



VOLUME 58 • ISSUE 2 • JUNE 2026

THE ORDER

The Military & Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem



The Official Newsletter of the Grand Priory of America

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3 From the Grand Prior

Upcoming events and an invitation to join in the next Grand Prioral Council

4 Our New Postulants

Our newest members from all over the Grand Priory are introduced

6 In-Depth: New Members

Sally Bourque interviews some of our recently professed members

10 The Hospitaller's Report

Learn how The Order is using the funds from the Pentecostal Appeal to make a difference.

12 New Orleans Awaits!

This year's Grand Prioral Council returns to the site of our national shrine. Join us!

15 Jurisdiction Reports

Find out what our subjurisdictions across the Priory are doing to reach out in service.

20 The Flame of the Hospitaller Militia

The Vice-Delegate of the Order in Mexico reflects on the unique vocation of knight or dame.



THE ORDER

The Official Newsletter and Periodic Publication of the Grand Priory of America & the American Association of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem is produced by the authority of the Grand Prior.

H.E. The Chevalier John F. Byrnes,
GCLJ, GMLJ, GCMLJ
Grand Prior

H.E., The Chevalier CDR George W. Zimmerman,
USN (Ret), DSSM, KLJ, OMLJ, MBA
Editor

The Rev. Christopher J. Decker, ChLJ, MMLJ
Associate Editor

H.E. The Chevalier Jack Schroder, Jr.,
GCLJ, GCMLJ, JD
Associate Editor Emeritus

Contents of the publication are provided by Jurisdictional Commanders except where noted.

Copyright 2026 by the Grand Priory of America. Reproduction in whole or in part without written consent is strictly prohibited.

For more information and in-depth coverage of activities throughout the year, you can visit The Grand Priory of America on the internet at:

www.st-lazarus.us

Front Cover: Members pose for a photo at the time of the investiture for new postulants in San Antonio.

From The Grand Prior

Gearing Up for New Projects!



H.E. The Chevalier
John F. Byrnes,
GCLJ, GMLJ, GCMLJ

Grand Prior,
Grand Priory of America

Dear Friends,

Summer is here and a time to relax a bit, if we can, as we approach the last 6 months of 2026. While typically the summer is a “slow” time for the GPA, a very productive Dallas mid-year leadership meeting has led to some very exciting new projects for the GPA that I think will take us to the next level among charitable organizations and chivalric groups.

One of these projects will be the implementation of a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software program for our back-office operations, which should simplify and make more efficient our membership and financial data tracking programs. While our general membership may not necessarily notice all of the improvements pending, our volunteer leaders who work in these programs certainly will!

We are planning to expand the products in our online store under the direction of our new Armiger, Raul Estrada, OLJ. Stay tuned for more information and in the interim the store will be temporarily closed “for renovation”!

We will be announcing additional programs, changes and improvements to the GPA in New Orleans to help improve and expand our mission and vision of helping those in need, so come to NOLA and be one of the first to hear!

Speaking of the GPC, it is rapidly approaching and if you haven’t already registered, please do so as

soon as you can as the room block is filling fast. Our Grand Commandery of the South always provides an excellent and entertaining meeting and this year will be no exception!

In this newsletter you will see information on an international pilgrimage in Prague, Czech Republic, in late September. This is a beautiful city if you haven’t been there so take a look at the information.

On June 24th myself and several other leaders of the GPA will be traveling to Edmonton, Canada for the annual Chapter General of the Grand Priory in Canada. Our Canadian friends always put on a great meeting, with many quite interesting educational seminars along with the ceremonies and social festivities. Edmonton is also home to the largest population of Ukrainians in North America, and one of the evenings will be spent at the Ukrainian Cultural Center where I have been asked to give a presentation on our work in Ukraine.

Speaking of Ukraine, the GPA’s fourth medical aid trip to war-torn Ukraine begins on August 12, and our team looks forward to continuing our medical training at the front lines and our delivery of much needed medical equipment to their combat medics.

Anna and I wish you all a very pleasant summer, and we look forward to seeing all of you in New Orleans from September 10-13, 2026!! ❖



Welcome our
new postulants!



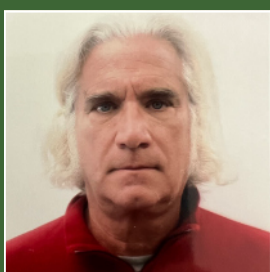
Mario Calzada Mercado, OLJ
Catholic
Federal Deputy / Businessman
El Marques, QT
Delegation of Mexico



Richard Clay Bluntzer, OLJ
Episcopal
Government Relations
Executive
San Antonio, TX



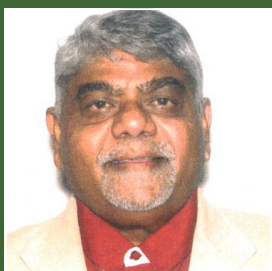
Liza Anne Ferer, OLJ
Catholic
Realtor
Newport Beach, CA
Grand Commandery of the West



Peter Constantine Georgiopoulos, OLJ
Greek Orthodox
Ship Owner
Millbrook, NY
Commandery of the Atlantic



Fr. Raymond Philip Cerezo Napuli, AChLJ
Catholic
Priest
Escondido, CA
Grand Commandery of the West



Ananda D. Babbili, OLJ, MD
Episcopal
Retired Physician Assistant
Fort Worth, TX
Commandery of the Southwest



James Edward Makaiolani Saffery, OLJ
Catholic
Police Detective
Honolulu, HI
Grand Commandery of the West



Michael John Skillman, OLJ
Christian
Institutional Investment Consultant
Newport Beach, CA
Grand Commandery of the West



Joshua Drew Jemjemian, OLJ
Armenian Orthodox
Security
Gainesville, FL
Commandery of the Southeast



In-Depth: New Member Introductions

Sally Bourque sat down virtually with some of our recently professed so that our members worldwide can get to know them better. Sally even introduces herself!



David Moore, OLJ, MBA
Grand Commandery of the South

St. Lazarus: Now that you are officers in The Order, what is one area that brings you joy/pride as you work alongside your commandery/delegation?

David Moore: The history of The Order and its defense of Christianity as well as its later defense against diseases and human suffering.

StL: What is one of the challenges that you find as a member of The Order?

DM: Finding time to be a more productive member.

StL: How important is prayer/faith life in the work you undertake in The Order?

DM: Extremely important. I believe we were put here on earth to care for each other and learn to overcome our differences.

StL: Is there a particular project or area of focus that has interested you since joining The Order?

DM: Not yet. I am aware of the projects we are working on, but have not attached myself to anything in particular. (Yet)

StL: What are your hopes for the future of The Order?

DM: That we continue to find quality people to join The Order as some older members pass the torch, and that we find unique ways to help our fellow man, which inspires others to do the same.



Camilo Rojas OLJ, MS
Commandery of the Southeast
(Bogotá, Colombia)

StL: Now that you are an officer in The Order, what is one area that brings you joy/pride as you work alongside your commandery/delegation?

Camilo Rojas: What brings me the greatest joy is the opportunity to serve others while living out my Catholic faith in a meaningful, practical way. Being part of The Order allows me to join men and women committed to Christian charity, service to those in need, and the ►

In-Depth: New Member Introductions continued

preservation of our rich spiritual and hospitaller traditions. I am especially grateful to Commander Jorge Valencia for his dedication and leadership in reaching out to prospective members throughout Colombia and Latin America. His efforts have enabled individuals like me to learn about and join The Order, and I am proud to help advance its mission in our region.

StL: What is one of the challenges that you find as a member of The Order?

CR: One of the challenges is helping people understand The Order's mission and purpose in regions where it is not yet widely known. Building awareness, recruiting dedicated members, and developing charitable initiatives require patience, commitment, and effective communication. However, I also see this challenge as an opportunity to strengthen The Order's presence across Colombia, Central America, and South America.

StL: How important is prayer/faith life in the work you undertake in The Order?

CR: Prayer and faith are essential to everything I hope to accomplish within The Order. As a Catholic, I believe charitable works are most effective when grounded in prayer, humility, and service to God. Faith gives our efforts direction and purpose, reminding us that our mission is not only humanitarian but also spiritual.

StL: Is there a particular project or area of focus that has interested you since joining The Order?

CR: I am particularly interested in initiatives that support vulnerable communities, especially children, the elderly, and families facing economic hardship. I am also excited about the opportunity to help establish and expand The Order's presence in Colombia and throughout Latin America, creating new

opportunities for charitable service and Christian fellowship.

StL: What are your hopes for the future of The Order?

CR: My hope is that The Order continues to grow in membership, visibility, and charitable impact while remaining faithful to its Christian and hospitaller values. I would like to see stronger participation across Central and South America, building on the excellent work already underway by Commander Valencia and the Southeast Commandery. I hope that more Catholics and Christians throughout the region will answer the call to service, helping The Order expand its charitable outreach and spiritual mission. I pray that future generations will continue to uphold the traditions, mission, and spirit of service that have characterized The Order for centuries.



Sally Bourque

Delegation of Imperial Calcasieu

St. Lazarus: Now that you are officers in The Order, what is one area that brings you joy/pride as you work alongside your commandery/delegation?

Sally Bourque: Having a vast community from different parts of our world. It's amazing to see so many people from different backgrounds come together for a

In-Depth: New Member Introductions continued

common good.

StL: What is one of the challenges that you find as a member of The Order?

SB: I find several problems that get addressed don't get solved. There isn't a lot of carryover from the meetings from what I can see. Also bringing new technology as a means of getting information out quicker and more efficiently.

StL: How important is prayer/faith life in the work you undertake in The Order?

SB: It's of utmost importance. Prayer helps one see the direction our Lord is guiding us to help others.

StL: Is there a particular project or area of focus that has interested you since joining The Order?

SB: Not at this time. I'm still learning all the different avenues about the order, but I'm excited about the future.

StL: What are your hopes for the future of The Order?

SB: To get more people involved to help as many people as possible. ✕

The Prayer of The Order

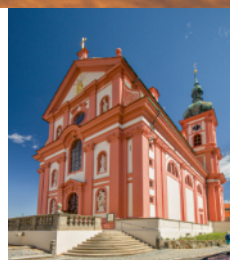
Almighty God, who dost chose
Thine elect out of every
nation, and dost show forth
Thy glory in their lives, grant
we pray Thee, that following
the example of Thy servant
Saint Lazarus, we may be
fruitful in good works to the
praise of Thy Holy Name,
through Jesus Christ, Our
Lord.

Lord, You Who are the Friend
of all mankind, were an
intimate friend of Lazarus and
his sisters. His death
brought tears to Your eyes
and power to Your voice
so that you called him forth in
life from the bonds of
death. Lord, may You who are
our life, now renew us
in the power of Your Spirit to
be concerned with the
lives and needs of others so
that one day we may all
share eternal life with You in
Your Heavenly Kingdom.
Amen.



**The Grand Bailiwick of the Czech Republic
invites you to a Pilgrimage
to Stará Boleslav, Czech Republic**

September 29 to October 4, 2026



Accommodation Options

- ▶ Lindner Hotel Prague Castle [[Visit Here](#)]
- ▶ Vienna House by Wyndham Diplomat Prague [[Visit Here](#)]

Note: Meetings will be held at the Lindner Hotel

The Program

Tuesday 29th September 2026

- ▶ Arrival of guests and accommodation
- ▶ Governance Working Committee (GWC) afternoon

**Wednesday, September 30, 2026
Meeting Day**

- ▶ Grand Magistral Council (GMC) morning and afternoon
- ▶ Venue: Lindner Hotel Prague Castle
- ▶ An evening gathering for everyone – coffee break/glass of wine

**Thursday, October 1, 2026
Meeting day**

- ▶ Meeting of the heads of jurisdiction (HOJ) – morning
- ▶ Hospitaller meeting (HM) - afternoon
- ▶ Venue: Lindner Hotel Prague Castle
- ▶ Dinner for selected guests (GWC, GMC, HOJ and HM)

- ▶ Venue: U Labutí restaurant [[Link](#)]

Friday, October 2, 2026

- ▶ Guided tour of Prague (a guide in English and Spanish will be provided) : Prague Castle, Old town square, Visit to the Infant Jesus of Prague in the Church of Our Lady Victorious, etc.
- ▶ Boat trip with lunch for everyone.
- ▶ Short meeting with the Mayor of Prague for selected guests (GMC, GWC, HOJ members)
- ▶ Evening: Gala dinner for everyone
- ▶ Venue: Monastery restaurant Premonstratensian at Strahov (restaurant is very close to Lindner Hotel Prague Castle)

**Saturday, October 3, 2026
Pilgrimage to Stará Boleslav
Church service**

- ▶ A walking procession to the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary approx. 800 m (1/2 mile) for members who are in good physical condition. Others will be transported to the church by bus. Transportation from Prague to Stará Boleslav will be provided by bus.

Sunday, October 4, 2026

- ▶ For those interested: a guided tour of Prague, Strahov Monastery, Loreta etc.
- ▶ End of the pilgrimage

Registration Packet Included on Page 24 of this Newsletter

From The Grand Prioral Hospitaller Our Members Continue to Step Up!



H.E. The Chevalier
Michael R. Milner,,
RADM, USPHS, (Ret), DHSc,
PA-C, KCLJ, KMLJ, SMLJ

Grand Prioral Hospitaller,
Grand Priory of America

Happy Flag Day America! Patty and I are enjoying the FIFA World Cup events as well as the recent NY Knicks win of the NBA Finals last night! A lot of things happening in our Nation right now as we approach the 250 th Anniversary of the Birth of America! We hope that this newsletter finds all of you well and celebrating this milestone for America with your friends and family!

Our Order's new grant cycle for local funding is underway with just over \$86,000 available to our local jurisdiction for projects that matter in your area. Every local jurisdiction has full decision-making authority on how to use these local funds. As you know, this fund is 50% of the total Pentecostal Appeal donations that our members made in 2025 and each jurisdiction has 50% of the total funds donated by their members. As has been stated in so many messages and reports, the more we all donate, the more we are able to give to projects in our area as well as nationally and internationally.

Some examples of projects for this year already approved include: support for USveterans, help for homeless families, efforts to stop human trafficking, support of local pregnancy or birthing centers, help for a disabled leprosy patient in Hawaii who needs a special lift to get out of bed and support for pediatric organ transplant/donation centers.

Each local grant application was sponsored by a member of the Order who brought the charitable need to the leaders of the jurisdiction and vetted the grantee by reviewing the background of the organization, its fiscal needs, gauge the likely impact of our contribution, its overall management and operational integrity and how the group might promote our donation in a way that might inspire worthy folks to join our Order. We expect to see a fair number of new postulants invested in the Order in September.

In this edition of the newsletter, which is an electronic variety and provides more space to share our stories, you will read about many of the larger projects that we supported this year here at home in the USA and internationally, especially in the Holy Land. We will share how we supported clinical research and clinical care delivery to patients with Leprosy in the USA; we will share updates on how the children are doing at the Infant Welfare Center in Jerusalem and a great article including a video link for the critical second elevator we sponsored at the French St Louis Hospital in Jerusalem which sits on the site of the 12 th century Leprosy hospital outside the gates of the Holy City. There will be an update on the Leprosy care program that we support in Mexico as well along with a story about how one of our Clergy and his parish in Texas support a ►

leprosy clinic in India and help feed lepers who can't feed themselves.

It goes without saying that our works of Christian Mercy are only possible because of your generosity and the hard work of your local jurisdictional leaders. A big shoutout to the Commanders, Hospitallers, and Almoners, working with all of you to recruit new local projects and provide greater visibility of our Order to the USA and the world! If any of you have ideas, suggestions or concerns about our charitable activities or wish to have additional details on how we review projects to ensure compliance with both US Internal Revenue Service rules as well as USA Patriot Act concerns, I am only an email or phone call away. I am ready to answer your questions and listen to your suggestions and ideas for other ways to promote giving by our members and ways to share our good work with others.

We look forward to seeing many of you in New Orleans in mid-September; if you wish to speak with me in person at that meeting, please let me know this via email or text message and I will share my travel schedule with you so we can agree on a "meet up plan". My email is: Hospitaller@st-lazarus.us and my cell phone number is 646-812- 1139. Enjoy this early part of your summer and thank you for all you do for those less fortunate. ✱

Leprosy Vaccine Development

Did you know?

Here is a concise summary of the current global status of leprosy vaccine development:

- ▶ **Current Status (BCG):** No specific vaccine is licensed. The tuberculosis BCG vaccine provides partial cross-protection and is standard for newborns in endemic countries, but not in Europe.
- ▶ **LepVax Candidate:** This is the first specific leprosy vaccine. Combining the recombinant polyprotein LEP-F1 with the GLA-SE adjuvant, it prevents infection and reduces severe nerve damage.
- ▶ **Clinical Trials:** Following a successful Phase 1a safety trial in the US, Phase 1b is ongoing in Brazil through the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) to evaluate safety in BCG-vaccinated adults. A Phase 2a trial is planned.
- ▶ **Funding & Strategy:** Driven by non-profits like DAHW, development depends on humanitarian infrastructure. Until approval, early diagnosis, Multidrug Therapy (MDT), and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP4LEP) remain the standard field treatment regimens.

From Mike: Thanks to my colleague on the International Hospitaller Commission who provided these statistics, Dr. Michael Feurstein, KLJ, a Specialist in Surgery and General/Family Medicine and the Hospitaller of the Grand Bailiwick of Austria.



Grand
Prioral
Council

**New
Orleans**



A Message from The Leadership of The Grand Commandery of the South

Dear Members of The Order,

As we move through this blessed year of 2026, the Grand Commandery of the South continues its sacred mission of hospitality, charity, and Christian fellowship. We are honored to host several significant events in the coming months and invite all members and guests to join us in prayer, service, and community.

In the bonds of Saint Lazarus,
The Grand Commandery of the South

The Grand Commandery of the South is honored to host the 2026 Grand Prioral Council (GPC), bringing together members from across the Grand Priory of America, which incorporates the United States of America and Mexico, and special guests from Canada.

Thursday, September 10

- Arrival, registration and reception

Friday, September 11

- Day Events at The Higgins Hotel
- Evening Vigil Service at Chapel of St. Ignatius, Gayle & Tom Benson Jesuit Center
- Dinner at The New Orleans Country Club





Saturday, September 12

- ▶ Day Events at The Higgins Hotel
- ▶ Annual Investiture of New Members at St. Mary's Church at the National Shrine of the Grand Priory of America
- ▶ Gala Dinner at The Higgins Hotel
- ▶ Entertainment provided by WWII Museum Veterans Band

Registration: Members should login to the Order website to reserve a room at the Higgins Hotel and complete the Grand Prioral Council Registration:

www.st-lazarus.us/events

Important Reminders for Members Attending the Grand Prioral Council:

- ✓ Book your accommodations early at The Higgins Hotel
- ✓ Log in to the member portal for the detailed schedule and registration
- ✓ Prepare for the prayer vigil if you are a postulant
- ✓ Formal attire required for Saturday evening gala (white tie)
- ✓ Review workshop offerings and plan your participation

For Guests: All events welcome guests unless otherwise noted. Please contact the Grand Commandery office for information about attending specific events.

About Our Historic Venues

National Shrine of St. Lazarus

Located at the historic Ursuline Convent in the French Quarter, this sacred space serves as a spiritual center for our Order's prayer vigils and devotions.

St. Mary's Church

Home to the National Shrine of the Grand Priory of America, this beautiful church provides a fitting setting for our most solemn ceremonies.

The Higgins Hotel

Our venue partner offers modern accommodations that mimic the '40s while honoring New Orleans' rich WWII history and connection to the Higgins Boat legacy.

The City of New Orleans

This diverse city has it all. From food to music to art, New Orleans' rich history and cultural blend make for an unforgettable trip. New Orleans is not just a place you visit; it is a place you feel. It is a lively representation of human creativity, struggle, and joy. Every bite of food, every note of jazz, every handmade piece of art reflects a legacy of resilience and community. New Orleans' culture is inclusive and unique, making the experience of being there feel captivating and new.



Hopewallah: "one who provides hope"

A ministry of care from a Texas church to the lepers in Hyderabad

The Very Reverend Ronald D. Pogue, SChLJ, D.Min.



▲ Loss of fingers and hands use due to neurologic impact of Leprosy

Here is the story of a ministry that aligns with the 950-year story of our Order. Since 2008, our congregation, St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, Texas, has been a primary supporter of a ministry that cares for lepers and their families in Hyderabad, India. It is called [Hopewallah](#), which means one who provides hope. (Click the link to go to their website.)

The ministry originated with Bishop Prabhudas Babbili, who became the first bishop of the Anglican Church of South India Diocese of Karimnagar in 1978. He ministered to hundreds of lepers and their families living in squalor and confined to leper colonies in remote locations. After Bishop Prabhudas's death in 1996, the Babbili family, along with friends, church families, and generous donors, continued his work to care these vulnerable children of God. Hopewallah, headquartered in Fort Worth, became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 2011 and the ministry was able to expand.

Hopewallah provides medical and psychological telehealth, clothing, food, mobility aides, sanitary supplies as well as school supplies for children living in the leper colonies. They serve 90 families in Borabanda/Parvathnager, 120 families in Maulali, and 100 families in Shanthinagar

who live in severe poverty. There were more before COVID took its toll. These families receive minimal government subsidies that include scant rations, medicines, and wound care supplies. I was especially moved to learn that Hopewallah provides daily meals for lepers who are unable to cook or feed themselves due to amputations or deformities of their hands.

At last year's annual Hopewallah Dinner, St. Christopher's raised over \$40,000. At their own expense, members accompanied Dr. Andy Babbili, a member of St. Christopher's and a Postulant in our Order, to India for his annual visit to provide direct care and oversight of the ongoing work. 100% of the funds raised provides hope through care and treatment of people with leprosy and their families. ✱

Clinical assessments being conducted in one of Hopewallah's villages ►





Dame Michie Bissel, Commander of The South, presents a check to *Cafe Ingles* for books and supplies for the English as a second language classes at St. Anthony of Padua Our Lady of Guadalupe churches in New Orleans.

Grand Commandery of the South members Ann Middleton and Bill Coe present a check to Jackson Smith for Bastion. Bastion is an apartment community for Veterans.

Funds donated went to support headphones to counter Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) used in their audio therapy technology.



Looking Back: San Antonio Grand Prioral Council



By the Numbers

Outreach in IRAPUATO and MORELIA

ACTIVITY	TOTAL
Municipalities Visited	60
Visits to households*	323
People living in households visited	1,350
Treatments provided in homes	16
Masses and social events	12
Attendance at events and Masses	208
Diocesan health initiative reunions	33
Training events	3
Attendance to training events (nuns)	9
Food packages delivered	371
Help with medicines	997
Provision of healing material	26
Kilometers covered	24,912
Blankets delivered	184
Personal cleaning material	114
Fruits and Vegetables	91
Medical consultations	1,414

*pharmaceutical products were also delivered at all home visits.



▲ Distribution of food at a home visit

México

On January 2nd, I traveled to our clinic in Morelia to bring medicines and pharmaceutical products provided to us through Direct Relief by Laboratorios Sanfer and Procter & Gamble. They were worth \$257,518 pesos (approximately US \$14,300).

On January 28, the nuns working with us in both locations who could spare the time -and I- listened via Zoom to the activities of the "VI Update on Leprosy Symposium organized by the Federal Ministry of Health". It lasted all morning and part of the afternoon, and our own Dr. Juan José Salazar -our chancellor for Irapuato- participated with a presentation on "The Role of the Civil Society in the Control of Leprosy".

My wife Fina and I attended the Mid-year Reunion of the main officers of the GPA in Dallas on April 10 and 11. Also in April, we detected an opportunity to request funds from a foundation called Gonzalo Río Arronte which donates resources for (among other causes) "Palliative Care". We filled out the necessary forms, which were finalized on May 31st, and are waiting to see if our request was approved and for what amount. If we succeed in obtaining those extra resources, we may use them to complement the purchase of a van in a good condition for Irapuato - since the one we are using now is 22 years old- and/or adapt our clinic in Morelia so that two nuns can move there instead of using the

Reaches Out

house that has been on loan for them to use over many years, but that has water leaks and other problems that have proven hard to solve.

In May, our very enthusiastic Vice-delegate Pedro Casillas got together with sympathizer -and probable future postulant- Javier Vázquez (who is 25 years of age) and created a group of young men and women we have designated as "esquires". There are over twenty of them already participating, mostly in Querétaro, and they have agreed on selling tickets for a raffle in which the prize will be an I-phone 17. We have printed 500 tickets with double numbers each, from 001 to 000, and the winning ticket will be the one whose three digits coincide with the last three digits of the National Lottery winning ticket of the lottery game on November 27. Each ticket costs \$200 pesos (about 11 dollars).

I may also add that the members of our Delegation living in Mexico City have held breakfast meetings at the Club de Industriales starting at 8:00 A.M. on Tuesdays in January, April and June. Attendance has averaged about 12 members each time. These meetings have been instrumental in maintaining the fraternal attitude and enthusiasm so important to our success. ❖



H.E. The Chevalier
Guillermo Salas Vargas,
KCLJ, CMLJ, BMLJ, MBA

Delegate,
Delegation of México



▲ Top: Distribution of supplies at home visit
Middle & Bottom: Breakfast meeting participants

PROMOTIONS & AWARDS

In accordance with the Constitution of the Order, and after consultation with the Advisory Council, the Grand Prior is pleased to approve the following promotions:

GRAND COMMANDERY OF THE WEST:

- ✠ Chevalier Nisham O. Partamian, KLJ, OMLJ → Knight Commander of Grace (KCLJ)
- ✠ Chevalier Leonard Peter Rossi, KLJ, MMLJ → Knight Commander of Grace (KCLJ)
- ✠ The Rev. Alfred Stephen Baca, ChLJ, CMLJ → Senior Chaplain (SChLJ)
- ✠ The Rev. Fr. William Matekihelotu Tulua-Alvarez, ChLJ, CMLJ → Senior Chaplain (SChLJ)
- ✠ Marc Philippe Chazaud, CLJ, MMLJ → Knight of Grace (KLJ)
- ✠ William Reimer Lavelle, CLJ, OMLJ → Knight of Grace (KLJ)
- ✠ Michael John Rossi, CLJ, OMLJ → Knight of Grace (KLJ)
- ✠ Anthony Vinothan Selvanathan, CLJ, MMLJ → Knight of Grace (KLJ)
- ✠ Shirley Ann Tamoria, CLJ, MMLJ, MD → Dame of Grace (DLJ)
- ✠ Joshua James Joseph Mitchell Barger, OLJ, OMLJ → Commander (CLJ)
- ✠ Jill Ann-Marie Short, OLJ, OMLJ → Commander (CLJ)

COMMANDERY OF THE SOUTHWEST:

- ✠ The Very Reverend Ronald Dennis Pogue, ChLJ → Senior Chaplain (SChLJ)

In accordance with the Constitution of the Order, and after consultation with the Advisory Council, the Grand Prior is pleased to approve the following awards:

GRAND COMMANDERY OF THE WEST:

- ✠ Chevalier Harry Lewis Tarnoff, KCLJ, KMLJ — Bronze Cross of Merit (BCrLJ)
- ✠ Anthony Vinothan Selvanathan, CLJ, MMLJ — Bronze Cross of Merit (BCrLJ)



Hospitaller Info: In Depth

Uncovering How Leprosy Persists

Tony Van Witsen — May 1, 2026

Jessica Fairley and colleagues are revolutionizing the understanding of how leprosy is spread. Also known as Hansen's Disease, the disease destroys nerves and muscles.

"Leprosy had gone away in many places since multi-drug therapy came on the scene in the '80s," says Fairley, professor in the Emory School of Medicine. "But it remained in other places like India and Brazil. My interest was: why does this persist in certain places?"

Leprosy was traditionally thought to be transmitted solely through respiratory droplets via close human-to-human contact. Yet approximately 200,000 new cases continue to appear each year worldwide.

In Fairley's study, 319 community members living near a former leprosy hospital in Brazil were tested for antibodies. Soil samples were also collected to detect viable bacteria.

"We found that when there was a lack of sanitary separation from human waste, it was associated with about twice the chances of being infected. The strongest association was not having access to improved bathing water. Owning agricultural land was also highly associated — not as a marker of wealth, but likely due to environmental exposure." ❖

Staying Current:

Medical Abstracts

N.I.A. Higueta, C. Avanzi, A.F. Henao-Martínez, T.P. Honap, et al. Leprosy. The Lancet(2026);

407 (10530), 805-819. ISSN 0140-6736.

[Download PDF](#)

Abstract

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a curable granulomatous condition caused by *Mycobacterium leprae* or *Mycobacterium lepromatosis*, disproportionately affecting impoverished communities across the globe. The bacteria's tropism for dermal histiocytes, endothelial cells, and Schwann cells causes neuronal and dermal damage that often results in disability, permanent disfigurement, stigma, and social exclusion. Despite important achievements in the understanding of the disease, its elimination has been hampered by the scarcity of sensitive diagnostic tools, suboptimal integration and implementation of coordinated and financially stable preventive interventions, persistent stigmatisation, and failure to efficiently and sustainably address the socioeconomic and demographic factors associated with an increased risk of leprosy. In this Seminar, we provide an update on key public health and clinical aspects of the disease.

Read more on the worldwide response to Leprosy in the Leprosy-Info Newsletter available from the Grand Magistry of The Order:

st-lazarus.net/content/leprosy-info-newsletter



The Flame of the Hospitaller Militia:

"Vocation, Sacrifice and Faith in the Order of Saint Lazarus"

Chev. Pedro Casillas Capetillo, CLJ, MMLJ, BMLJ, MS.
Vice-Delegate of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Mexico



I. The Echo of the Ancestors and the Vocation of Chivalry

As Vice-Delegate of the Order of Saint Lazarus in Mexico, it is my profound honour to guide the new candidates preparing to cross our definitive threshold. Listening closely to their concerns, I write not from the detachment of authority, but from shared spiritual empathy. For these postulants, knighthood is far from a mere honorary title or heraldic embellishment; it is an affirmative response to an inward vocational calling, an absolute disposition of body and soul toward serving the destitute and protecting the vulnerable.

This vibrating vocation links them directly to the history of those who preceded us. To bear the green cross is to recall a sacred responsibility inherited from ancestors who upheld the same ideals of piety and valour. Our future brothers in arms understand that their daily work alongside our commandery represents a dynamic spiritual and historical restoration. Each act of service becomes a golden link binding a glorious past to a needy present, proving that the Order remains a transforming, living force at the heart of Mexican society.

II. The Scales of Sacrifice: Economy and the Gift of Self

The path of the contemporary knight is rarely traversed beneath an atmosphere of idyllic ease. Today, our postulants confront a pressing operational challenge: the capacity to contribute financially through donations. For many estimable candidates, sustaining

these commitments severely strains the domestic economy, requiring a monumental effort to reconfigure family priorities so that aid is not wanting on the battlefronts against disease.

This economic detachment is made from a theological perspective of sharing whatever God bestows. Money transforms into medicine and solace at the vital nodes where our Delegation concentrates its efforts: our clinics in Irapuato and Morelia.

Faced with rigid financial limitations, the candidates bring a luminous counterpart: their time and talent. They constantly reiterate that goodwill and personal capacities are the most valuable capital they can treasure. As leaders, we must ensure that our membership is never restricted solely by financial metrics; it would be an institutional tragedy if an organization born for hospitaller service became an exclusive club for financial elites. The worth of a knight is measured by the magnitude of their devotion, not the balance of their bank account.

III. The Invisible Pillar: A Living Life of Faith

None of our planned works would possess long-term viability if detached from their foundational root: the constant practice of prayer. The Order of Saint Lazarus is an institution of deeply Christian roots; thus, prayer stands as the invisible, indestructible pillar of our daily work.

For these candidates, God is the absolute ►



pillar of individual and institutional life. Their rule is clear: never doubt. They accept the divine will with humility, interpreting every grace received, both consolations and tribulations, as a spiritual tool to serve their neighbour from their specific trench of duty. Beneath these spiritual laws, the permanence of our care centres in Mexico is explained not by secular administration or subsidies, but by a collective summing of prayers and goodwill that materializes divine providence for the helpless.

IV. Horizons of the Spirit and the Hospitaller Trench

For those entering our ranks, commitment is nurtured through a vibrant tapestry of cultural and historical passions: the rigorous study of history, the symbolic beauty of heraldry, and a fascination with the medieval world. Far from being exercises in graphic or academic vanity, these disciplines provide coordinates of identity. To our candidates, altruistic service is heraldry put into action, history written with lines of charity.

In our nation, this path is outlined with meridian clarity: our focus is strictly concentrated upon the concrete realities of Irapuato and Morelia. Our postulants recognize that the Order is a physical presence through its assistance clinics. Sustaining these medical centres requires a daily dose of ordinary heroism, keeping alive a vital impulse that we identify as the direct action of the Holy Spirit moving hearts to conquer weariness and financial limitations.

V. The Seedbed of the Future: Escudero Clubs

An institution that limits itself to the battles

of the present without drawing up a strategy for the morrow is doomed to extinction. To achieve the generational renewal our future requires, the new intakes actively promote the establishment of *Escudero* (Squire) clubs within our delegations.

Rescued from medieval tradition, the concept of the squire serves as an ideal tool for twenty-first-century formative needs. These clubs will operate as authentic human seedbeds, spaces for education in values, discipline, heraldry, and early initiation into altruistic service. This structure guarantees a steady influx of conscious, prepared adults. The knight and dame of the future must be formed from youth to understand that the green cross is not a prize for personal merit, but a light yoke of responsibility toward the suffering.

VI. Conclusion: The Commitment of the Green Cross

The impending belonging of these candidates to the Order of Saint Lazarus constitutes a path of personal perfection through collective service. No dichotomy exists between the pride of knighthood and evangelical humility; both concepts merge in servants who recognize the face of Christ in the chronically ill.

May the study of history and heraldry remain the intellectual lights guiding their steps, but let it ever be their altruistic actions that define the nobility of their character. With our gaze fixed upon the future, and upon the young squires who shall inherit our crosses, we renew today our vow of fidelity. May God grant us the necessary graces to continue serving our neighbour with joy, keeping aflame the immaculate lamp of hospitaller chivalry in our beloved homeland. ✠

The French St. Louis Hospital In Jerusalem



H.R. Penton, GCLJ, KMLJ, GMLJ, PhD
Bailiff, Order of Saint Lazarus in Mexico

The French St. Louis Hospital in Jerusalem was founded in 1851 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. Built just outside the northern wall of the old city, near the New Gate and the Tower of David, Lazarite historians have identified its location as the site of the medieval St. Lazarus leprosarium — the headquarters of our Order in the twelfth century.

The hospital gradually specialized in caring for terminally ill patients and became a pioneer of palliative and hospice care. Both our Order and the hospital are linked by a common tradition of caring for the sick and vulnerable in Jerusalem — a mission that has endured for nearly a millennium.

GPA members visited the hospital during pilgrimages in 2019 and 2023. What became obvious was the dire need for infrastructure updates. The single elevator, dating from the 1960s, was unreliable and used for both patients and supplies.



View the 2025 Renovations!

French St Louis Hospital Patients Enjoying Entertainment and Cool Breezes on the Rooftop Patio at the Hospital

Timeline of Activity

2024: GPA donated \$5,000 for medical equipment.

2025: GPA contributed \$70,000 for a second elevator — enabling mobility-impaired patients to enjoy the roof patio for the first time.

2026: The GPA is providing \$80,000 to establish a first-class outpatient clinic, providing services for hospital patients and also Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Old City who need outpatient medical care.

Your Pentecostal Appeal donations are reaching out globally and locally, continuing the mission our Order started nearly 1,000 years ago.✙



The Infant Welfare Society In Jerusalem



Nursery & Kindergarten 1 2: The Nursery welcomed the children from January 2026. The number reached up to 22 children. The number is lower than every year since the war on Gaza 2023, lots of parents lost their jobs particularly those who work in Tourism.

In March our nursery was closed because of the Iranian War. For the first two weeks, there was a complete closure on the Old City, we were not able to reach the center. After two weeks I managed to enter the Old City and we continued with our activity of cooking a hot meal for the Elderly. Our cook lives in the Old City so together we managed to distribute the meals.

On the 9th of April, we opened the center for everyone. The children continued with their activities as usual and the number increased.

Now we are preparing for the summer school. Usually we start on the 15th of June, but this year it was postponed for a week. We will start on the 22nd of June until the 29th of July. We are having three themes this year: Little Musician, Little Chef, and Story Sack. The number is reaching 40 children from age 4 to 12. All 40 children are Christians from the Old City.

They spend 7 hours daily at our center and we provide food for them. The main goal is to help the working mothers during the summer vacation.

Other Activities of the Society: The Remedial Education Program for the Youth.

In order to reduce the drop outs of the youth from schools, we provided support lessons to strengthen the weak points in specific subject so they can at least finish school.

We started the first two months of this year then we were obliged to close the center because of the war and this program has stopped for one month and a half.

In the middle of April we managed to resume the lessons, unfortunately, it was difficult and unsafe for the youth to reach our center. The situation was tensed and lots of police and army in the Old City. In the coming two weeks we will have intensive lessons for the exams.

Hot meals: As mentioned above, we stopped this program for two weeks only. The demand increased during the closure of the Old City, so I had to reach the center to continue with this program even if it was dangerous sometimes. There were rockets on the Old City and our building was a bit affected because it is an old building. Now we are distributing around 44 meals per day, for five days a week.

Elderly Club 3 : This program for the Elderlies who can reach our center started after the war on Gaza 2023. These old people were terrified from the on-going situation, but we managed to provide a platform to socialize and to enhance their overall well-being. Meetings took place three times a week. Usually, we have trips and activities out side the center, but the situation is not stable so until now our activities are at the center only.✱

The Military & Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

Grand Bailiwick of the Czech Republic

GRAND MASTER'S PILGRIMAGE, OCTOBER 2026

Stará Boleslav, Czech Republic, 2nd– 4th October 2026

BOOKING FORM - PILGRIMAGE

(please use a separate form for each member)

SENDto: lazarus.cz@seznam.cz

Name of Jurisdiction	
Country of Jurisdiction	
Title	
Family Name	
First Name	
Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female
Rank and Position within the Order	
GC Number (from Membership Certificate)	
Nationality	
Address	
Post Code (Zip code)	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Languages spoken	
Names of any non-members accompanying you	
Wheelchair access required?	☐ YES ☐ NO
Arrival date	
Departure date	

EVENT	Number attending	EUR per person	Total EUR
FIXED PRICE INCLUDES: Gala dinner at the Lindner Hotel (2 nd October) Pilgrimage incl. lunch (3 rd October) Bus transport to and from Stará Boleslav (3 rd October)		EUR 310	
EXTRAS			
Prague sightseeing (Prague castle) – morning (2 nd October)		EUR 25	
Boat trip with lunch (2 nd October)		EUR 55	
Prague sightseeing (Old Town etc.) - afternoon (2 nd October)		EUR 20	
Prague sightseeing (Strahov Monastery)		EUR 15	
Commemorative medal		EUR 25	
Total amount in EUROS			
SIGNATURE			

Accommodation:

Lindner Hotel Prague Castle

Each participant is responsible for booking their own accommodation.

Here is the internet link for booking accommodation for pilgrims at the Lindner Hotel:

- [Booking Link Lindner Hotel Prague Castle](#)

PAYMENT METHODS:

- 1) By bank transfer in Euros (free of collection costs)
 to: VSR SV.LAZARAJ, Z.S. REFERENCE: 2026 Pilgrimage
 IBAN = CZ6803000000000254939405 Swift code (BIC) = CEKOCZPP
- 2) PAYPAL: <https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/HMDUQSQ2JVXAA>

Please also include your name and GC number in the payment reference for identification

If you have any special requirements, either for the meals or for any other matter, please write the details here:

LAZARUS

