



FOR THE FAITH AND
IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY



St John

Eyes on the Future

THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

PRIORY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Newsletter Editor

Karen Miller Lamb, DStJ

PRIOR'S MESSAGE

The Grand Council of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem met in Williamsburg in May. The Order's governing body, the Grand Council, is subject to the oversight of the Grand Prior and the Sovereign Head of the Order. It consists of the Priors of the Order's 11 Priories, and the Great Officers of the Order. The Grand Prior, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO, often attends, as he did this year.

The opening session saw leadership discussing the Order's three elements: Chivalry, Christianity, and Charity. The Priory's Sub-Prelate, The Right Rev'd Stacy Sauls, CStJ, beautifully laid out how our Christian Orders are in complete accord with other faiths of the world. His remarks were incredibly impactful on Council discussions.

Over the course of meetings, we heard reports from several Priories. I will mention a few highlights to demonstrate some of the good the Order is doing. Australia, for example, is exploring affordable defibrillator distribution for residential use. The current cost of a defibrillator is in the range of \$3,000-\$4,000, yet it may be possible to produce them at price point closer to \$500. Their immediate use can improve survival rates from 10-15% to 90%. The Australian Priory is in talks with a manufacturer, and, it is hoped that less expensive models can be made available under the St John symbol.

Another initiative comes from St John Canada, with its Therapy Dog Program, which serves thousands of people daily, "bringing comfort, joy and companionship to members of the community who are sick, lonely, or reside in long-term care and mental health facilities." With Canada as an advisor, we might incorporate this program into our own Volunteer Corps. (However, my wife, Amy, has already warned me, that she doubts Henry, our Portuguese Water Dog, would be accepted into the program,



Palmer Hamilton; Lord Prior Sir Malcolm Ross, GCVO, OBE; and HRH the Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO.

since despite his owner's thinking him near perfect, he occasionally likes to bite people!)

South Africa plans to train health care specialists who could help the hospital congestion problem by directing persons with health issues directly to the appropriate health care provider. This would reduce the growing number of individuals automatically seeking hospital care in South Africa for both urgent and less-urgent problems. We are working with that Priory to explore funding sources. Many of our Priory Members have relationships that could be of assistance for this life-saving work. (Let me stress, though, that this in no way diverts our Priory's attention or resources from the Hospital in Jerusalem.)

All in all, the four days in Williamsburg were not only enjoyable, but inspiring. To hear what the Order's hundreds of thousands of volunteers worldwide are doing is incredible, and it is exciting to think that our Priory can be a part of all this.

Grand Council was a great success, thanks largely to the tireless work of Ellen LeCompte, OStJ and Regional Chair of the Richmond Region; Chip Mann; Cindy Jarboe, OStJ, and many regional Members. Our Priory staff worked countless hours to ensure that the event went flawlessly. In short, the annual Grand Council continues to provide dramatic evidence of the Order's constant striving while living up to its motto: *Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum*.



DESTINATION SAN FRANCISCO: 2018 INVESTITURE WEEKEND

The Rev'd Billy Graham said, "The Bay Area is so beautiful, I hesitate to preach about heaven while I'm here." Confrères can again go to heaven! The 2018 Investiture Weekend will be in San Francisco, October 12-14. To make the event truly heavenly, the goal is for the entire weekend to be underwritten. All money raised goes directly to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group.



The Weekend will showcase San Francisco and the Order's successful St John Volunteer Corps. Nob Hill will be action central, with the Fairmont Hotel, the Pacific-Union Club and Grace Cathedral as the "St John triangle." All venues are within an easy stroll of one another.

In 1906, the nearly-completed Fairmont was heavily damaged by the earthquake. It opened in 1907, and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to its architectural beauty, the Fairmont was where Tony Bennett first sang "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" in 1961, and the occasion is marked by his statue. On a more serious note, delegates from 40 countries met there in 1945 to draft the United Nations Charter.

The solemn Investiture service, in the magnificent Grace Cathedral, will as always be the Weekend's focal point, and the popular Sunday-morning Chivalry Breakfast returns. It will center around the theme "Chivalry in the 21st Century: What It Means to be a Member of the Order of St John."

No Investiture in San Francisco would be complete without special tours, and this year is no exception. There will be walking tours of Chinatown, the oldest and largest in the country. Also, a tour of San Francisco's magnificent City Hall will be held Friday afternoon, with a champagne reception and presentation of a Muristan Swift to the city. On their own, Confrères may want to take in The San Francisco Fall Art and Antiques Show (October 10-14).

The cost of \$500 per person covers the entire cost of the Weekend (except tours). A subscription only to the Friday reception costs \$175. The Weekend is the Priory's primary fundraiser of the year. Knowing that 2018 funds will not go to overhead, but to the Hospital Group should be a heavenly incentive for Confrères to participate! ✨

Karen Miller Lamb, DStJ

EAST MEETS WEST: A SAN DIEGO WEEKEND

Until 2017, I had never attended a Presidents' Day Weekend in beautiful San Diego, California. For two years now, I have made this weekend my tradition. It is a very welcome mid-winter getaway from the chilly Northeast in February! More than ever, I'm convinced of the value of Confrères attending St John events outside their own areas — and not just Investitures.

In 2003, the first Weekend was initiated by The Right Rev'd Gethin Hughes, who wanted to promote the Order's ideals and good works. That successful Weekend led to an event every year since. Confrères convene to honor the Order, to reaffirm their vows, and (incidentally) to party!

Andrew Brooks, KStJ, and co-chair of the San Diego region, kindly collected me at the airport and drove me to my hotel. While I checked in, Andrew comfortably settled in at the hotel bar, with its breathtaking view of the Pacific. Soon, we met Rob Donaldson, OSTJ, Weekend event coordinator, and his twin children Joy and Glenn, both Esquires in the Order.



At the Saturday reception, we enjoyed a talk by The Rev'd Canon Robert J. Brooks, DD, CStJ, priest of the Diocese of Connecticut and Canon for International Affairs of the Diocese of El Salvador. Formerly the Director of Government Relations for the Episcopal Church, he spoke about conflict resolution, and his work with The Most Rev'd Desmond Tutu, OMSG, CH, GCStJ, on the transition from apartheid. On Sunday, a splendid Evensong was held at St. Paul's Cathedral. In his homily, Canon Brooks spoke of the day's significance (the first Sunday in Lent) as it related to our preparation for renewal, and our need to support the daily good works being done by our beloved St John Eye Hospital Group.

As I travelled home, I was grateful for the new friends I had made, and the camaraderie shared with Confrères from other parts of the US. Plans for the 2019 Weekend are already underway and I look forward to attending again! So, when you receive invitations for events outside your own region, please consider attending and broadening your own St John horizons! ✨

*Barbara Hayward, CStJ
Priory Executive Director, 1999-2008*

REGIONAL DYNAMICS: THE TWO JIMS

Birmingham's Convention Bureau proclaims it to be a city as modern and contemporary as it is classically southern. Birmingham's assets attracted (and kept) both James Moody Proctor II, MStJ, and James Hugh Miller III, MStJ, over the years. Enthusiasm for their city and a belief in helping those in need are two reasons why they are doing what Prior Hamilton describes as "a dynamite job" of building the Birmingham region for the Order of St John.

Early on, the two Jims made a connection. Jim Miller, a lawyer and Birmingham native, hired Jim Proctor for his law firm and continued to mentor him over the years. Both were law graduates of the University of Alabama, Proctor being the first fourth generation student to graduate from the law school. His son, Harrison, is now the fifth.

Jim Miller's career eventually brought him to the position of Chairman, President and CEO of Southern Nuclear Operating Company, where he was responsible for the safe operation of three commercial nuclear energy plants, and licensing and constructing two others. He says, "The production of electricity and delivering it to customers who use it to enhance and improve their lives is enormously satisfying." A cradle Episcopalian, he and his wife, Kathy, have been married for 43 years, and have four daughters and 11 grandchildren. Along the way, he has been active in many community activities. He believes that "a community that is vibrant, energetic and constructive will be a great place to live, work and raise a family." In his spare time, Jim hunts quail and "to drive home the inequities of life", plays golf.

Proctor, on the other hand, emigrated from Scottsboro, a small town in northeast Alabama, where his family has lived for 200 years. Becoming a lawyer, he says, came from his desire to follow the family tradition for its own sake. He says, "Law is a profession that allows one to help others solve problems, and lets me dabble in a large variety of subjects, something that addresses my professional ADD." A Methodist, Proctor points out that "Methodism is an offshoot of the Church of England, the precursor of the Episcopal Church, so we are in some sense siblings in the faith!" Jim and his wife Laura fell in love with Birmingham and never left. They have three sons and a granddaughter. He enjoys boating, hunting, running, reading, and serving on several boards.

Their shared desire to help others brought both to the Order of St John. Jim Miller says, "When I first learned of the Order I knew it was for me. Having worked for the community for years, I wanted to expand my efforts to an international sphere. Knowing the Hospital Group serves those in need

regardless of their ability to pay was an important element: it strikes the right cord of the Christian belief." Jim Proctor agrees, noting that "St John appealed to me as an international organization committed to serving distressed populations in an area of the world that needs both the services

themselves, and the examples of kindness and charity." Both became Members in 2015 and 2014, respectively. Before long, Miller and Proctor's enthusiasm for the Order and their desire to establish it in Birmingham began to bear fruit. Proctor insists that Miller drove the process and he became his "eager apprentice." Their first step was to gather a core group of local Members and ask for their input on possible interested candidates. Then, Proctor says, "We make the contacts and the pitch. The good news is that the Order sells itself. Then, as you reach critical mass, gather the membership for local events, inviting prospective members so that you can see the caliber of people who make up the membership."

One such event involved the Grand Prior, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO, who visited Birmingham in 2015 at the invitation of the Prior. His visit, Miller says, "gave our Order great visibility and credibility. Building on this foundation proved a natural advantage to attract new Members." During his visit, the Duke was taken to Highlands Bar and Grill, owned by Chef Frank Stitt III, MStJ, and his wife. No doubt the restaurant made an impression on the Duke, as he sent a congratulatory note to Stitt when in April 2018 Highlands was named the most outstanding restaurant in America by the prestigious James Beard Foundation.

Alabama now has 60 Members of the Order, including the Birmingham region which, thanks to the two Jims, is going strong. Their success leads Jim Miller to give this advice to Confrères who want to establish a region: "First, consult with Palmer, or his successor, and then be prepared to demonstrate the energy and enthusiasm required to make it happen. It is a very worthy undertaking. Good luck!" ❄️

Karen Miller Lamb, DStJ



Friends and Confrères Jim Proctor (L.) and Jim Miller.

CONFRÈRES DEPARTED

- William Henry Trotter Bush, CStJ
- John James Hodges III, CStJ
- Charles W. Howland, OStJ
- Howard Lester, CStJ
- Elizabeth Muller Stafford, DStJ
- Ellsworth George Stanton III, MBE, KStJ
- Anne Jeannette Sylvestre, PhD
- The Hon. Togo Dennis West Jr., OStJ

OUR PATH INTO THE LIGHT:

“To go on a pilgrimage is a tradition in all religions. Human beings have through all times been searching for their origin, closeness to eternity, something that is holy for them. A place where the border between the earthly and the heavenly reality is thinner than any other place, a location that tells about the divine presence in the existence or a place that has a unique meaning in the life of individuals.”

ST. OLAV WAYS

WHAT WAS OUR RECENT 2018 PRIORY PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM LIKE? Austin Confrères Charles Sloan Teeple IV, MStJ, and his wife, Mary, captured the mood perfectly at the start: “We are like young children on Christmas Eve with awesome anticipation of what we will be experiencing with you.”

The wonders of Jerusalem and the courageous work of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group did not disappoint. A visit inside the Dome of the Rock, a chorus of village girls welcoming us to a West Bank clinic, conversations with professionals at the Hospitals, and the palpable presence of God we felt while praying the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem’s Old City are only some of the powerful experiences enjoyed by our merry band of pilgrims.

Our week was organized per the Order’s motto: *Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum*. Each day involved spirit and service. To connect with the Order’s healing mission and context, we visited (among other facilities) the Jerusalem hospital and clinic, and met with American and British diplomats, as well as young thought-leaders from my own Jerusalem Peacebuilders. To embrace God’s challenge and strength, we prayed in the desert and in Jerusalem’s holy places. As always in pilgrimages, some days were long and tiring, but Richard Clark, KStJ, and The Hon. James Ziglar, MStJ, kept our pilgrim hearts full of song.

Our final day took us to our forbearers’ last redoubt in the Holy Land: St. Jean d’Acre. We paused in a Crusader chapel to pray and emerged into the light. The Teeple’s words proved true. The best blessings of pilgrimage — deeper faith, insight and friendships — were now ours. A Christmas in April, indeed! ✨



Sharon Moore, MStJ, with some enthusiastic patients.

The Rev’d Canon Nicholas T. Porter, KStJ

IT WAS 4:30 AM, FIRST LIGHT, IN OUR ROOM AT THE AMERICAN COLONY HOTEL in East Jerusalem when we heard Adhan, the Islamic call to prayer from a nearby minaret. From dawn to dusk and wherever we went, we were reminded that we were in a Holy Land.

Arriving at the Hebron Hospital, the waiting and exam rooms were full. Dr. Ala’a AlTalbish and Sister Hlatel gave us an in-depth tour of the Hospital. Sister Hlatel was the driving force in the Hospital’s receiving the coveted Joint International Commission accreditation for the highest medical standards, the first hospital in Jerusalem to receive it.

John G.P. Boatwright Jr., MD, OStJ, and I were invited to attend pterygium surgery, a complex procedure performed with the aid of a surgical microscope. Donated by Peter Goltra, KStJ, this state-of-the-art gift assists surgeons by amplifying the patient’s eye on a screen about two feet square. John said, “I felt I was back in my own operating room. The doctors, nurses and staff are highly competent, followed protocol, and are excellent at what they do.”



John Boatwright Jr., MD, OStJ, observes the Goltra gift in action.

Yet, even with this valuable contribution, most of the medical equipment in Hebron is 15 years old and in sore need of replacement. Witnessing in person the impact of a single gift underlined the importance of making every effort to raise funds for the Hospital Group, especially through special gifts. ✨

Julian V. Brandt III, CStJ

PRIORY PILGRIMS SPEAK

VISITING THE HOSPITAL IN HEBRON, WE SAW THE NEARBY AL-KHALIL MOSQUE/SYNAGOGUE AND SHOPPED AT THE ADJACENT SMALL STORES. I

bought a traditional Hebron dress and later wore it in Jerusalem as I sought last-minute gifts in the Old City.

My dress drew attention from the shop owners, and many commented on it, smiling their approval.

In a little shop, I looked at watercolors of Jerusalem. The shopkeeper asked me where I bought the dress, and I replied, in Hebron. Since most tourists don't go there, he was confused, and asked if I was a Swede on a peacebuilding visit! When I said that I was from the US, he became even more confused.

To help him understand, I explained that I was a Member of the Order of St John, and that we had been visiting our eye hospital in Hebron. His face, previously one of someone trying to make a sale, completely softened into one of a desperate Palestinian. He told me that the Order of St John is the Palestinians' only messenger and savior — that they only want to live in peace with the Israelis and that everyone except the Order of St John has abandoned them.

He rummaged through his watercolors and found a lovely one of the Old City, which he presented to me as a gift. I was deeply moved. What I learned that day was that our efforts also feed souls, providing hope where little is found. I wish every Member could have the chance to see the emotion in this man's eyes, to hear the passion in his voice, and to understand the gratitude conveyed. What we do makes a difference. ✨

Linda Ziglar, MStJ

EXCITED TO SEE FIRSTHAND THE HOSPITAL GROUP'S WORK, MY WIFE, ELIZABETH (OSTJ), AND I DID NOT ANTICIPATE THE RENEWAL OF FAITH WE WOULD EXPERIENCE

as we absorbed the pilgrimage's great spiritual and historical aspects. Now, our understanding of the Order's history and place in the Holy Land is far better.

Evident every day was the deep faith of Canon Porter. The prayers, hymns, readings, and site visits allowed each of us in our own way to share his commitment to his faith and to working towards peace in the Holy Land. Visits to Jerusalem, Hebron and Anabta brought home the tremendous work St John is doing. Pride, warmth, enthusiasm and professionalism radiate



The surgical microscope donated by Peter Goltra, KStJ.

through every room as does the gratitude of the patients.

In addition to Nicholas and his wife Dorothy, we were fortunate to have another guide, Daoud, a Coptic Christian who could quote chapter and verse of Old and New Testaments and who has an encyclopedic knowledge of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Daaoud seemed to have relatives everywhere

we went, many smoothing our entry into places very difficult to access. This combination made the Pilgrimage a unique experience. With faith renewed, we returned home with a group of 18 new and wonderful friends united by a common experience, and a shared — and rekindled — dedication to the Order's mission. ✨

Douglas Paul, KStJ, Chancellor of the Priory



Julian V. Brandt III, CSTJ, conquers Wadi Kelt.



Pilgrims inside the dramatic Refectory Hall of the Hospitallers in the Crusader City of St. Jean d'Acre.

The Pilgrims Society will be launched at the 2018 Investiture, at a joint breakfast with the Muristan Society. The Pilgrims Society will be composed of Confrères who have participated in a Priory Pilgrimage and have witnessed the impact of our work. All known Confrère Pilgrims will be invited. The two Societies will bring focus to the life-changing importance of our mission.

TO CURE OFTEN, BUT TO COMFORT ALWAYS: DAVID VERITY, MD MA (OXON) BM BCH FRCOPHTH, OSTJ

The son of a Royal Navy surgeon, David spent his earliest years in postings in Singapore, South Africa, Newfoundland, and the Kalahari, where his father also worked for the Church Missionary Society in the African homeland of Bophuthatswana, a remote territory. Exposure to diverse cultures, religions and languages, and the effects of apartheid were formative experiences in David's early life, and continue to influence his personal and professional outlook even now as the new Hospitaller of the Order of St John.

Before the family's return to England, David was sent to continue his education in the depths of Hampshire, where he completed his education at Winchester College before reading physiology and medicine at Oxford. Throughout this time, and for many years after, his grandfather, Anthony Harding Rains, was a profoundly influential figure in David's life: A distinguished surgeon in the British National Health Service, Professor Rains practiced medicine "to the highest standards, yet still had time for his family and grandchildren."

In 1985, Rains' good friend and colleague Sir Stephen Miller, then the Order of St John's Hospitaller, suggested that David, then a medical student, should visit Jerusalem. David was duly dispatched and returned twice before qualifying as a doctor. He witnessed the Hospital's extraordinary work in the face of great odds, and decided a few years later to pursue a career in ophthalmology. David carries with him today his vivid impression of "the commitment of the staff, the long-suffering of the patients, and the mission and ethos of an Order that gives people hope and value."

Soon after qualifying, and with only a modicum of experience, David took leave from Britain's National Health Service to work in Jerusalem. He was tasked by London to pursue a genetics project on the Silk Road disease, a blinding condition found between China and the Mediterranean basin, and particularly common in Palestine. Privately, he admits to "some of the most challenging and self-doubting moments of my entire career" during this time. With little clinical experience, he was launched into a research program in which DNA samples from Palestinians from across the disparate villages of the West Bank were obtained and transported back from Jordan and Israel to London. (He wore a flak jacket on more than one occasion.) But at times, David says, "Fortune favors the brave, and the published research from my thesis on *The Immunogenetic Basis of the Silk Road Disease* opened up career opportunities in London that ultimately led to my current post as at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, where I now specialize in eyelid, lacrimal, orbit and socket disorders."

After leaving Jerusalem in 1995, David visited Dr. Ernesto Basauri in Spain, his previous diving buddy and a surgeon from Jerusalem. There he met his wife-to-be, Asunción, and now, 20 years later, they have two children, Gregoria (Goya, 18) and Harry (16). They spend their holidays in Spain, where David unwinds by tending to the family's olive and palm plantations. He also enjoys the challenge of languages, speaking Russian and Spanish, both of which he finds useful in an increasingly cosmopolitan world. To escape it all, David indulges in his life-long hobby — windsurfing across the wide and tranquil bays of Mallorca, "far from every possible distraction."

What began as David's personal interest in St John is now shared by the whole family. Goya and Harry have visited the hospital on many occasions, and spoken of their experiences at school and at the annual Hospital Symposia. Inspired by the St John staff, Asunción is writing a book on Palestinian cuisine. Young Harry likes to work in the kitchens, although his father notes he is possibly "less inclined to such duties at home." David is proud of his children's commitment, particularly their recent fund-raising efforts, which raised \$1,000 for the Hospital's pediatric ward.



The Verity family (l. to r.): Harry, David, Asunción, stepson Javier, and Goya.

In his role as Hospitaller, David seeks to strengthen relations between the Hospital Group and all its supporters. He is also a strong advocate for the medical and nursing staff, working to increase their opportunities for training and research both regionally and internationally. He firmly believes that these are essential if the Hospital's academic reputation is to grow.

While David's mission as Hospitaller is to do everything in his power to lift up disadvantaged patients and improve their vision, at heart he is a doctor with a very personal vision. He reflects: "As for all doctors, and especially as an ophthalmic surgeon, the greatest challenge is to listen to the patients, and to understand their concerns and how to treat them. Paraphrasing Hippocrates of Kos (c. 460-c. 370 BC), we are exhorted to 'cure often, but to comfort always.' Both are a privilege, as I discover each day. It is, of course, what we all do in the name of St John." ❄️

Karen Miller Lamb, DStJ

In 2015 Dr. Verity founded a postgraduate group that has now grown to become the St John Ophthalmic Association (SOA) uniting clinicians and nurses across the Priors who are interested in the work of St John. In September 2018, the SOA will host its inaugural international meeting in Jerusalem. Over 125 leading surgeons will speak on state-of-the-art ophthalmology. Simultaneously, "Jerusalem — Fiat Lux", a separate congress there, will examine the history of medical work in the Holy Land, and the worldwide activity of St John. This conference is co-organized with the The Rev'd Canon Nicholas Porter, KStJ, founder and Executive Director of Jerusalem Peacebuilders. For information on both events, please see www.SOA.global.

SJVC MEMBERS ELIGIBLE FOR ORDER OF ST JOHN SERVICE MEDAL

With the creation of the St John Volunteer Corps (SJVC) in 2012, the Priory in the USA established a vehicle for the award of the Order of St John Service Medal to US Members. SJVC members can earn the Service Medal after 10 years of qualifying service.

A qualifying year of service consists of 50 hours of volunteer service, under the auspices of the SJVC, directly supporting Veterans in the United States. Each volunteer's one-year period starts on and ends the day prior to St John's Day, June 24, and must be reported by each Regional SJVC Chairperson to the National Service Coordinators in the month of July. Service

years do not need to be consecutive; 10 cumulative years will qualify any Member in good standing for the Medal.

Confrères interested in serving Veterans should contact their regional SJVC leadership to learn about the ever-expanding opportunities to help "those who have born the battle." ❄

LTC (Ret) Jeffrey Andrew Ritsick, OSTJ



VOLUNTEERING AND LEARNING: A PRIEST'S STORY

As a clergyman, I have assisted for 10 years in opening and closing Naturalization Ceremonies in the Federal Courthouse in Charleston, South Carolina, a short distance away from the church I served as Rector. Not knowing what to expect when asked to participate, I soon learned that to do so makes one profoundly aware of one's own heritage.

I'm proud to be an American, but have taken that for granted. As I began my duties, I was struck by the fact that I myself am from "elsewhere". Both parents' families were immigrants — Wales, on my father's side, and Italy on my mother's.

What I see in that intimate courtroom are people from countries large and small who have studied hard to take a test while engaged in their chosen careers. One day, just as my grandparents did, they stand proudly in the courtroom, raise their hands, swear allegiance to their new

country, and become citizens. As Members of the Order, we have a duty to serve not only the sick and the poor but also our fellow citizens. For that reason, the SJVC was formed and, in my own area, members volunteer at the newly-built Fisher House. We assist the families of Veterans receiving treatment at the local VA hospital. I also serve on the Board of Directors for the Charleston Area Senior Center, which addresses the needs of our impoverished citizens (some of them Veterans).

Sharing the entry of "former" immigrants into citizenship and thus a new phase of their lives has become increasingly meaningful for me, as I remember that my own roots have been refreshed by the journey they have taken. May God bless all of them. ❄

The Rev'd. David Anthony Williams, DMin, OSTJ
Priory Director of Ceremonies

THE TIES THAT BIND: THINKING CREATIVELY ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

One of the many strengths of the Order of St John is the diversity of Members in age, profession, and residence. Connecting like-minded Confrères can promote fellowship, and also unite them with prospective members. Two informal groups that have formed in the Washington, DC, region illustrate this.

A Young Members Group meets for cocktails quarterly to build camaraderie among the region's young professionals, and also serves to reach out to prospective Members. Inspired by this group's success, Ensign Damian Antonescu, USN, OSTJ, and Captain James Rojek, USA, MSTJ, recently formed another group, the Officers' Mess Club (OMC), for military officers of all ages.

The OMC educates Members about the Order's spiritual link to the historic Knights Hospitaller and builds *esprit de corps* among Confrères who are military officers. It also introduces the Order to other officers who might become Members. The group met informally for cocktails last September. In attendance was the Chaplain General of the British Army, David Coulter, CB, QHC, OSTJ, a guest of The Rev'd Timothy Cole, QHC, MSTJ, himself a retired chaplain of the British Army.

In December, OMC marked the centenary of General Allenby's entrance into Jerusalem following the victory of the Battle of Jerusalem in the Great War, an event paramount to the Order's existence in the Holy Land today. In 1914, when war was declared between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, the Order and its Hospital were evicted from Jerusalem. Allenby captured the Holy City in 1917, and the Venerable Order in 1919 was able to re-open the Hospital. It was rededicated by Lord Allenby himself, who became a Knight of Justice of the Order.

A Middle Eastern-themed mess dinner was held at Washington's Army and Navy Club. Guest of honor was the British Embassy's military attaché, Brigadier James Carr-Smith, whose remarks wove together the battle's history and General Allenby's role in the victory. Military Confrères attended, along with prospective Members. The toasts flowed freely!



We hope both groups will be an inspiration for other regions to think creatively about uniting and recruiting Members through shared interests and activities. ❄

Captain J. James Lawrence Rojek, USA, MSTJ

GRAND COUNCIL 2018: STEPPING BACK AND FORWARD IN TIME

When I began my role as the Priory's Executive Director in January, I learned that the Priory staff would be working with the Grand Council Host Committee to plan and execute the 2018 Grand Council meeting of the Order of St John. As a "newbie," I was not sure what — or who — the Council was, what it did or why Williamsburg, Virginia, would be the venue for the meeting. I quickly learned these ABCs, and as the three-day event concluded on May 26th, I could not be prouder of the way our Priory Members, volunteers and staff rolled out the red carpet for guests.

I was struck by how engaged Council participants, including Grand Prior HRH The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO, were as they discussed the nature of the Order, as an Order of Charity, as a Christian Order, and as a provider of charitable services. While the Council meets annually and is hosted on a rotating basis, much work is done throughout the year to ensure that policies are consistent and relevant across all Priories and Associations, and that Grand Council decisions are implemented.

These discussions are the event's primary purpose, but not the sole function. Many Council members and executive leaders

bring spouses, partners and children, so the Host Committee and staff wanted to show the role of the Williamsburg area in our nation's history, also to exhibit the region's famous "Southern hospitality." Most guests had never visited Williamsburg, so how could they pass up the opportunity to stroll Duke of Gloucester Street — with the Duke of Gloucester — or to attend an Evening Prayer service at historic Bruton Parish Church, or to be escorted by a fife and drum corps to the Governor's Palace, and dine in the garden?

With the help of our volunteers on the ground and our generous Confrère sponsors, the US Priory made the three days special for all attending. I was struck by the group's spirit of cooperation, collaboration and kindness – something I have not experienced in other organizations for which I have worked. I watched as old friends and colleagues reconnected – some for the first time since the 2017 meeting; I observed new friendships develop, and I personally feel more committed to the work of the Order than ever.



Michele Blair, Executive Director



The Grand Prior greets dancers from the Chickahominy tribe at historic Velynton plantation.



Those who made it all happen, with Regional Chair Ellen LeCompte, OStJ, at right.



Brian Ragen, KStJ; Sheryl Meyering, DStJ; Diana McCormick, Membership and Events Officer; Corena Hasselle, Administrative Assistant, and Aimée Squires, DStJ.



A break from the business of the day (1st row, 2nd from r., Michele Blair.)



The Duke of Gloucester on Duke of Gloucester Street.