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Saint Lazarus Magazine

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Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

History of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

The Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem was a medieval military, religious and Hospitaller Order of Chivalry, and bore no resemblance to modern-day historical or charitable organizations, all using the name Saint Lazarus. It was military in that it played a military role from 1120 to about the beginning of the 16th century. Until 1291, its military activities were centered in the Holy Land helping to hold it for Christianity, while after its loss they were involved in the protection of the pilgrim routes, particularly of that to Santiago de Compostela. The military role was partly revived in the early 17th century when the Order maintained a squadron of ten frigates based at St Malo, manned by the knights, novices and chaplains. With the ending of the Order's naval activities in 1668, the military role was continued by means of its naval academy, and the ownership of a military school in Paris, which it held until the



French Revolution in 1791. With regards to the religious aspect, the Order was originally an order of monks taking the triple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The monastic character was in no way lessened when it commenced its military role. After the Crusading period, the Order's religious character was maintained by means of its chaplains, its Religious Protector, its Spiritual Grand Prior, its rules, services and traditions. Members were expected to live their lives in the spirit of ecumenical Christian charity.



The Order was Hospitaller in that its origins allegedly stem from a leper hospice founded in Jerusalem in the 4th or 5th century. The Order, according to some historians, was first established during the time of Saint Basil, with the founding of its first hospital in the city of Ptolemais (Acre). Other authors state that the source of the name of the Order stems from the fact that the Order



was started by a group of Armenian monks who worked under the Rule of Saint Basil, and that their work was primarily to look after lepers. Due to this very contagious work, these monks were given quarters outside the walls of Jerusalem and their 'hospice' was established near to the Gate of Saint Lazarus, or, as it was referred to, the postern of Saint Lazarus. It is thus due to this geographical location that they became known as the Order of Saint Lazarus.

The majority of historians, however, agree that such claims of continuity from remote antiquity was in effect an apocryphal pretension so that the Knights of Saint Lazarus pass as the oldest of all the Orders, especially since they became, in a very short time, expert Hospitallers and carers of the ill, lepers and needy. Despite its subsequent military role, it remained primarily a Hospitaller Order, operating a worldwide network of hospitals and Lazar Houses, and sending aid to wherever there was sickness and suffering, maintaining or supporting leper hospitals and Lazarettoes.

With the loss of the Holy Land in the Crusades, the Order of Saint Lazarus continued operating in Europe, albeit in a more non-centralised manner. Historical documentation proves that certain areas of Lazarite operations, such as those operating in the area today re-

ferred to as Great Britain, went on with their Hospitaller work with little or no communication with the rest of their brethren in France and Italy. In Italy, the Order was diluted in strength and eventually merged, with papal blessing and guidance, into what is today referred to as the Order of Saint Maurice and Saint Lazarus and which is still under the Fons Honorum of the Royal House of Savoy as per a number of Papal Bulls on the subject. In France, the Order was instructed on several occasions by the Papacy to be incorporated into the Order of Saint John. However, the French Monarchy took the Order of Saint Lazarus under its protection and later, the same French Monarchy amalgamated the Order with the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel by means of a Royal Letters Patent dated October 31st 1608. This amalgamation was accepted by Rome on June 5th 1668 by means of the Papal Legate.

The French Revolution and its immediate aftermath meant the total dissolution of the Order from France. In layman's terms, the Order *ceased* to exist. In September 1792, the National Convention met



and abolished the monarchy and established the First Republic of France. Since the Order had been primarily active in France from the 14th Century it follows that it was subject to all the political upheavals in that country, none more important to the Order than the decree by the Assembly from the Third Estate, on the 30th July 1791, which emphatically stated that all Orders of Chivalry were abolished. To date, the various governments of France have continued to uphold this decree. It is thus due to our constant need for historical accuracy that our chivalric organization emphatically states – in precisely the same manner of language as do all the governments in question, that the medieval Order of Saint Lazarus was thus extinguished in this particular era.

Nonetheless, a number of individuals opted, from time to time, to resurrect the aura of the Order of Saint Lazarus. All of these modern day revivals are registered in their various countries of origins as an organization and not as a Chivalric Order. Stating the opposite is indeed considered in legal and historic circles as stating an interpolation and an untruth. Our chivalric organization has nothing whatsoever to do with such



twisting of historic facts.

Notwithstanding the above, in more recent times, the various reincarnations of the Order were at

the forefront of manning and assisting medical centers, hospices, ambulance units and various other humanitarian institutions throughout the world.



The Order was chivalric in that it became a monastic Order of Knighthood in the early 12th century. Its ranks held those who were already knights or those of noble birth who received knighthood after entry into the Order. The Order always had the power of conferring knighthood on any person deemed suitable. This ancient prerogative was enshrined in the Act of 1624, which created the category of Knights of Grace, where nobility was not required. This power, to confer knighthood remained unimpaired from the 12th century and needed no recognition for its validity, preceding, as it did, all secular knight-hoods still surviving to this day.

Apart from this knightly aspect of chivalry, it also implied that privilege went hand in hand with responsibility, to care for the sick and protect the weak. It was service without being servile, the use of one's effort and strength for the purpose of Christian and human charity. The Order was not a reward, but a commitment of service past, present and future, to carry out its aims, and to work for humanity in its name. Through the dedication of its knights





and members, its nobility of purpose in caring for the sick, and its splendid history, the Order's traditions have survived intact throughout the centuries, and should continue so for centuries to come, as long as Christianity, and a need to help our fellow man, exists.

The United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem are a confederation of independent Lazarite Grand Priorities governed by the Supreme Grand Priory which is headquartered in Scotland, Great Britain. Unlike other similar organisations, it is assembled on a regular basis, and representatives of all the Grand Priorities jointly decide on the challenges facing today's Hospitaller works throughout the world.

Since the Fons Honorum of the Order



of Saint Lazarus was historically extinguished after the French Revolution by means of an official decree by the Paris Commune, the above Grand Priorities do not recognize any self-appointed Grand Master or Master General. Since the main and noble aim of the Order is indeed the carrying out of charitable and Hospitaller work throughout the world, it is the policy of the United Grand Priorities to leave and assist the independent Grand Priorities throughout the world in collecting and distributing funds in their respective regions without the need of burdening such noble work with the uncalled for imposition of un-



justified fees.

Thus, the history of the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus goes no further back than the year 1995. Whilst emulating the noble virtues of the extinguished medieval Order of Chivalry bearing the same name, the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem projects itself according to the laws and statutes of the countries where it operates as a fully registered chivalric institution. It is duly recognized as such by all the relative authorities and is proud to have a number



of very close relationships with other established chivalric operations throughout the world. In various regions where it operates, the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem works hand in hand with local and national government authorities in order to further underline modern-day Hospitaller and philanthropic work.

Its primary aim is Hospitaller and philanthropic work throughout the continents. Such Hospitaller work is evident and constant in the continents of the Americas, Europe, Africa, Australasia



and Asia. Although cordial rapport is encouraged with other organizations working today under the banner of Saint Lazarus, the United Grand Priorities does not form part of Lazarite organizations who unfortunately continue to defy the accuracy of historical records and perpetrate the myth that the medieval Order of Saint Lazarus continued uninterrupted after the French revolution. Additionally, in 2008, the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus, by means of a unanimous vote taken by all of its Grand Priorities save one, abolished the self-



appointed position of 'Master General' of the Order which was unfortunately introduced without the proper statutory consultations. From that time onwards, the expansion of the Order on an international level was encouraged and properly overseen by means of a proactive Grand Chancellery fully authorized to ensure a Global Lazarite presence.

With this administrative change in the United Grand Priorities in 2008, a number of important milestones were firmly established which included the following:

1. The establishment of a Supreme Grand Priory to govern all the united Grand Priorities within the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus with proper and statutory representation for all Grand Priorities.
2. The establishment of the Supreme Grand Prior, duly elected by the Grand Officers of the Supreme Grand Priorities to preside on the work carried out by the Supreme Grand Priory. The role of the Supreme Grand Prior thus takes the form of an experienced Chairman to the operation and has nothing whatsoever to do with the various un-called-for trappings and hyperbolic



add-ons which are normally found in other organizations which use the title of Grand Master or Master General.

3. The unanimous agreement within the United Grand Priorities that all funds generated from specific regions by the various Saint Lazarus Commanderies, Grand Commanderies and Grand Priorities will remain available to be utilized in charitable and Hospitaller works in the region from where they were collected.

From 2007 onwards, the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem expanded greatly in various countries and regions. The Order established itself in 38 different regions with 42 jurisdictions (as of December 2011) in the continents of North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia/Oceania and Africa. While most of its jurisdictions are organized as Grand Priorities, there are a number of jurisdictions which are somewhat smaller in number and thus are organized as Grand Commanderies, Commanderies and Delegations.

In 2009, the United Grand Priorities entered into a synergic, collaboration agreement with the Corps San Lazare International, based in Vienna, Austria. The latter are a registered nongovernmental organization also spread around the world with an impressive amount of Hospitaller work world wide to their credit. In 2011, the international operations of the Saint Lazarus Corps – Special Rescue Group also entered into a strategic alliance with the United Grand

Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem and is indeed operating from within the offices of the Grand Chancellery of the Order.

With these amalgamations and Lazarite synergy worldwide, most of the Grand Priorities of the United Grand Priorities are also very active country branches of these organisations, hence being given constant support services from both our



administrative structures in order to ensure concrete Hospitaller and philanthropic work all over the world under the Lazarus banner. This synergy effectively ensured that the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus became one of the largest, if not the largest, Lazarite organization worldwide with an international membership of 14,000 brothers and sisters worldwide.



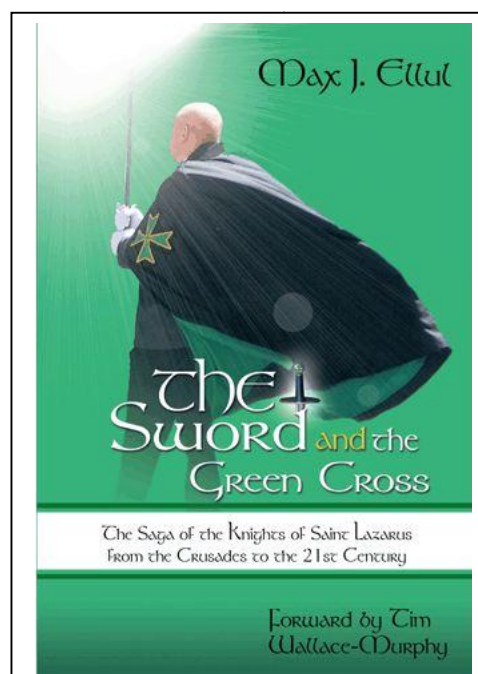
It has been the policy of the United Grand Priories of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus to constantly present the history and ethos of the Order of Saint Lazarus throughout the ages from its crusading past to the present day in an undiluted and non-interpolated manner. We actively ensure that people interested in Saint Lazarus operations in the 21st Century understand that it is a proven historic fact that the medieval Order of Saint Lazarus became extinct immediately after the French revolution. For these last decades since the founding of the United Grand Priories in 1995, we have humbly sought to emulate the Hospitaller tradition of the medieval Order by means of an international chivalric organization, fully compliant with the laws and regulations of the jurisdictions in question, and without the need to manipulate history in order to project an inaccurate account of a wishful Lazarite past. It is, we believe, primarily due to this sincere approach to our members and patrons that one can understand why the United Grand Priories of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus have grown to be the most active and the most expanding Lazarite chivalric organization worldwide.

The United Grand Priories of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem is led by its democratically elected Supreme Grand Prior, H. E. Rich

ard Comyns of Ludston GCLJ GCMLJ. The Supreme Grand Prior is also the head of the Grand Priory of Scotland of the Order.



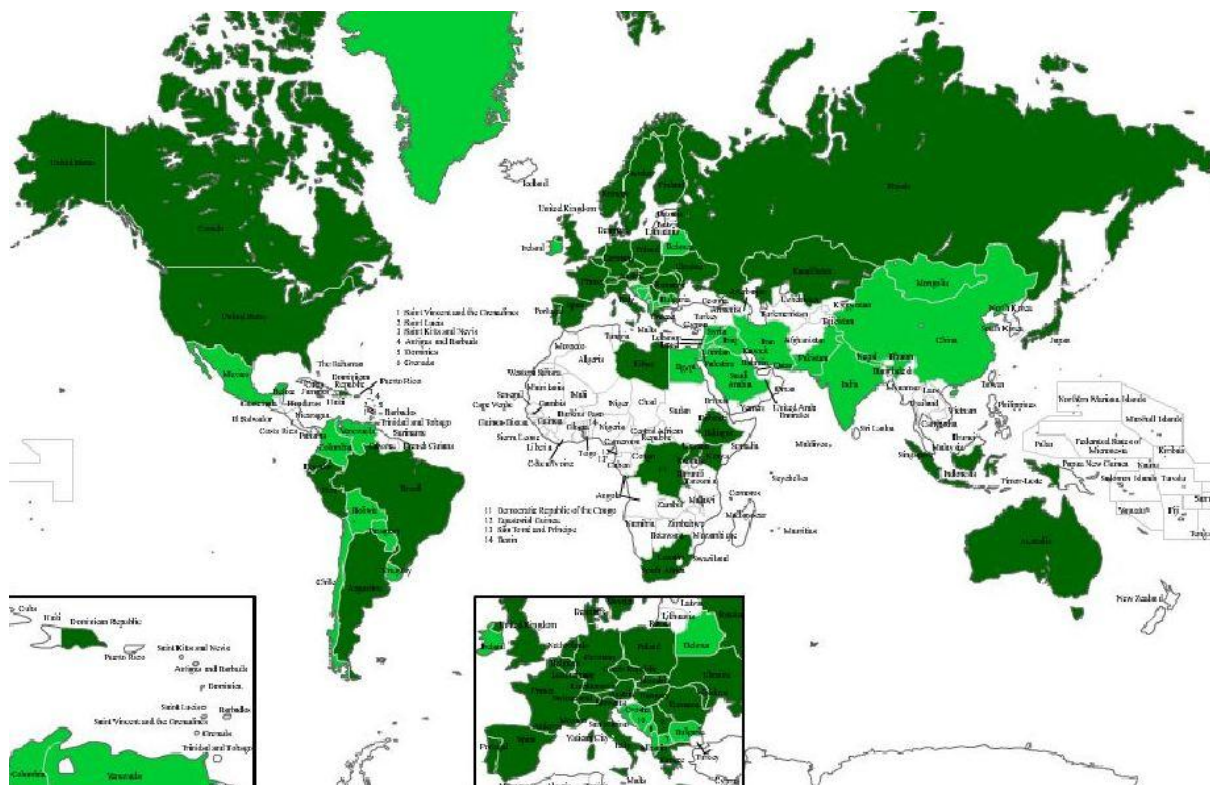
The Grand Chancellery is located in Malta.



The Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus has, three times to date, published thorough and extensively researched historical works related to the Order's history from its foundations in the Holy Land to modern day operations of the revived Lazarite organisations. By far the most sought after historical publication, entitled 'The Sword and the Green Cross', was published in February 2011 in the US, is available from all leading international book distributors, including Amazon.com, Authorhouse, Barnes and Noble and other prestigious operators. The publications of the Order have been also translated into the Russian and Greek languages.



Global Lazarite Presence



In the enclosed map of the world, the countries highlighted in Lazarite Green refer to countries and jurisdictions wherein the United Grand Priorities is represented by means of a Grand Priory, Grand Commandery, Commandery or Delegation of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem. In some of these countries, the Grand Priorities of the Order are presently 'in formation', meaning that the Lazarite delegations and Commanderies in the region in question will be formally upgraded and consecrated into Grand Priorities by decree of the Supreme Grand Priory of the Order.

The countries highlighted in Light Green refer to countries and jurisdictions wherein the United Grand Priorities of the Order is represented by means of its sister affiliated organizations: the Union Corps San Lazare International, CSLI; the Special Rescue Group of the Saint Lazarus Corps and the Sacred Medical Order of the Knights of Hope. These chivalric organizations operate in countries as diverse as Bolivia, Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, Taiwan (Province of China) and Venezuela.





Union Corps Saint Lazarus International



The Union Corps Saint Lazarus International representatives taking the oath of loyalty to the Supreme Grand Prior of the Order and the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem.

The Union Corps Saint Lazarus International, the Sacred Medical Order of the Knights of Hope and the Special Rescue Group of the Saint Lazarus Corps are also fully represented in the Supreme Grand Priory of the Order since all these chivalric organisations and international Hospitaller operations have unanimously opted to join the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem.





History of the Lazarus Union

Established in 2006 as a subsidiary association of the 1973 founded "Saint Lazarus Volunteers (LHW Lazarus Hilfswerk)" named "Lazarus Hilfswerk Landesgruppe Lower Austria – LHWNÖ".



February 2007: separation from the "Saint Lazarus Volunteers". Autonomy and change of name to "Lazarus Hilfswerk Ostarrichi – LHWÖ".

Caused by a lawsuit forged by the "Saint Lazarus Volunteers" based on "similarities of name" change of name to "Corps Saint Lazare Ostarrichi (St. Lazarus Corps Ostarrichi) – CSLO".

March 2008: VOLUNTARILY and full subordination under the protectorate of the PIA UNIO "Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem, Grand Priory of Austria, shortly Order of Lazarus". The CSLO sets up of a Board of Directors consisting of the highest members of the Chapter of the Order of Lazarus. The Order grants the status of "official relief organization of the Order of Lazarus" to the CSLO.

On 2. September 2008 the CSLO was dissolved by the Board of Directors because of disagreements between the Board and the Executive Committee.

On 16. September 2008 it was re-established as **CORPS SAINT LAZARE INTERNATIONAL**



(Stank Lazarus Corps International), briefly CSLI. The CSLI cooperates with all organizations and sub-groups of the Order of Lazarus, who accept this cooperation, on a worldwide basis and presents the acquired know how without any limitations.

After reaching more than 2600 members worldwide, the constituent general assembly was held on 27. June 2009. The founder of the CSLI, Senator h.c. Wolfgang Steinhardt, was elected for four years as the first president of the CSLI.



To keep step with the world-wide scorching growth of the CSLI and its different formations on 7. September 2010, the **LAZARUS UNION** was founded as a world-wide umbrella organisation for the various CSLI groups in more than 50 countries and with more than 11,000 members already. It is registered and recognised officially under the Austrian ZVR registration number 023914681. The constituent general assembly was held on 8. December 2010, with Senator h.c. Wolfgang Steinhardt being elected as president and Union Commander Mrs. Dr.med. Martina Mitter as vice president, both for a period of four years.





On 15. January 2011, the CORPS SAINT LAZARUSAUSTRIA (Sankt Lazarus Korps Österreich) CSLA was officially founded in its constituent assembly and registered under the Austrian ZVR number 451929423 and officially recognised as an association by the state. At the same time all Austrian members of the CORPS SAINT LAZARE INTERNATIONAL have been recognised as CSLA members and all non-Austrian members as LAZARUS UNION members, all with their respective function and rank. The (old) CORPS SAINT LAZARE INTERNATIONAL was then officially and unanimously dissolved by the general assembly.

Since 1.1.2012 the Lazarus Union, together with the Knighthood of Honour of the Lazarus Union, as independence aid organisation, is under the protection of the United Grand Priorities of the Hospitaller Order of Saint



Lazarus of Jerusalem and became therefore a part of this organization.



March 2013, the LAZARUS UNION was registered as NGO by the United Nations Organization (UNO).

At 21. June 2013 the Castle of Kreuzenstein nearby Vienna became the titular castle of the Knighthood of Honour of the Lazarus Union after the given approval of the owner of the castle, Earl Hans-Christian Wilczek.







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Ordinis Sancti Lazari Hierosolymitani
United Grand Priorities

