside St George's Cathedral Perth after Evensong on Sunday 18 October

A History of the Order in Australia | Production Progress

Chev Bill Killinger AM KLJ CMLJ | NSW Commandery

The history of the Order in Australia is currently being written and is due to be finished and printed early in 2021.

The publication of the book will be followed by a celebration in Sydney later next year marking the establishment of the Order in Australia forty years ago.

While the very beginnings of the Order in Australia actually trace back to 1979, the 17th October 2021 will mark the fortieth anniversary of the first official church service held by the Order in Australia at St John's Anglican Church Gordon NSW.

At 40 years we are still a young organisation in Australia – but we are part of that worldwide order that in 2021 will be 923 years old!

We should consider the old maxim: life begins at 40 – and relish the following years up to our 50 year jubilee and beyond!

We in the New South Wales Commandery, are proud of the leadership that was effective in 1981 in establishing the Order here. It calls out for recognition at this time and not to wait for future milestones.

It will be exciting for the whole Australian membership to join in the celebration and can be seen as a motivational event which will be very beneficial to the Order in Australia at this time.



For actually writing and compiling this forty year history we are indeed greatly indebted to a person of great distinction in the field of history. **Matthew Glozier** took on the task of producing this book in a totally honorary capacity. Our gratitude is expressed here with great appreciation.

How fortunate are we to be able to engage Matthew for this task. Matthew has a most impressive collection of credentials:

- He is widely published as a military historian, interested in military, social and religious aspects
- He was made a fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2009
- He is the Hon Archivist and Official Historian for the Venerable Order of St John and St John Ambulance NSW

- He is the official Historian of the Australian Air Force Cadets organisation
- President for the Sydney Society of Scottish History
- History Master at Sydney Grammar School
- Co founder of the Huguenot Society of Australia

The work by Matthew is overseen by a **Steering Group** consisting of :



Peter Bennison



John Bishop



Ian Chesterman



Bp Richard Hurford

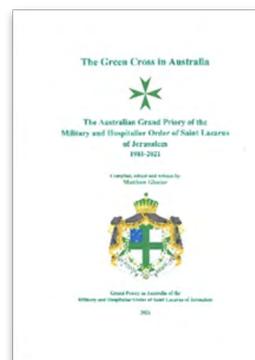


Bill Killinger



Michael White

We have been collecting material from archives and current members. If you have anything of interest to add to the history please contact Bill Killinger – bkillingeroptusnet.com.au



Mark your diaries for October 2021

Stay in downtown Sydney
 Commemoration Service St John's Gordon
 Gala Black Tie Dinner
 Lunchtime Harbour Cruise

Registration called early next year

Monsignor Anthony K Toms EGCLJ KMLJ (1938-2020)

A reflection from Vice President - GCPI, Dr Walter Uhlenbruch AO KLJ OMLJ



During his long life, Monsignor Toms has served many organisations in an exemplary manner and the Order of St Lazarus shall always remain greatly indebted to him for his many and valuable contributions.

The late Major-General Duncan Francis AO OBE KLJ, then President of the ACT Commandery), introduced Monsignor Toms to the ecumenical and charitable ideals of the Order of St Lazarus. So it was that he initially joined the ACT Commandery of the Order as Chaplain in 1995. Following his posting to Seymour/Puckapunyal he transferred to the Victorian Commandery in 1996.

He provided spiritual advice to the then Grand Prior Chev Tony Sallmann AO LVO GCLJ GCMLJ and was awarded the Officer of the Order of Merit in 2002. He became Deputy National Chaplain in 2003 and Chaplain of Jurisdiction. He served as President of the Victorian Commandery from 2009 – 2014.

In 2003 he joined Green Cross Project Inc. where he served as Deputy President from 2003 to 2017. Although he became unwell, he continued to serve on the Committee and has, in fact, remained as a member until his end. Over many years he played an active role in the outreach-bus liaison team in the western suburbs, initially in cooperation with the Western Region Health Centre and subsequently with cohealth. Former Chairman of GCPI, Dr Walter Uhlenbruch AO KLJ OMLJ said that *“we will always remember Tony in our hearts as a faithful servant of our Lord, an erudite priest and scholar, a great friend”*.

At the invitation of the then Chair of the International Public Relations Committee, Chev Klaus-Peter Pokolm, he became its Vice-Chair for ten years. In recognition of his exemplary service, the then Grand Master made him a Knight of Merit in 2011. With great enthusiasm he also worked for the introduction of an internet website for the Order and for the Grand Priory of Australia and was its webmaster until 2016.

From 2013 to 2016 Mons Anthony served as National Chaplain of the Grand Priory of Australia and in 2014

the Grand Master of the Order bestowed on him the Ecclesiastical Grand Cross.

While Monsignor Toms made significant contributions at the national and international levels, he also served the Order at the local level too and was the Catholic Chaplain in Victoria from the moment he arrived in Victoria. In 2010 he became the President of the Victorian Commandery.

As President, Monsignor Toms continued the tradition of leading a harmonious Commandery, which increased its support for good works and its membership.

Victorian Commandery members will remember the Quiet Days at his home in Seymour in March every year or how he would always supply the hams for fund-raising events. Whether standing at the BBQ or giving thoughtful Lenten talks Monsignor Toms was always willing to serve others, as Christ had served. For his work for the underprivileged in Thailand he was recognised by the King of Thailand with the Boy Scout Commendation Medal.

Monsignor Toms was deeply religious, warm-hearted hard-working, generous, gifted, forthright, uncompromisingly honest, charmingly diplomatic, a man with a great sense of humour, a superb cook and writer of recipes, and full of compassion for those fallen on hard times.

Victorian Commandery President, Chev John Molnar OAM KLJ OMLJ said *“Mons was full of life and laughter. He had a deep knowledge of his faith and was able to make difficult theological issues seem simple. His infectious giggle will live in my memory. He will be sorely missed.”*

The Victorian Commandery has no doubt that Monsignor Tony Toms has more than doubled the five talents that the Lord has entrusted him with and, with Matthew 25:23:

“His Lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”

VALE

Chevalier Willoughby James Bailey AO GCLJ GCMLJ GCrLJ (1933-2020)

Chevalier Willoughby James Bailey AO GCLJ GCMLJ GCrLJ, Grand Prior Emeritus of the Australian Grand Priory died aged 87 on the 13th August 2020 at his home city of Geelong in Victoria. He is survived by his wife, Dame Dorothy Bailey DLJ and his three daughters.

He was born on 29th March 1933, the son of William Henry Bailey and Alice May (nee Willoughby). As a child he lived with his parents in Murrumbeena, Victoria. In April 1956 he married Dame Dorothy, whom he met at the Anglican Church in Murrumbeena.

He was educated at Dandenong High School and thereafter at the Chisholm Institute of Technical and Further Education at Dandenong. In later years he attended both the Harvard and the Australian Staff Colleges.

In January 1950, at the age of almost 18 he commenced employment with the English Scottish & Australian Bank (later to become the Australia & New Zealand Bank) where he was to remain for the rest of his working life. He began employment as a ledger keeper at the Oakleigh branch of the Bank and thereafter worked his way through the ranks of the Bank in Victoria, South Australia, New Zealand and London. In 1983 he was appointed the Chief General Manager and appointed to the Board of the Bank. In 1984 he was made the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Bank. In 1988 he became the Deputy Chairman of the Board and Group Chief Executive, a position he held until he retired in 1992. In addition, he was for a time, either the President or Chairman of the Australian Institute of Bankers, the Australian Bankers' Association and of the AsiaPacific Bankers Club. In his work as a banker he oversaw the introduction of electronic banking. Indeed, while he was its Chief Executive Officer the ANZ Bank was the first Australian bank to create an electronic branch.

Apart from his banking career Chevalier Will Bailey was engaged in many other commercial and community activities. He gave freely of his expertise and business acumen for the benefit of the arts, educational opportunities for youth and for medical research as well as being active in the Anglican community, principally in the Anglican Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Amongst the many community organisations in which he was involved, he was a director of the Australian Opera, President of the Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, Chairman of the Geelong Gallery Foundation, Chairman of the Open Learning Agency of Australia, a director of The Queen's Trust for Young Australians, and treasurer of the Baker Medical research Institute. In 2001, with others, he founded the Lazarus Centre for marginalized people in Victoria (now the Green Cross Project Inc.) He and his family continued to be generous donors to this and many other charitable causes up until the time of his death.

In 1989 he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for service to commerce and business, particularly in the field of banking and in 1991 the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa was conferred on him by the Monash University for service to the community.

Amongst his personal activities for some years he and his family ran a sheep and cattle farm and a vineyard at Strath Creek, Victoria. He was also a collector of vintage cars, most notably Bristol motor cars.

Chevalier Will Bailey was admitted to the Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem (Victorian Commandery) in 1993. He served as the Secretary and as the President of the Commandery. After a period as the National Almoner he became Chancellor of the Australian Grand Priory in 2007. He then succeeded Hon Chevalier Barry O'Keefe, as Grand Prior of Australia in 2012 and held that post until 2018. He was knighted in 2002, promoted to a Knight Commander in 2010, and further promoted to a Knight Grand Cross of the Order in 2012. He received the Gold Cross of Merit of the Order in 2016 and was further honoured by the Grand Master with the Knight Grand Cross of Merit of St Lazarus in 2018 as well as being recognised as a Grand Prior Emeritus.

Chevalier Willoughby Bailey was a firm and forthright individual and a practising Christian who did much to advance the cause of Christianity by word and by deed.



**Chev Hon. Gavin Fielding AM GCLJ KMLJ
Grand Prior**

The 900th Anniversary of the death of the Blessed Gerard Founder of the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem

The Blessed Gerard, Founder of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, and Founder of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, died in Jerusalem on the 3rd September, 1120.

On the 3rd September, 2020 these two Orders commemorated the 900th Anniversary of the death of their Founder. Here in Australia the privations and constraints of the Covid 19 Pandemic did not allow the Order of St Lazarus to hold public observances of this significant landmark anniversary.

Nonetheless, it is hoped that when possible - perhaps in December if Commanderies are able to hold their annual St Lazarus Day liturgies, they will take the opportunity to reflect on the remarkable impact The Blessed Gerard had on the life of our Order.

In 1098, Gerard (master of a hospital within the walls of Jerusalem) took over the leper hospital outside the north wall (established centuries earlier by St Basil) and this hospital was dedicated to St Lazarus - thus Blessed Gerard is cited as the first Master of the Order of Saint Lazarus.

We find in him the typical example of those active mystics who are not people with great projects and plans laid far in advance, but who can meet the challenges of the moment and at times even foresee them. An event as abnormal in its consequences as a Crusade does not disturb Gerard. He adjusts himself to it and at his own risk, according to his conscience; then he returns to his work moulding it to the new necessities. The act is accomplished and the basic aim is reached: the relief of bodies and the well-being of souls. It denotes the talented flexibility of Gerard's spirit as well as his great humility.

Prayer:

O God, who exalted Blessed Gerard because of his care for the poor and the sick, and through him founded the Leper hospital at Jerusalem, give us the grace of seeing, as he did, the image of your Son in our brothers and sisters. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. Amen.



**Right Reverend Richard Hurford OAM KStJ ECLJ,
National Chaplain**



SHOFAR

AN EVOCATION FROM THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



A Question so often asked at Christmas

Do you know what is the most frequently asked question on Christmas day and the days following - **WHAT DID YOU GET?** The consumer Christmas leads us to believe our BUYING is what truly makes Christmas special. Children watch and wait with wonder for those special toys that are technologically savvy and the price reflects these savvy features!

I invite you to hear something different. I invite you to hear, in the voices of angels, the haunting question that begins the last verse of the Christmas Carol "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Christina Rossetti - **WHAT CAN I GIVE?**

This question is often buried deep under the rubble of commercialized Christmas. We know the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, we hear it every year. It is nothing we do not know or have not heard. It is nothing really exciting or different than last year. Sometimes it is even hard to believe that St Luke's story of Jesus' birth is still held before us as the way our Christmas faith began. This way, with this story.

Yet the essence of Jesus' birth, of Mary and Joseph saying "Yes" to God, is deep within our DNA. The essence of Christmas is the mystery of God, God doing what God will do without the slightest concern of our Calenderizing dates for celebration. God comes into the world in utter freedom. There is nothing about Creation that compels God to take on human form. Yet God freely comes among us in this Holy Child Jesus. It is the Incarnation of God in Jesus that we celebrate, we seek to live each and

every day, and we remember his birth at this Holy time.

When we pay attention to the Christmas story, we get the sense that the cast of our faith story **was not necessarily ready**. The call of Mary to be the "God bearer", and Joseph to be faithful to Mary in this call of God, is not a new one. It has been the method and message of God to Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Hannah, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, and countless others. They are surprised to be chosen by God, surprised by the messenger, surprised by the message.

Why does God choose to invite this cast of characters? Why does God choose to invite you and me to this journey and life of faith? I do not know the answer to the mystery and movement of God in our life and in our world. I do know without doubt that **God makes something out of nothing ... God takes nowhere and makes it somewhere ... God takes nobody and makes them somebody**.

God's incursion through this holy birth crashes up against us each year. It crashes against our ongoing inhumanity which we carry out against one another in this life, so perplexing and troubling, so prejudiced and paralyzing. As we view the world's dysfunction we may be more ready to hear the question "**What can I give?**".

If we think about it, the Christ Child would be born in a land controlled by an Empire that he was not a member of. He would be born in the midst of a system where the protection received from the ruling powers that were enjoyed by some citizens

SHOFAR continued

but not by others. Certainly not by his mother, a homeless unwed pregnant young woman. And when Jesus **was** born it was such a threat to those powers, that King Herod eliminated the male children two years and under just to wipe out the Prince of Peace. All of that is to say we are living in times not that different from the Christmas story we hear each year when God came to us in Emmanuel, God chose to enter a time as violent and faithless as our own. Jesus came to save sinners right smack in the middle of the mess they had made of things.

So as members of the Order of St Lazarus in this country at this time, let us be **changed by God**. Because in the tender compassion of God, we are sent a Saviour - Christ the Lord. We remember the question **what can I give**, we are invited by our committed and convicted self, by this holy incursion into our lives to ask **what WILL I give?** This Christmas 2020 in the holy remembrance of Christ's birth may you and I embrace the Divine DNA that is in each and every one of us. May the days ahead engage us into sharing the love and light of God that is Christ to our world with humble

confidence each day. As the Christmas Carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter' continues, may we live as so ...

**What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can give him ... GIVE MY HEART.**

I wish you a joyous and fulfilling Christmas and New Year.



**Right Reverend Richard Hurford OAM KStJ ECLJ,
National Chaplain**



NATIONAL DIRECTORY

Grand Master (50th)

His Excellency Don Francisco de Borbón, Graf vonHardenberg GCLJ (J) GClrLJ – Spain

Grand Prior: The Hon Chev Gavin Fielding AM GCLJ KMLJ - WA

Chancellor: Chev David Slater AM KLJ OMLJ - QLD

National Council

Referendary: The Hon Dame Margaret White AO DCLJ CMLJ SCrLJ - QLD

National Chaplain: Right Reverend Richard Hurford OAM KStJ ECLJ- NSW

National Treasurer: Chev Roderick Scurrah KLJ - TAS

National Almoner: Chev John Donovan ED KLJ OMLJ - ACT

National Hospitaller: Chev James Grant KLJ - TAS

Marshal: Air Commodore Chev Peter McDermott AM CSC KLJ RAAF (Ret'd) - ACT

Grand Prior Emeritus: Lady Primrose Potter AC CMRI DGCLJ DGCMLJ GCrLJ

Presidents of Commanderies:

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NSW: Chev Martin Dowling KLJ

QLD: Chev Ronald Campbell Phillips KOTJ KLJ

SA: Chev Dr Ross Sweet AM KLJ

TAS: Chev Richard Pringle-Jones KLJ OMLJ

VIC: Chev John Molnar OAM KLJ OMLJ

WA: Very Reverend Dr John Shepherd AM ChLJ OMLJ

Special Appointments:

Secretary General: Chev Peter Bennison OAM JP KCLJ CMLJ - TAS

Herald: Chev Phillip Clarkson KLJ OMLJ - NSW

Deputy National Chaplains:

Very Rev Dr Michael Protopopov OAM ChLJ - VIC

Custodian of Insignia: Dame Davina Johnson OAM DLJ OMLJ

National Archivist: Chev John Molnar OAM KLJ OMLJ – VIC

