



**THE MILITARY
AND HOSPITALLER
ORDER OF
SAINT LAZARUS
OF JERUSALEM**

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE ORDER OF
SAINT LAZARUS
OF JERUSALEM.

Grand Priory of
AMERICA

Historical Background

The early history is conjectural as might be expected in view of the fact that it is one of the oldest Orders extant. Some traditions trace it back to John Hircan Maccabeus, Chief Priest in Jerusalem, 125 A.D., others to St. Basil in the fourth century, and still others to the time of Vespasian in the seventh century.

However, we are on firm ground when we come to the time of the First Crusade, when there was a Hospital in Jerusalem under Gerard Tonque as its Master. This was also the Hospital which was later to be known as that of the Knights of St. John. When he died in 1120 A.D. that part of the Hospital which had as its master Roger Boyant, and which dealt with skin diseases, branched off to become the Order of St. Lazarus with him as its Master.

It will be seen that the Orders of St. John and St. Lazarus had a common association which they were to maintain at several periods in their history.

As the Crusaders fell back to the coast, following their loss of Jerusalem, they made their last stand in Palestine at St. Jean d'Acre, just north of Haifa. Here the Order of St. Lazarus was one of the four recognised principal Orders of Chivalry. It had its own quarter in St. Jean d'Acre, with its hospital, barracks, and fortifications. In common with the other four Orders it was a sovereign state and recognised as such by the Papacy and the powers.

With the loss of its sovereign estates at St. Jean d'Acre the Order's claims to Sovereignty were allowed to lapse. Nevertheless, its international status was always recognised, which meant that it had the right of self-government, although from time to time there were attempts, sometimes successful for short periods, to interfere with the free exercise of this right.

On the 18th November 1291, when St. Jean d'Acre fell, the

Order was forced back upon its various European possessions. In France it had an important seigneurie at Boigny, near Orleans, while in Scotland its house was at St. Mary Magdalene, Linlithgow, with at least one other at Elgin, and in England at Burton Lazars. In Switzerland it had possessions at Seedorf and at Gfenn. The Nunnery of Seedorf is still associated with the Order, the Mother Abbess being a member of the Order.

The Grand Master established his seat at Boigny, and in all the northern countries this was the seat of the Order to which the Order looked, except from time to time when the English part of the Order declared its independence under its own Master.

By the early part of the fourteenth century the Pope recognised the Prior of Capua, in Sicily, as the Grand Master, thus creating a schism in the Order.

On the 15th February 1459 Pope Pius II ordered the amalgamation of the Order with those of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Ghost in Saxony, the unified Order to become the Order of our Lady of Bethlehem. This was resisted by the Order. The next interference came when Pope Innocent VIII attempted to combine the Order with those of the Holy Sepulchre and St. John, on the 28th March 1489.

It seems that these attempts were largely directed against the northern part of the Order, centred upon Boigny, because in 1436 the Grand Mastership based upon Capua had been ceded to the King of Sicily. However, in 1517, due to the support of Charles I of Spain, who was later the Emperor Charles V, the Grand Magistracy in Capua was restored.

Meanwhile, in France, the Order lost its independence when in 1547 the Parlement de Paris declared that the Grand Master of the Order was subordinate to the Order of St. John, and went on to proclaim that the Order of St. Lazarus was the senior bailliwick or priory of the Order of St. John in that country.

This union of St. Lazarus and St. John which then occurred

could not affect the Order in any other country, as this was the act of a French parliament. This resulted in the Order once more being divided into several parts: the Order in Capua, the Order in France, which was now a part of the Order of Malta, the Order in Spain and elsewhere.

Following this, Pope Leo X, in 1565, although the Order based on Capua had been restored its independence in 1517 with the right to appoint the Grand Masters vested in the Kings of Spain, appointed Giannoto Castiglione as Grand Master.

No doubt to comply with Papal policy, Giannoto Castiglione resigned his office to the Duke of Savoy, and this was followed by Papal confirmation on the 16th September 1572. On the 13th November that year the Pope proclaimed the unification of the Order of St. Lazarus with the newly formed Order of St. Maurice, to become the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus, of which the Dukes of Savoy, now Kings of Italy, were to be the hereditary Grand Masters.

The Papal intention was not only that the Order at Capua, which was looked upon as the true seat of the Order, should be brought into this union with St. Maurice, but that the whole Order should be, with the exemption of that part which was subordinate to the Kings of Spain.

The King of France does not appear to have had any deep-rooted objection to this Bull, until under the pressure of the Order of Malta, which was opposed to the Pope's depriving it of its important and rich priory in France, he was induced to resist Papal authority.

The result was that the Knights of the Order in France, who were, in this peculiar way, in some measure Knights of Malta also, by a Chapter meeting on the 19th May 1578 repudiated the Papal decree, claiming that the Papacy on more than one occasion had recognised their independent status, as a former sovereign Order in the Holy Land.

Thus we find that the Order came to exist in three parts: that which had the sanction of the Papacy in the form of St. Maurice

and St. Lazarus: the Order in Spain exempt from amalgamation with St. Maurice: and finally the part of the Order in France, which asserted itself as an independent Order.

On the 14th May 1581 the French section of the Order declared itself a secularised Order. Up to this time it had maintained its close association with the Order of Malta.

On the 7th September 1604 Henry IV, King of France, declared himself by letters patent the Supreme Sovereign of the Order in France. The King was unable to obtain from the Pope a Bull to restore the ancient privileges of the Order, but he did obtain from him in the Bull "Romanus Pontifex" on the 16th February 1607 the right to institute a new Order, that of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This the King promptly proceeded to amalgamate with the Order of St. Lazarus by the subtle move of making the Grand Master of the old Order Grand Master of the new on the 4th April 1608.

The Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel became dormant after 1787, thus restoring the Order of St. Lazarus to its original condition, and so it remained, in France, till 1830, on the fall of Charles X. In 1837 it passed under the Melchite Patriarchs of Antioch till they released their control of the Order in 1930.

In May 1930 the Patriarch resigned the charge and a Chapter of Knights offered the position to H.R.H. Prince Don Francisco of Bourbon and de la Torre, Duke of Seville, the head of a cadet line of the House of Spain. The Duke of Seville obtained the sanction of King Alfonso XIII to accept the office of Lieutenant General of the Order. On the 15th December 1935 the Duke became the 44th Grand Master, with his son Prince Francisco of Bourbon and Bourbon as Lieutenant General, who succeeded as 45th Grand Master.

The significance of this appointment of the Duke of Seville should not be overlooked. Since the rights of the Order in Spain rested within the rights of the Monarchy (whether by that time the Order had become dormant or not) the sanction of King

Alfonso effectively brought together the Spanish branch of the Order which was not affected by the Papal Bull of the 13th November 1572, and the French branch (which had formerly included all the northern branches of the Order which had become extinguished by the Reformation), over which, in the end, the Kings of France had become Supreme Sovereigns or Protectors, as the case may be, in France.

The Order was now reduced to two branches, that under the Duke of Seville, and that in the form of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus under the King of Italy.

Unfortunately the unification which the Spanish princes had brought to the Order of the Franco-Spanish parts, the seat of which had been established in Madrid, with its administrative centre in Paris, was disturbed when, owing to opposition of certain elements among the French officers in the administration, the 45th Grand Master ceased to hold his office on the 17th May 1967, and H.R.H. Prince Charles-Philip of Orleans, Duke of Alençon, Vendôme, and Nemours, First Prince of the House of France, became the 46th Grand Master.

Very shortly after that the Duke of Nemours instituted reforms of an ecumenical nature, and insisted upon performing his office of Grand Master without being dictated to by the group who had created difficulties with Prince Francis of Bourbon and Bourbon. Therefore, he found himself in the same position as his predecessor. The dissenting group in Paris broke away from the Grand Master, and on the 15th April 1969 they elected the Duke of Brissac (who was the former Grand Administrator) as "47th Supreme Head of the Order". This was not accepted by many important priories and commanderies. The Duke of Nemours established the Grand Chancery in Malta, the reforms were incorporated in new statutes, and a rule of law was established in the Order, instead of the arbitrary acts of a small junta in Paris. At the same time H.R.H. Prince Michael of France associated himself with the actions of the Grand Master, and he became Coadjutor. This was later confirmed with rights of succession. The

45th Grand Master, Prince Francis of Bourbon and Bourbon was invited to become Grand Commander and to accept the office of Grand Master Emeritus, Lieutenant General, and Grand Prior of Spain. This securely knitted together once again the succession as it had come down through the French and Spanish royal associations with the Order, and ensured the complete legitimacy of the Order. As a consequence of this the *International Orders' Commission*, at its meetings in Germany and Austria, during September 1970, and now recorded in its new edition of its official *Register of Orders of Chivalry*, dated December 1970, has made it clear that it regards the legitimate succession of the Order to be that which stems from the Duke of Nemours as 46th Grand Master. The Grand Master died suddenly on the 10th March 1970, but in due course a successor will be elected.

With the establishment of the English Tongue of the Order, priories, bailiwicks, and commanderies, were formed throughout the English speaking world and also in Scandinavia, and among several nationalities in exile. After a lengthy period of development the Grand Priory of America was founded on 1st January 1971, to pursue the humanitarian activities of the Order of St. Lazarus in the New World. Thus today the Order continues to give service to mankind throughout the world as the International Green Cross Association.

Not only has the order become entirely international but because of the historical circumstances which developed it has become entirely oecumenical and admits all major Christian denominations to its membership. Like in previous eras, the Hospitallers of Saint Lazarus are dedicated to upholding the Order's ancient ideals of defending the Christian Faith, promoting Ecumenism, and following Christ's example of assisting those in need and helping to eliminate suffering where ever found, in the tradition of the Crusades, and in the imitation of Christ.

Recognised Organisations of the Order

The Grand Priory of America:
The Grand Priory of Armenia in Exile:
The Delegation of Australia:
The Delegation of Belgium:
The Grand Priory of Bulgaria in Exile:
The Priory of Denmark:
The Grand Priory of England:
The Delegation of Finland:
The Delegation of Germany:
The Grand Priory of Hungary in Exile:
The Commandery of the Holy Trinity (Canada):
The Grand Priory of Ireland:
The Commandery of Lochore (Scotland):
The Priory of Malta:
The Grand Bailiwick of the Netherlands:
The Bailiwick of New Zealand:
The Commandery of Rhodesia:
The Grand Priory of Rumania in Exile:
The Grand Priory of Scotland:
The Grand Priory of Spain:
The Grand Bailiwick of South Africa:
The Grand Priory of Sweden:
The Grand Priory of Switzerland:
The Delegation of Venezuela:

The Charitable Works of the Order

The Hospitaller services

The goal of the Order of Saint Lazarus: to help the Church in Silence--Christians who are not able to practice their religion because of poverty, disease ignorance, or national policy--in the Americas, Africa, Asia and in iron curtain countries.

Ambulance services

The Bailiwick of New Zealand, and the Commandery of Lochore each maintain emergency ambulance services, which have done some useful work. In the Commandery where are seven ambulance sections with men and women enrolled as St. Lazarus Volunteers.

Leprosy services

Supplies of drugs are maintained to leprosaria overseas. In 1970 the American Grand Priory supplied drugs to the value of \$40,000 for the Middle East countries. Other units of the Order have also been supplying drugs.

In addition, assistance is given, where possible, by providing luxuries for leprosy patients, such as in the supply of television sets and the like.

Geriatrics

The Order is beginning to plan for work in this field, which is becoming a pressing problem in the advanced countries, where old people are becoming increasingly in need of proper care and attention.

The Oecumenical Outlook

The Order seeks to build up in each unit groups of priests and ministers from the varying communions in order to assist a better understanding among the different branches of Christendom, and from time to time issues publications on this subject.

The Structure of the Order

The Membership consists of Member, Officer, and Commander Companions, Knights, and Knight Grand Officers. In addition it awards the Companiate of Merit, Donat's Cross, and certain Meritorious Crosses and Medals, for good works and assistance to the Order.

The St. Lazarus Volunteers are men and women who give their time voluntarily to the work of the Order, in such occupations as the ambulance services, are recipients of meritorious awards for good services, and their senior officers are members of the Order.

Those interested in the work of the Order who wish to assist in some form or another should apply to the administration of the Order in their own countries, or through the *Vice-Chancery*, Grand Priory of America
945--2nd Street, Hermosa Beach, California 90254.