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Hospitaller's Report

2007

The Hospitaller activities of the Grand Priory during 2007 were centred towards supporting several charitable institutions.

1. **Victims of Leprosy:** While leprosy is not today a significant problem in the Maltese Islands; the Grand Priory has striven to continually remind the 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. A socio-cultural event which included a historical lecture entitled "*The History of Leprosy in the Maltese Islands*" was delivered by the Hospitaller followed by an informal dinner was organised to commemorate World Leprosy Day at the Topax Hotel on 27th January 2006. The lecture was also attended by representatives of the *Order of Charity of the Raoul Follereau Foundation* and members of the public. During the event, a number of items, including medical history books and a CDROM featuring the past World Leprosy Day lectures organised by the Grand Priory, were offered for sale to help augment the Charitable fund aimed at assisting leprosy projects overseas. Donations were also collected during the lecture to supplement this Leprosy Fund.
 - b. The Leprosy Fund collected throughout 2007, supplemented from the Grand Priory's Charity Fund and by further donations from individual members of the Grand Priory, amounting to Lm 310 were committed to a school-building project for children suffering from the disease in Ethiopia initiated by the *Moviment Missjunarju Gesú fil-Proxmu*. The hospitaller section of the main Order, supported strongly by the local Commandery of the Castello, has adopted a project to aid The Ying Yang Leprosy centre centered between China and Hong Kong.
 - c. The Grand Priory has continued to respond to the ongoing appeal for used stamps made by the British organisation *Lepira* which supports several international initiatives to combat the disease. During 2007, the Grand Priory forwarded a total of 250 gm weight of used stamps collected by various members.
2. The Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands has been given permission 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. A Caregiver's Guide provides family caregivers with the medical and nursing information they will need to support their loved

ones in clear, easily understood language. This also helps them understand the journey upon which their loved one has embarked and to become an effective, informed member of the palliative care team providing essential physical, spiritual, and emotional support. In addition the Canadian confreres have also furnished a number of printed copies of the book for distribution to relevant libraries [particularly medical and nursing]. These have been donated to the relevant National and University libraries. Further copies have been received for distribution to relevant organizations.

3. The Grand Priory had responded to the general appeal by the Mission Fund which had requested individuals to donate electronic equipment, books, clothes, etc as part of “*Progett TAMA*” which were needed to help in the equipment of a **School for orphan children in Guatemala**. After appeals were made by the Grand Priory to its members, a tangible amount of items, including electronic IT equipment, was donated. Similar donations of clothes and goods were regularly made during 2007 to the **Refugees at the Hal Far Centre** through the efforts of the Almoner of the Grand Priory Chev. J. Grixti; who has also gratuitously given his services of food and hygiene inspections to the *Ir-Razzett ta’ Hbiberija*.
4. **Donations to the Special Rescue Group – St. Lazarus Corps**. The Grand Priory has continued to support its affiliate in its endeavours to expand and update its services. In this regards, the Grand Priory and the Commandery of Gozo donated two-thirds of the cost of purchasing new edition copies of the *First Aid Training Manual* used by the SRG-SLC in their first aid training courses given to their members and to the public.
5. The Grand Priory has also been asked by the **Step-by-Step Foundation** to assist it in the re-organization in its management structure. A working committee has been set up in liaison with the Foundation members to help strengthen the organizational structure. The Step-by-Step Foundation continues to give its support to brain-injured children and their families in its various centres. It has also been selected by a number of University students for their requirement of 20 hours voluntary work in order to gain experience and gain credits towards their education.

Other socio-medical activities were discussed during the Council Meetings. These had to be shelved either because of [1] restriction in available funds and/or [2] a limitation of human resources. Regretfully, it must be observed that participation in both fund-raising activities and in medico-social events is limited to the same few individuals. Admittance to the Grand Priory should be accompanied by a commitment to fully participate in all its activities and the Hospitaller feels obliged to recommend to Council that promotion within the ranks of the Grand Priory should reflect commitment to organised medico-social activities.