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## Grand Prior's Address 2009

This Year has been dubbed the **Year of Creativity and Innovation**. Dr Edward de Bono, a Maltese Doctor who has specialized in developing and spreading the 'ethos' of creativity and innovative thinking has been named *Creative Ambassador* for 2009 by the European Union. I have been for several years a disciple of Dr de Bono.

**Can WE, that is, our Grand Priory, take up the message and become more creative, more innovative this year?** That depends on me, on you, on each of our Members. We need to get into the **spirit of innovation**, come up with good ideas that work, and come forward to not only bring **new ideas** to the Council table BUT ALSO to actuate the best ideas with enthusiasm.

I have in mind to create a **Ladies Circle** for our Grand Priory, why not? In many voluntary institutions, women have shown they can do it. And that's not only where the men are the leaders. The Ladies I have in mind will not be 'followers', they will be our Partners...ready able and willing to help our creativity campaign to succeed.

Last year (2008) we have had much success, and opened **fresh avenues** of action and growth as evidenced by the various Reports you'll hear. BUT we have failed rather badly on the Fund-raising side. We have concentrated much more on social activities, functions and donations. Yes we gave away Donations, but mostly from our existing charitable Fund. That Fund MUST be nurtured and helped to grow, or it will die a death.

This area in particular is where the Ladies can help. I have in mind that they can help us organize AND RUN rummy parties, outings in the countryside, jumble sales, visits to famous buildings, and even a trip abroad, and this with fundraising in mind. A concert and/or a group visit to the Manoel Theatre for some big show would also be a new thing for the Grand Priory and it'll be fun doing these things together. We must keep our mark-ups moderate to encourage participation, and group discounts can be explored. If each of us try harder to encourage Guests to participate this would of course considerably increase our charitable takings better to fulfill our philanthropic aims. I also wish to involve the Ladies in telling us what **they** think of our events and functions, and what area of social need they wish us to support. **Come on Ladies; help the chevaliers make a hit this year!**

Among the innovations going on, we are now supporting a new **affiliate organization, The Order of Charity**. This organization packs several hundreds of local contributors (who are not members of the Order) towards **the needs of Lepers in foreign lands**. It is part of the **Raoul Follerau Foundation**, a highly respected international organization based in France. We are proud to be thus enabled better to help the fight against Leprosy, which still effects hundreds of thousands abroad in

Africa, India and the near and far East. Dr Joe Galea has kindly offered to help Chevalier Tony Cutajar in the running of this affiliate. In 2008 we contributed also to other Leprosy-care institutions.

We also plan to redevelop and strengthen the **Step By Step Foundation**, in the cause of brain injured children. This is another affiliate which needs us to give it more life, as it has great potential to do good locally. The two Clinics continue to function meanwhile

Another target this year, to which my Council rightly attaches great importance, is to continue relentlessly seeking out suitable Premises as our **Headquarters**. The Castello is really the Order's property and we have the right to use it, but there are limitations as we do not hold the Key. I enjoin each of you to keep alert for any opportunity that presents itself. Our big problem is *funds* of course. So we need to either hit a bargain or find a benefactor who will help support this project either financially or with a Property. I am sure you all agree that we must be very creative if we are to achieve this ambitious objective.

Our **relations with the Order** have been, and are, very good, - and we have consolidated those good international relations during our memorable stay in Manchester, UK for the Chapter General, electing the new Grand Master and seeing him installed in the magnificent Cathedral there. The Grand Master, **Don Carlos Gereda de Borbon**, is a Marquis and a relative of our former Grand Master His Royal Highness Don Francisco de Borbon y Escasany. The correct term of address for Don Carlos is 'The Most Honourable'. In Manchester we took a delegation of seven, and we made many Lazarite contacts there, some of whom are very keen to come over for our more important functions, like Investitures. Proof of this was the visit of the Honorable Mr Justice Barry O'Keefe Grand Prior of Australia, Chevalier John Moriarty from the Grand Priory of California, USA, and Aarne Koskimies, Grand Prior of Finland.

We were also contacted from Lazarus members overseas to send them copies of **our first publication, THE HOSPITALERS OF ST LAZARUS**, authored by our ever-active Hospitaller, Chev. Prof Charles Savona –Ventura. I said our 'first' publication, because it is not said that we shall not produce another publication before this year is out!

**Relations with the Grand Commandery** are friendly and we have this year had occasion to invite them and be invited to functions of each other. However it was rather disappointing that they did not support our Investiture this year, though invited...for reasons of their own. However I enjoin you all to be friendly and courteous towards our brethren in that Grand Commandery, as I am hoping that this year we can also work together on some important project. I am not ruling out a visit to Malta by the Grand Master and the Spiritual Protector later in the year, in which case our Grand Priory and the Grand Commandery will work hand in hand to make such a great occasion a memorable success.

We are lucky to have a **Website** of international level. Our thanks here goes to Chevalier David Zammit, Commander in Chief of the Special Rescue Group, who hosts and manages this grand communication and information tool. It was developed with lots of design and content from our Hospitaller, who is basically David's partner in this project. The Site is an excellent PR source...but I must say we can do with a **regular PRO** in our Group, who is able to promote media interest in our activities and also be our direct link with members on an individual level.

**Individually**, each of our Members has excellent qualities, capabilities and assets. I wish to tap into those capabilities so as to obtain greater input from them where it comes to participation, contribution and function building. Our PRO will also be a member-relations officer working in this field, getting to know you better, and helping you get more involved.

Talking of involvement I think it is a pity that during 2008 the **Special Rescue Group** was not very active, at least in our regard. An eminent example of that as their total absence from our last Investiture, which nonetheless was a huge success. Even here we made a fresh breakthrough, by having the Function in the impressive Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Never before, apart from the unique Basilica of St George in Gozo, did we have an Investiture in such a large and beautiful church.

As regards **Gozo**, I cannot fail to mention our **Commandery of Gozo**. We have to work hard to assist this body to become active and to grow in numbers. Unless they reach the membership of at least 15 persons and perform activities in Gozo, I'm afraid the Order's *magisterium* will expect us to call it a Delegation...which is not something we will allow to happen. In Gozo we have done some lovely operations over the years, but this year we need more action over there. I know and appreciate that Chevaliers Paul Banavage and Joe Griscti have Gozo very much to heart and are working with me and Council towards the objective. Well, actually, 50 per cent of the new members admitted this Investiture hail from Gozo. I am not ruling out an Investiture in Gozo some time before the summer sets in.

**My Council** consists of a bunch of really good people. Collectively they are involved and active, and I believe I am lucky to have such a good team. Our Chancellor Chev. Michael Ciavola and our Vice Chancellor and Secretary General Chev. Tony Cutajar deserves special praise. I want here and now to say to them a big thank you. And I extend my sincere thanks to each of the other Councillors for all their loyalty, dedication and contribution during 2008. As even greater work and efficiency is the target this year, I will have to carry out a small cabinet reshuffle though, starting next month., but I stress it is no personal reflection on the individuals who will be rested, at least for a period.

Finally, I must now communicate to you that **His Excellency the Chevalier Geoffrey Fosberry**, has informed me by email that the Order, namely the Grand Master, has nominated him as **Grand Bailiff of Malta** for the next five (5) years; and in conjunction with this, **the Maltese Islands have become a Grand Bailiwick**. This move is intended to make of Malta a **National Jurisdiction**, just like several other much bigger nations. We of course knew about the Order's intentions in this matter since 2007, but it had been a seeming arrangement at the time that the appointment would be for two years and that the Maltese Grand Prior would be appointed Bailiff, to later succeed as Grand Bailiff. My Council shall be clarifying matters with the Order and with the Grand Bailiff as soon as practically possible. I have of course congratulated Chevalier Fosberry on your behalf and that of Council. He meanwhile continues to be the *Deputy Commander of the Castello* and *Grand Chancellor Emeritus* within the Order, actively responsible for some twelve (12) countries mostly in Europe. The two jurisdictions meanwhile will retain their internal independence. This much is assured. But more is at stake. I will of course inform all Members by Circular when more is known about the details of this latest 'innovation'. Innovation of course is only successful if preceded by careful pre-planning.

But I DID tell you when I started, that this is the year of Innovation and Creativity.



*Chev. T.C. Cutajar*  
*KCLJ*  
*Vice-Chancellor & Secretary General*  
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## **Administrative Report**

### **2008**

#### **COUNCIL MEETINGS**

During 2008 the Council of the Grand Priory met officially 10 times.

The following attended 10 times: The Grand Prior Dr. The Chev. Joseph Pace; The Chancellor Chev. Michael Ciavola; The Vice-Chancellor Chev. Tony C Cutajar; Chev. Prof. Charles Savona Ventura. Dr. Ray Gatt attended 9 times, was excused once; Chev. Paul Banavage attended 8 times, was excused twice; Chev. Godfrey Sammut attended 7 times, was excused 3 times; Chev. David Zammit and Chev. Salvino Muscat attended 7 times, was excused twice, was absent once; Chev. Joseph Griscti attended 6 times, was excused 4 times; Chev. Joseph Spiteri Audibert attended 6 times, was excused once, was absent 3 times.

#### **DECISIONS**

- \* At the 38th Council Meeting on 6th February it was decided that the Grand Priory takes over the Order of Charity
- \* At the 39th Council Meeting on 12th March it was decided that those members who are one year in arrears on their membership payment will be put on the inactive list. Also that all potential candidates are to be provided with an information package before joining the Order (to include details of obligations).
- \* At the 40th Council Meeting on 16th April it was decided that the Rescue Group members who are also members of the Order, must pay their fee like everybody else.
- \* At the 42nd Council Meeting on 23rd July it was decided that the sum of €2,000 be allocated to help those members who would participate at the Chapter General representing the Grand Priory, in Manchester.
- \* At the 44th Council Meeting on 1st October the Order of Charity Committee was formed. It is made up of the Grand Prior (*ex officio*), Chev. Cutajar, Chev. Savona Ventura and Mr. Joseph Galea. Also that the Investiture in December will take place at the Carmelite Basilica in Valletta followed by a reception at the Kazin Malti.
- \* At the 46th Council Meeting on 17th December it was noted that the Rescue Group will not form part of the Investiture. (?) Also that the Order of Charity should open a separate bank account and Mr Galea issue the official receipts.

#### **ACTIVITIES**

- 26 January – World Leprosy Day was celebrated at the Topaz Hotel. Chev. Savona Ventura gave a lecture following the AGM. This was followed by a Buffet Dinner.
- 15 March – Concert by Marie Therese Vassallo's choir at Balluta Parish Church
- 20 April – Gozo occasion. Mass at St. George's Basilica followed by lunch at Calypso Hotel and the film *Molokai*.
- 25 June – Meeting Archbishop Paul Cremona at the Castello.
- 1 September – The Grand Prior's 70th birthday private party, Council was invited.

5 September – BBQ at Vila Tarxien. Six members attended.

12/13 September – Chapter General of the Order and Installation of the New Grandmaster in Manchester. 7 members from the Grand Priory attended.

20 September – Lecture by Dr Donald Sammut at Catholic Institute. Only three members attended.

2 November – Mass at Our Lady of Victories followed by lunch at Osborne Hotel.

6 December – Investiture at Carmelite Parish Church in Valletta followed by Gala Dinner at Kazin Malti. 90 members and guests attended.

17 December – St Lazarus Day. Mass at Dar tal-Kleru where a hamper was presented.

29 December – Council Get-together at the Grand Prior's residence.

The three Executive officers met the Prior of the Carmelite Basilica in Valletta at his request. He accepted to become our Assistant Chaplain. Their historian had done research work about our Order for their annual publication. A donation was made to the community following the Investiture.



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## **Hospitaller's Report**

### **2008**

The Hospitaller activities of the Grand Priory during 2008 were centred towards supporting several charitable institutions.

1. **Victims of Leprosy:** the Grand Priory has continued to organise activities with the aim of reminding its members of their assumed responsibility towards the victims of this disease in line with the original medieval function of the Order. A number of minor activities were organised to
  - a. World Leprosy Day was commemorated by the Grand Priory by a series of activities held on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2008. These included the Annual General Meeting, followed by a historical lecture entitled "*The Sacra Infermeria of the Order of St. John – Jerusalem to Malta 700 years of service*" was delivered by the Hospitaller followed by an informal buffet dinner at the Topaz Hotel, Bugibba.
  - b. On the 20<sup>th</sup> April, members of the Grand Priory enjoyed a day together in Gozo. The day was initiated by celebrating Mass at St. George's Basilica in Victoria which houses the only altar dedicated to St. Lazarus, followed by a Buffet lunch at the Calypso Hotel at Marsalforn. The activity was topped by the viewing of the film by Paul Cox "*Molokai – The story of Fr Dammien*" who relentlessly gave himself for the service of lepers exiled to this barren island.
  - c. The Grand Priory has continued to respond to the ongoing appeal for used stamps made by the British organisation *Lepra* which supports several international initiatives to combat the disease. It also helped circulate the fund-raising "Celebrity Book Auction" appeal held by *Lepra* in August.
  - d. The most significant endeavour in support of leprosy undertaken by the Grand Priory was no doubt the arrangement made during 2008 to take over the management of the Order of Charity. Contacts had initially been made with this philanthropic organisation through the past activities organised on World Leprosy Day. The person managing the Order of Charity showed the desire to retire and asked the Grand Priory to take over the management of this organisation which has the aims of collecting donations to assist the work done with lepers on a worldwide scale. One such endeavour supported by the Order of Charity is the work being carried out gratuitously by the Maltese hand surgeon Mr. Donald Sammut FRCS with lepers in India and Nepal. Mr. Sammut outlined his work during a lecture organised jointly by the Order of Charity and the Grand Priory. A managing committee for the Order of Charity has now been set up and has taken over its management. Two monetary donations have been made by the Grand Priory to the funds of the Order of Charity. [see separate report]

2. The Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands has continued to mirror the download facility for an electronic copy of the useful publication entitled “***A Caregiver's Guide - A handbook about the end of life care***” published by the Grand Priory of Canada of the Order and The Palliative Care Association of Alberta. Some hard copies of the book donated by the publisher have been distributed to relevant organizations.
3. To commemorate St. Lazarus Day in December, the Grand Priory organised a Eucharistic Service at **Dar il-Kleru** at Santa Venera when a Christmas Hamper was given to the Home for the benefit of the inmates there.
4. The Grand Priory through its member – Mr. Remo Mifsud OLJ OMLJ – has assisted in the organisation of a Trauma – Basic Life Support seminar “Dealing with an emergency situation” for the members of the **Special Rescue Group-St. Lazarus Corps** and other members of the Grand Priory. The seminar, run by the Emergency Response Team [Malta], was based on a series of talks and hands-on experience. The Course was held at the Topaz Hotel with the support of the Commander of Gozo Chev. Paul. Banavage. It was followed by a sponsored dinner for all participants.
5. The Almoner Mr. Joe Grixti CLJ has further undertaken philanthropic work representing the Grand Priory and the Commandery of Gozo.
  - a. The main activity during the first half of the year was the collection of household items such as furniture, clothes, mattresses and blankets for donation to the various **Refugee Centres** at Hal Far and Marsa. This project was stopped mid-year, since the refugees started objecting to second-hand material particularly clothes and ten mattresses. Twenty blankets and 5 beds which had been donated to the Hal Far Refugee Centre were ‘accidentally’ burnt at one go. Further items had been donated to Centres sheltering ‘battered’ women and refugees at B’Kara and Balzan. These donations were also put on hold for the same reason.
  - b. A monetary donation of €100 to the Mission Fund to assist in the purchase of food for the **Project Tama Tanzania 2008**.
  - c. The **Razett tal-Hbieberija** at Marsascula has also been supported through the donation of second-hand material for sale at their fund-raising Sunday open market where money collected from such sale goes towards expenses at the centre. The centre was also supported by the Grand Priory with the donation of an electric medium - sized ‘power washer’ purchased at €300. The Almoner has further continued to tender free of charge consultancy services to the centre, thereby saving the centre €233 Euros monthly which another consultant had requested of them.
  - d. Contributed €150 to Fra Lucian to sponsor two paintings (out of a set of six) to be put up at the main church in **Addolorata Cemetery**.
6. Other philanthropic activities were carried out under the auspices of the Grand Priory.
  - a. Mr. Remo Mifsud OLH OMLJ has supported the initiative of **Rotaract Malta La Valette** to aid children orphaned by HIV-AIDS in Tanzania [April 2008];
  - b. the Special Rescue Group-St. Lazarus Corps has organised the collection of desiderata items for the **Education of school children in the Missions**.



**RAOUL FOLLEREAU  
FOUNDATION**

**Order of Charity**  
Affiliated to the Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands  
of the Military & Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem

**Catholic Institute, Floriana, MALTA**

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## **REPORT 2008**

It was at the 38<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting of the Grand Priory on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008 that Mr George Spiteri, President of the local branch of the Raoul Follereau Foundation, known also as the Order of Charity, was invited to address the meeting. This Foundation was set up in 1954 by R. Follereau who for almost 50 years worked single-handedly in favour of those suffering from leprosy. It is now spread in 140 countries around the world. R. Follereau died in 1977 and the process of his beatification is well advanced. Mr. Spiteri asked the Grand Priory to take over this branch made up of 1831 members as he has been at its helm for the past 40 years since its foundation. He was getting on in years and his committee could not take responsibility. He wanted to leave it in the hands of a serious body to perpetuate what he had started.

The take-over took place at the 44<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 when the Vice-Chancellor explained the workings of the Order of Charity and what was expected of us. We have to see to the printing and distribution of the annual newsletter to members and of posters to all churches and church schools, as well as the collection of donations and sending out receipts. Every year an average of €12000 is sent by members, most of which is donated to local and foreign charities after expenses are deducted. These charities have to have connections with lepers.

At that meeting it was decided that we adopt a logo to include our Order and the Order of Charity and to have the following members to make up the committee:

President ex officio: Chev. Dr. Joseph R. Pace, Grand Prior; Principal Administrator and Editor: Chev. Tony C Cutajar; Hospitaller: Chev. Prof. Charles Savona Ventura; Treasurer: Dr. Joseph Galea

For this year Mr George Spiteri will be helping out until we take over completely as of 2009. We are expected to celebrate next year's Leprosy Day on the last Sunday of January 2009 on a bigger scale than formerly. Our first joint activity took place on 20<sup>th</sup> September at the Catholic Institute when the well-known surgeon Dr Donald Sammut gave an illustrated talk about his work with the lepers in Nepal and India. He was presented with a copy of *The Hospitaller Knights of St Lazarus* written by Chev. Savona Ventura while a donation of €500 was made to the Order of Charity. Chev. Cutajar prepared the annual newsletter which is being printed and which will be forwarded to the members by the middle of January. Press releases will be sent to all newspapers 10 days before Leprosy Day, as well as posters to churches and schools. Chev. Cutajar, Dr. Galea and Mr Spiteri will be going to the bank some time after April 2009 to change the official signatories on the Order of Charity bank account.



**Step-by Step Foundation**  
Affiliated to the Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands  
of the Military & Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem

**Cantru Kavallier Vincent Bugeja, School Street,  
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## **REPORT 2008**

During 2008, the **Step-by-Step Foundation** has continued with its support of brain-injured children.

Through her full-time employment with a locally established International Hotelchain, Mrs Marisa Xuereb, President of the **Step-by-Step Foundation**, managed to raise enough funds for “**Beyond the moon**”, a Belgium-based International non-profit charitable association in order to sponsor a cost-free holiday in Euro Disney for a Maltese brain-injured child and his family. The family travelled to France in May when the weather conditions were warm enough for Shaun. Needless to say, Shaun and his parents returned with some lovely memories and snapshots of their sponsored vacation in Euro Disney.

In the meantime, our resident therapist, Mr Kenneth Cremona Caruana carried on monitoring member children and adapting their home exercise programme which is custom made for every child. Mr Cremona Caruana also had the opportunity to train a number of University students who have offered their free time on a voluntary basis, to assist member children with their exercise regime.

On Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> December 2008, the Step by Step Foundation organised a Christmas Party for member families at the Topaz Hotel in Bugibba. During the party, young children enjoyed themselves jumping inside a mushroom shaped Bouncing castle, supervised by a jolly Court Jester and whilst their children were occupied, parents had the chance to relax over refreshments, and mingle with fellow members. At the party, families were given the opportunity to renew their membership for 2009 and in return for payment of the nominal annual fee, the Foundation offered free tickets to various shows available on the Maltese Islands during the festive period, including the Circus and Barney Shows. No children’s Christmas party would be complete without Santa Clause and sure enough, before the fun was over, Santa stopped by with a surprise gift for each child.



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## **Historian's & Editor's Report 2008**

The Historian's activities during 2008 have centred on four fronts:

1. **Lectures:** A historical lecture has been delivered during 2008 entitled "The Sacra Infermeria of the Order of St. John – Jerusalem to Malta 700 years of service" delivered at the Topaz Hotel during the World Leprosy Day Activity in January.
2. **Film show:** The film by Paul Cox "Molokai – The study of Fr Dammien" who relentlessly gave himself for the service of lepers exiled to this barren island was shown to the members of the Grand priory in April. The film was made available by DISCERN: Institute for Research on the Signs of the Times.
3. **Publications:** The major literary publication of the Grand Priory entitled *The Hospitaller Knights of Saint Lazarus* was published during 2006. The book has been advertised on the Grand Priory's website and there has continued to be a demand for its purchase from overseas. A number of copies have been donated to various dignitaries of the Order.
  - a. In 2006, the Grand Priory entrusted its historian with the onus of publishing a newsletter for its members. This year a total of three issues have been published and distributed. The newsletter includes also a section of *Historical Tidbits* that have dealt with various historical items of interest pertaining to the Order. The subjects included:
    - i. a feature on the Lazarite involvement in the Battle of Lepanto;
    - ii. the political background of the Papal Bull *Cum solerti* of 1489 and its aftermath effects;
    - iii. the family tree of the Bourbon Grandmasters of the Order; and
    - iv. the biographies of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Grandmasters.The feedback response to the Newsletter has been very positive – both from local members and from overseas members of the Order.
  - b. Academic historical papers have been commissioned by a number of journals.
    - i. C. Savona-Ventura. The Order of St. Lazarus in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. *Journal of the Monastic Militant Orders*. 2008, 1:p.55-64.
    - ii. Buttigieg GG, Savona-Ventura C, Micallef Stafrace K. History of leprosy in Malta. *Malta Medical Journal*, 2008, 20(4):in press

4. **Library:** The Historian has continued to compile the electronic library by tracing further references of several articles and books pertaining to the history of the Order.
- i. A interesting important work obtained during 2008 includes the diary kept by one of the 17-18<sup>th</sup> century grandmasters of the Order: *Memoirs of the Court of France from the year 1684 to the year 1720, now first translated from the diary of the Marquis de Dangean*. Colburn, London, 2 vols., 1825.
  - ii. Another “discovery” is a 17<sup>th</sup> century laudatory poem by Jacques de Coras [1625-1677]: *Ode à la glorie des chevaliers de l'ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*. Sebastien Cramoisy, Paris, 1673.