

THE MILITARY AND HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM
Grand Priory of Australia

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Letter to Commandery Presidents
From The Chancellor.

Following a very successful National Chapter meeting in Sydney at which we were able to meet with the Grand Master a very busy period with our International colleagues has absorbed quite a deal of time. The Sydney meeting enabled us to recognise what an able and approachable man we have in Don Carlos as our leader. His clear vision for the future of the Order has given us confidence that the Order can and will continue to grow. His strong message that we are an Ecumenical Christian Order with a focus on good works and a valued Military structure, left us in no doubt as to what is expected from our membership. Also new members must be practicing Christians who are willing to participate fully in the Orders activities. His delight in seeing that we are a unified, happy and hardworking Priory was not only obvious from his demeanor but was reinforced by what he said publicly and in private conversations.

The Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was an emotional and moving experience and upon my return I am pleased to be able to share some of the highlights with you, and through you, to Commandery members. It was a very important and instructive gathering which ran from 21st to 24th May.

Our Grand Priory was represented by Grand Prior, Barry O'Keefe, Mons. Tony Toms, Deputy National Chaplain and Deputy Chairman of the Public Relations Commission (PRC), Jim Grant of the Tasmania Commandery and his wife Annabelle, Chev. Ian Dickson (Inactive Vic.) who lives in the UK, and myself.

A major event at the Pilgrimage was a meeting of the Heads of Jurisdiction with the Grand Master and some members of the Grand Magistral Council. 42 members were present and listened to an address by the Grand Master, Carlos Gereda de Bourbon-Marquis of Almazan, Chev Dr Ron Hendriks GCLJ (delegate for European Affairs), Chev Klaus Peter Pokholn CGLJ Chairman of the Public Relations Commission (PRC) and Mons Tony Toms (Deputy Chairman PRC). The PRC had arranged for a Powerpoint presentation on communications and I was asked to assist so was privileged to attend the Head of Jurisdiction meeting as an observer.

The Grand Master delivered an opening address in which he stressed the ecumenical christian basis of the Order and the need for all communications to be transparent and clear, a welcome change to what had been apparent in the more recent past. He raised the issue of seeking more younger members and the need for our good works to be a focus of the Order and to ensure that we promote our endeavours in the community.

Chev. Hendriks supported the Grand Masters message and spoke on the strengths and weaknesses (challenges) of the Order. Also he drew attention to Constitutional issues in particular reminding members of the oath of loyalty to the Grand Master and the need to consult with and obtain his approval to appointments which fall within his office. The need for transparent communications was addressed as well.

The PRC powerpoint presentation gave a very clear summary of what the PRC , with the Grand Master's consent, wishes to see adopted as the policy and guidelines for communications. The details are available on

our website suffice to say that as they were drafted ,with considerable input from our own Tony Toms, we in Australia observe the requirements.

The matter of Grand Magistrial Appointments was discussed and the Grand Master indicated that he would like to see a structured rotation of its membership. Lengthy appointment can lead to a feeling that a person is indispensable which is not true! He intends to introduce such a policy progressively over the next few years. At the same time he reinforced the importance of the Heads of Jurisdiction in the structure and intends to call a meeting of them every two as required by the Constitution. At this stage our Grand Prior, Barry O'Keefe addressed the meeting proposing that a number of Heads of Jurisdiction should be appointed to the Grand Magistral Council. He was eloquent and persuasive in his argument and at the Grand Master's invitation drafted a suitable motion which was late carried without opposition. It was very good from an Australian perspective to see the heavy involvement by our colleagues at the meeting. A lighthearted comment by the Grand Master is worthy of inclusion - "At times looking at the variety of uniforms at meetings one could gain the feeling of Christmas Trees or cakes".

The spiritual content of the Pilgrimage was very evident throughout the three days. The Pilgrim Mass on Saturday was a very moving experience. Literally thousands packed the Cathedral; it was an enthusiastic and moving service with the Order's 18 or so Chaplains participating.

The Melkite Mass for the Order at San Fructuoso's Church on the Sunday presided over by our Spiritual Protector, His Beatitude Gregorios 111 Patriarch of Antioch and all the East of Alexandria and Jerusalem, was again a very moving service. It was carried out in 6 languages (Arabic, Greek, Italian, Spanish , French and English and lasted just over 2 hours. The music by a family of 4 from New York was superb.

All in all it was an honour to be at the Pilgrimage. At the last stages of the meeting it was a great delight to learn that Barry O'Keefe was appointed by the Grand Master to the Grand Magistral Council and that Tony Toms was named by the Grand Master as a Knight in the Order of Merit (KMLJ), the only Australian to hold this rank. Congratulations to both of them.

With my best wishes,
Atavis et Armis,

Will J Bailey
AO KCLJ CMLJ,
Chancellor.