

**Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitallers**

A Chivalric Primer



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Alamos, Sonora, Mexico
MCMXCVII



**A Chivalric Primer
for the
Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitallers**

Prepared under the auspice of
The Prince Grand Master

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Forward

The concept of Knighthood and the development of Orders of Chivalry are both firmly rooted in the Old World. With the exploration and settlement of the New World, its settlers naturally brought with them their traditions and institutions. To this we owe our language, our law, and much that has enabled us to develop as unique peoples.

The New World also offered refuge. At first it was a refuge from religious intolerance, and later it was a refuge from a social stratification that prevented many from achieving their full potential. Still later it offered refuge to those whose position in the social fabric had been destroyed by revolution and the rise of totalitarianism. Those who came, regardless of what brought them here, each had a contribution to make, and the sum total of their contributions created the Americas.

In the wake of the migrations across the Atlantic came our Hospitaller Order of Saint John. Established in the Old World it was to see itself fulfilled in the new. Like those pioneers who struggled to conquer the wilderness, our Order also suffered many vicissitudes in the century and a half that it has been on the North American continent. But like all who struggle, we have emerged the stronger for it.

Just as other European institutions have been able to adapt and flourish in the fertile climate of the New World, so has our Order. While keeping the best of the old, we have been forced by circumstances to also embrace the new. While retaining the aristocratic principles of chivalry, we have opened our ranks to a world where an established aristocracy is unknown. While standing firm under

the banner of Christ, we have opened our ranks to all Christians without regard to denomination. While retaining our belief in the validity of the Knightly way, we have embraced an appreciation of the unique benefits that all people, regardless of sex or ethnic background, can bring to an Order of Chivalry.

In doing all this, we have been careful not to abandon what is necessary to maintain our chivalric integrity. Indeed, our Sovereign Protector, King Peter II of Yugoslavia, himself a victim of all those evils that engendered the development of the Americas, came to these shores just as did we and our ancestors. Even as he gave us our Constitution, he lay dying, and he is the only king to be buried in the New World. Both King Peter II and our Order came from the Old to the New World, and through their mutual influences both have contributed and continued to contribute something special, something ages old yet wondrously new, an amalgam, a fusion, an Order of Knighthood.

THE PRINCE GRAND MASTER
The Feast of Saint John the Baptist
24th June 1997



Introduction

A great deal of confusion exists regarding the very nature and significance of chivalry and knighthood. To this is added the centuries of myths and traditions which are unique to each country where these institutions have been nurtured. It is not the purpose of this modest work to definitively dispel this confusion, nor will it endeavor to answer every question that these subjects might raise. Rather, this primer is intended to answer those basic questions that are relevant to our Hospitaller Order of Saint John for its members and those who might be interested in it.

As this work is presented in a question-answer format, answers must of necessity be briefly expressed and simplified. Some of the questions found in these pages have elicited entire volumes. Therefore, the answers given, while accurate, cannot always address every exception or variation. Also, since Knights and Knighthood have been a part of Western Civilization for many centuries, their position, purpose, and place in society cannot always completely cover all aspects in all countries at all periods. An attempt has been made to make answers as relevant as possible to the present era.

This work is offered for the benefit of those whose lives are too demanding to allow them the leisure to make a prolonged study of the subjects touched upon in these pages. One need not be an expert on these matters to be a good member of the Order, just as one need not be an expert on constitutional law to be a good citizen.

It is, of course, hoped that this work might interest its readers to pursue the subjects covered in greater detail through additional reading. However, its main purposes are to explain what it means to be a Knight and belong to an Order of Chivalry, and to place the Hospitaller Order of Saint John within an historic and chivalric content.

A word should be said with respect to ladies. Historically ladies were generally not a part of the formal chivalric structure, and even today a great many Orders of Chivalry exclude them from membership or relegate them to a distinctly secondary capacity. The Hospitaller Order of Saint John, however, accords them full and equal status. In the following text only masculine terms are employed, reflecting historic continuity, but whenever and wherever these are used with reference to the Hospitaller Order of Saint John, they embrace both sexes equally.

A final word of appreciation must be expressed. This work could not have been prepared without the excellent advice and able assistance of Kt. Cmdr. David Hanson, the Blanche Croix Juge d'Armes of the Order, whose knowledge of, and devotion to, Chivalry is complete.

**This humble work is dedicated to the memory of
Emperor Franz Josef I,
who by general agreement was the most chivalrous gentleman
of his century.**



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Part One: On the Nature of Knighthood

1. What is a Knight?

A Knight is a noble, a member of the *nobilitas minore* (minor nobility) who enjoys that distinction by virtue of his having received the Accolade through the *fons honorum* (fount of honor) of a Sovereign.

2. What is Knighthood?

The word “knighthood” is a modern form of the Old English *cnihtad*, the period between youth and maturity; the word “chivalry” (See below no. 3) derives from the Old French *chevalerie*, meaning men-at-arms, gallant horsemen equipped for battle, a company of honorable men. By the middle of the XIIth Century the two words were virtually synonymous, describing both personal attributes and a code of conduct. Knighthood may be described as the institution embodying Knights.

3. What is Chivalry?

Chivalry means both the code of courage and courtesy which are the ideals of Knighthood, and the system of Knighthood itself. Chivalry and cavalry came from the same linguistic root, indicating that Knighthood was the prerogative of the mounted warrior. Knights gradually evolved into a warrior-social class, and this exclusive class adopted a code of conduct which aspired to the highest ideals. The fact that few could reach these

ideals did not lessen the value of the code, which men of goodwill in all ages have come to respect. Since chivalry grew up in Christendom, that is, in western Europe, it is natural that the Church and chivalry should have exerted a strong influence upon each other.

Chivalry was the formulation of certain rules and regulations which aimed at rendering the upper classes worthy of their exceptional privileges. This Code of Chivalry may be summarized under four main aspects.

1. Belief in the Church, and its defence, especially against the heathen, this latter finding its main expression in the Crusades;
2. Courage and loyalty towards companions, feudal lord, and monarch;
3. Respect, pity, and generosity for, and in defence of, the weak, the poor, and women; and
4. Insistence, with the greatest force, on the necessity for a Knight "inviolably to keep his word."

4 What is the Accolade?

The Accolade is the ceremonial striking of the shoulder with a sword, done by a Sovereign as he makes an individual a Knight. This is usually accompanied by certain words which indicate the Sovereign's intention that this act be valid. This can be done as an act unto itself or as part of a more elaborate ceremony. It is also known as "dubbing". Its significance is lost in the mists of the past. One possible meaning is that it demonstrated that a Knight must be prepared to bear any tribulation. Another, and rather contrary, interpretation is that this is the last injury that a Knight will ever be forced to accept.

5. Who may bestow the Accolade?

Only a Sovereign, possessing a *fons honorum*, or someone specifically deputized by the Sovereign to act in his place.

6. What is a fons honorum and who possesses it?

Fons honorum is Latin for "Fount of Honor". It means that legally from the Sovereign and only the Sovereign flows all honors, including the creation of valid Knights. Only the Sovereign himself possesses the *fons honorum*. The members of a Sovereign's Royal Family do not possess a *fons honorum* in their own right, nor any part of the Sovereign's *fons honorum*.

7. Can a Sovereign share his *fons honorum*?

He cannot share it, per se, because it is an essential attribute of his sovereignty, but he can delegate specific uses of it. As an example, in England the right to grant arms, which is the sole prerogative of the Sovereign, has been delegated by Royal Charter to the College of Arms, a private body. It is not unusual for a Sovereign to delegate to someone acting on his behalf his exclusive right to create Knights. With respect to an Order of Chivalry, this is usually delegated exclusively to the Grand Master and is reflected in the Order's Royal Charter.

8. What are the duties of a Knight?

Traditionally, a true Knight is the servant of God and the poor. It behooves a Knight to fear God, and with all his power to maintain his faith; to be charitable, and comfort those who are afflicted; to serve faithfully, and to defend his prince and country courageously; to detest intemperance; to forgive the follies and offences of other men, and sincerely embrace the love of friends; to esteem truth, and without respect to maintain it; to avoid sloth and superfluous ease; and to spend his time in honest and virtuous actions. Or, more simply, the duties of a Knight are to love God and his fellow humans, to always set an example of moral rectitude and Christian tolerance, and to do unto others as he would have others do unto him.

9. Can one Knight create another?

At one time, during the feudal period, it was an acceptable practice for a Knight to make other Knights; this was generally done on the battlefield in recognition of outstanding service. As time went on and the institutions of society became more fixed and regulated, the Sovereigns limited this right exclusively to themselves, thus making it an attribute of their sovereignty. Today, only a Sovereign through his *fons honorum*, or someone specifically deputized by him to act on his behalf, can create valid Knights.

10. What are the origins of Knights?

They were mounted warriors. In ancient Rome, Knights were *Equites*, or "mounted nobles", and this *Ordo Equestris* ranked next after Senators. Likewise, similar comparisons can be found in French (*Chevaliers*), Spanish (*Caballeros*), and German (*Reiters*) traditions. By the XIIth and XIIIth centuries the word "knight" conveyed a definite dignity attached to a certain rank in the profession of arms. Through the birth and growth of Knighthood in Europe is a subject on which great obscurity prevails, it is at least certain that it is the oldest dignity of arms in

Christendom. It should be realized, therefore, that the rank of Knight is the most ancient and was in early days the most illustrious title to be attained. It may be said that Knighthood was the first of all military dignities and the foundation of all subsequent honors.

11. What is a Knight Bachelor?

He is a person who has been created a Knight by the Sovereign, but is not a member of an Order of Chivalry. While various monarchies have and do bestow the title of Knight Bachelor, it is most often encountered in Great Britain. Historically, a Knight Bachelor was a young knight who was not old enough or who could bring too few vassals into the field under his own banner. Not being a banneret, he followed the banner of another as a novice in arms. Hence some scholars suggest that "bachelor" is derived from the French "*bas chevalier*" in the sense of lower than a Knight of an Order of Chivalry. Other scholars believe the term "bachelor" is derived from the Latin adjective *baccalarius*. This word would also imply a lower position, however, as it applied generally to farm laborers, especially one who worked for the tenant of the land, which was called *baccalaria* or division of land. In England, a Knight Bachelor is given precedence below Knight Commanders of all Orders of Knighthood and above Circuit Judges and Companions of all Orders of Knighthood.

12. Are all Knights equal?

Yes, insofar as they are all created through the *fons honorum* of valid Sovereigns. While they enjoy equality amongst themselves as all being the same manifestations of the same creative authority, a Knight of an Order is generally deemed superior to a Knight Bachelor. Indeed, many Orders require that a candidate first be created a Knight Bachelor and then be received into the Order. Also, the relative place accorded them in different societies at different times, or even at the same time in different countries, may vary greatly.

13. What is a Dame?

A Dame is a female Knight. She is created through the action of a Sovereign and is attached to an Order of Chivalry in the equivalent rank as a Knight.

14. Is a Dame the same as a Lady?

Not in the English language. While a Dame is invariably a lady, she is not a "Lady". By English law a "Lady" is a title and style that a wife derives from her husband's titles and dignities. The wives of Knights and Baronets are styled "Lady" followed by their surname. "Lady" is also used

by the wives and daughters of British Peers, but usage varies according to rank within the Peerage. A Knight is styled "Sir" followed by his Christian name. Thus a Knight and his wife would be addressed in conversation as, for example, "Sir John and Lady Smith".

15. Is Knighthood heredity?

No and yes. While inheritance is no longer the common means for transmitting Knighthood, there are examples both past and present of it. There are hereditary Knighthoods of the Holy Roman Empire and some other kingdoms which descend just as other inheritable titles. Ireland boasts certain Hereditary Knights, including the Knight of Glin and the White Knight. Within the pre-Revolutionary Order of Malta there were certain Commanderies which were hereditary within specific families. In England, Knighthoods are not hereditary, but the dignity of "Baronet" is hereditary. Both use the style "Sir" and that can cause confusion. Another confusion results where two or three successive generations within the same family receive a Knighthood independent of one another, the total effect giving the appearance to the casual observer of an hereditary Knighthood. These days a Knighthood is only hereditary if it is specifically declared to be so by the Sovereign in the Patent accompanying its bestowal.

16. Can Knighthood be revoked?

Yes. If one commits a grave crime or seriously breaches the Code of Chivalry, he can be degraded from Knighthood. Also, if a member of an Order of Chivalry fails seriously in his obligations to that Order or violates its statutes, his Knighthood can be revoked, and he can be expelled. The most celebrated instance of this in recent times is the case of Sir Roger Casement, whose Knighthood was revoked before his execution for treason during the First World War.

17. Can Knighthood be resigned?

Yes.

18. Can one continue to wear the insignia of use the post nominals (initials after one's name) of a Knighthood that has been revoked or resigned?

No person of conscience would ever do so. After his country and Russia went to war in 1914, it was particularly noted with what sorrow the Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary remove the Order of Saint Anne from his tunic, an Order which he had received from the hands of Tsar Nicholas I and which he had proudly worn for over half a century.

19. What is the chivalric status of a person whose Knighthood has been resigned or revoked, or who has been expelled from an Order of Chivalry?

He has no chivalric status.



Part Two On The Nature of Orders

20. What is an Order of Knighthood?

It is a confraternity of persons upon whom valid Knighthood has been bestowed and who have taken a solemn vow to maintain specific standards of behavior or to perform specific acts, all in conformity with the statutes of the confraternity.

21. Are there different types of Orders of Knighthood?

Yes. Depending upon one's criteria, they may be classified in various ways, as for example into international, national, and dynastic; or into religious, hospitaller, and merit, etc.

22. What are the differences between these?

While an Order may fall into more than one of these general categories, they are loosely defined as follows:

International Orders are those whose general membership transcends the borders of any one country and whose history and activities are supra-national in character and scope. An excellent example of this is our own Order: others are the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (S.M.O.M.) and the Order of Saint Lazarus.

National or State Orders are those which depend solely from a

Sovereign State of the Crown thereof. Examples of these are the Order of the Thistle (Scotland), the Order of Legion of Honor (France), the Order of the Elephant (Denmark), the Order of Canada (Canada).

Dynastic Orders are those depending from the authority of a Sovereign or formerly Sovereign House. Examples of these are the Order of the Golden Fleece (House of Habsburg and the House of Bourbon-Anjou), the Constantinian Order of Saint George (House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies), the Order of Hohenzollern (House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), the Order of Danilo I (House of Montenegro).

Religious Orders are those which have professed Knights or whose members live under a Rule. Examples of these are the Teutonic Order of Saint Mary of Jerusalem and the S.M.O.M.

Hospitaller Orders are those requiring service for the needy from their members. Examples of these are our own Order and, indeed, most of the Saint John Orders, and the Order of Saint Lazarus.

Orders of Merit are those which are primarily bestowed for meritorious service or acts, and which generally require no further obligation on the part of the recipients. Examples of these are the Order of the British Empire (Great Britain), the Order of Morazan (Honduras), the Order of the Aztec Eagle (Mexico), the Order of Merit (Germany). Most Dynastic Orders and all State Orders created since the French Revolution, patterning themselves upon the Legion of Honor, fall into this category.

23. Are all Orders of Chivalry equal?

Yes, to the extent that the sovereignty that created them is equal. But just as in the book *Animal Farm* some animals are more equal than others, so, too, in the world of Orders of Chivalry some are more prestigious than others. Much of this is, of course, subjective. Generally speaking, though, those Orders which maintain extreme exclusivity in their membership, either through a very limited number (Order of the Garter), requirements of noble quarterings (formerly the Teutonic Order), or the conferral of actual nobility (Order of Saint Stephan of Hungary), and, consequently, are those most aspired after, are considered the more prestigious. Likewise, a great Order coming from a powerful realm, such as the Order of the Holy Ghost (Kingdom of France), is considered to be more important than, as an example, the Order of the Honor Cross of the Principality of Reuss. In reality, however, the ultimate importance that an individual Order of Chivalry has must be determined by the regard in which it is held by its members.

24. Are such groups as the Knights of Columbus, the Order of Foresters, the Masonic Knights Templar, the Knights of Labor, etc. considered to be Orders of Chivalry?

No, and they do not consider themselves to be so. They are religious sodalities, fraternal organizations, and other groups of people who have banded together for a particular purpose. While they may employ the nomenclature, or even the forms, of an Order of Chivalry, the mere fact that they do not partake of the fons honorum of a Sovereign prevents them from being a true Order of Knighthood.

25. Are all groups calling themselves Orders of Chivalry real?

No. Only those who fulfill the definition of an Order of Chivalry (See above no. 20) and have a Sovereign or a Sovereign entity (i.e. the State) as their source of existence and authority can be considered a valid Order.

26. What is a bogus order?

It is an organization which improperly claims without any right to do so to be able to create valid Knights. This is usually done for the purpose of obtaining money from the unwary.

27. How can one tell a real Order of Knighthood from a bogus one?

This is very difficult to do: even specialists in the field are often confused. A few clues that should cause one to be suspicious of an "Order" are:

If it claims some ancient date of origin, but then has an obscure and "secret" history until very recent times.

If its "Sovereign" or "Protector" or "Grand Master" claims some antique throne such as Byzantium or some unknown sovereignty, or has some equally fantastic pretensions to thrones and crowns.

If it is attached to some fantastic-sounding or far-reaching church that has more "honors" at its disposal than it has congregants.

If it charges unusually high fees for membership or decorations. This is where its leaders make their living.

If it offers special additional perquisites such as membership in other "orders", the acquisition of coat-of-arms or titles of nobility or diplomatic passports.

If it is vague about what it does (if it does anything) and where the money goes: if its charities seem suspect.



Part Three On The Nature Of The Hospitaller Order Of Saint John of Jerusalem

28. What is the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitallers?

It is an independent international Order of Chivalry open equally and fully to both gentlemen and ladies. Its Patron is Saint John the Baptist, cousin of our Blessed Lord, and it is dedicated to the same principles as were those Crusading Knights of Saint John who established the Hospital in Jerusalem and fought the enemies of Christ in the Holy Land and elsewhere.

29. Is ours a valid Order of Chivalry?

Yes. The Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem fulfills all of the requirements stated in the definition of an Order of Chivalry (See above no. 20).

30. What is the position of our Order in relation to the ancient Knights of Saint John?

We are a descendant Order, but not a successor one. This means that we can trace our origin to elements of the Roman Catholic Order that existed since Crusader times and was established on Malta until 1798. But we do not claim to be that Order, this distinction is held by the S.M.O.M. exclusively; not, based upon the information that we presently have, do we claim to be a direct successor to it.

31. How is our position different from that of the Venerable Order of Saint John in the British Realm?

They are substantially the same. We were founded by Knights of the Roman Catholic Order who had been created personally by the Prince Grand Master on Malta. These Knights subsequently separated themselves from Malta, and eventually the group they had formed, after settling in Great Britain during the French Revolution, Protestantized itself. The Venerable Order, on the other hand, was organized by Protestant gentlemen in Great Britain who had been made Knights by members of a French Capitular Commission in the name of the Roman Catholic Order of Malta. Subsequently, the central authority of that Order declared this to be in violation of the Order's statutes and refused to recognize them as legitimate Knights of Saint John. Both were in reality private organizations until they received their Royal Charters.

32. From whom did our Order receive its first Royal Charter?

From King Ernest Augustus of Hanover.

33. What were the circumstances?

Before his accession to the throne of Hanover (resulting from the division of the thrones of Hanover and Great Britain upon the death of his brother, King William IV), King Ernest Augustus had been H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland, sixth son of King George III. From 1807 until the mid 1830s the Duke of Cumberland served as Grand Master of our Order. It is generally understood that he was forced to resign the Grand Mastership as a result of a Parliamentary inquiry. He, nevertheless, maintained his interest in the Order, and after becoming King of Hanover in 1837 he issued a Royal Charter conferring the authority of his *fons honorum* upon it. Indeed, there is much evidence to support the contention that he actually remained Grand Master until his death in 1851 inasmuch as a new Grand Master was not elected until after that date.

34. Do we have another Royal Charter?

Yes. In 1965 H.R.H. King Peter II of Yugoslavia was pleased to grant us his Royal Charter when he accepted election as our Grand Master. When he stepped down as Grand Master, in 1968, he became Royal Protector of the Order. At that time he issued us a new Royal Charter and approved the Constitution which governs how members of the Order automatically advance through the ranks.

35. Can this royal Charter be rescinded?

By its wording, it can only be rescinded by a de jure and de facto King of Yugoslavia. That means by the legal descendant of King Peter II entitled to occupy the throne, actually ruling over the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

36. What is a Royal Charter and of what importance is it?

It is a document issued by a Sovereign wherein he extends his Protection to the Order and allows legitimate Knights to be created through the fons honorum of his sovereignty.

37. What are the purposes of the Order?

The two main purposes of our Order are:

"To encourage the highest ideals of Christian chivalry and all that makes for the moral and chivalry and all that makes for the moral and spiritual strengthening of mankind in accordance with the first great principle of the Order, embodied in the motto PRO FIDE (For the Faith);" and

"To encourage and promote all works of humanity and charity for the relief of persons in sickness, distress, suffering, and danger, without distinction as to race, color, creed, or national origin, and the extension of the second great principle of the Order, embodied in the motto PRO UTILITATE HOMINUM (For the Service of Mankind)."

38. What are the obligations of membership in the Order?

Aside from the obligation to lead an exemplary life, which is common to all Orders of Chivalry, our Order has special additional requirements. Since ours is a hospitaller Order, our concern is to alleviate distress. Thus, we are obliged to actively serve. This is done by our members actually contributing their time, their financial means, and their prayers to the work of the Order. Unlike a merit Order, membership is not

just a reward at the end of one's life; rather it is a new commitment to help wherever and however possible, a commitment that is freely undertaken by each member of our Order. A Knight of Saint John is not content to let someone else do the work, he is prepared to step in wherever his help is needed.

39. How does one become a member of the Order?

Membership is by invitation, usually by way of a member of the Order inviting someone whom he knows, and who he feels possesses those qualities worthy of the Order, to submit a petition for admission.

40. What are the requirements of membership in the Order? Who may join?

The only two absolute requirements are that a candidate for membership be a practicing Christian, and that he be prepared to take and observe the Chivalric Oath. In addition to this, the candidate should be of outstanding moral character, enjoy a certain position within the community, and be prepared to support the Order in whatever ways possible.

41. What is the Chivalric Oath?

It is a solemn Oath that each member must swear upon being admitted to our Order, and it reads as follows:

"I do solemnly declare in the name of Jesus Christ that I will observe the Statutes, the lawful orders of the Grand Master and of the Sovereign Council, and the praiseworthy customs and traditions of the Order of Saint John, so far as is consistent with my duty to God and to my country; that I will do everything in my power to contribute to its glory, prosperity, solidarity, and unity; that I will combat everything prejudicial to its well-being and unity; that I will never act contrary to its dignity; and that I will conduct myself always as a Christian of honor in accordance with the highest chivalric ideals, so help me God."

42. What are the stages or ranks within the Order?

The main ranks within the Hospitaller Order, in ascending order, are:

1. member (A Member becomes a Jurat upon formal reception into a Commandery of the Order);
2. Companion or Assistant Chaplain (for Religious);
3. Knight or Dame Or Chaplain (for Religious);

4. Knight Commander or Dame Commander or Sub Prelate (for Religious); and
5. Bailiff or Prelate (for Religious).

43. Do all those who become members of the Order automatically advance through the ranks?

No. The Hospitaller Order is a service Order, and promotion to a senior rank is wholly dependent upon the continued worthiness of a member and the scope of his service to the Order. If a member shows no special interest in the Order and its work, he may never rise beyond the rank of Jurat or Companion, which, of course, are worthy distinctions in themselves. While the rank of Knight or Dame is certainly not uncommon, our Order bestows few Commanderships, unless they are merited, and there are even fewer Bailiffs in the Order.

44. What are the financial obligations involved in membership in the Order?

As in keeping with most Orders of Chivalry, certain costs and financial obligations are attendant with membership in the Order. These are as follows:

1. Admission Fee. This fee is paid upon a candidate becoming a member; part of it is retained by the Central Treasury of the Order, and the rest is remitted to the Grand Priory of jurisdiction.
2. Passage Fee. This fee is paid if and when a Companion of the Order is advanced to the rank of Knight or Dame. This is symbolic of the monies that the original Knights of Saint John paid for their transportation to, and maintenance in, the Holy land. Today this fee is used primarily to offset the cost of the Investiture ceremonies.
3. Annual Oblations (based upon rank within the Order). This money is used for Order administration purposes on all levels and to help support the charitable work of the Order.
4. Insignia Fee. Upon being promoted, this is the cost of appropriate insignia to that rank.
5. Charitable Contributions. While not required, the Order trusts that those honored with membership will contribute as they can to the special charities of the Order and/or to charities of their own in the name of the Order.

45. Is the Order ecumenical?

Yes, it is open to members of all Christian denominations. This is more clearly elaborated in the Statutes and Regulations of the Order.

46. Is the Order open to non-Christians?

While non-Christians by that very reason are not eligible for membership in the Order (See above no. 40), the Order maintained a special status of Affiliate. Someone who has been particularly supportive of the Order, or of worthwhile humanitarian goals, but who does not fulfill the requirements of membership, may become an Affiliate of Merit. This is more clearly elaborated in the Statutes of the Order.

47. How is the Order organized?

The order is organized on a geographical basis throughout the world. There are three basic organizational levels of the Order. These are:

1. The Central Administration, which is drawn from the universal membership of the Order;
2. The Grand Priories, which are the largest geographical units, may embrace many countries, a single country, or a portion of a country; and
3. The Commanderies, which are the regional areas within the Grand Priories, may embrace a city or cities, a state or province, or a country. In addition to these there are intermediate levels oetherlands?

Known as the Johanniter Orde in Nederland, it is a national and Evangelical Order. Like its Sweden counterpart, it disassociated itself from the Prussian Johanniterorden at the end of the Second World War. Since then it has enjoyed protection and fons honorum of the Dutch Crown, with a Prince of the Royal Family serving as its Grand Master.

48. Is the Order hierarchical?

Yes. It is ruled over by the Prince Grand Master, who is Sovereign of the Order and to whom is delegated the fons honorum, and the Sovereign Council. It is organized on a military system wherein the officers at each level are answerable to those above them in the chain of command.



Part Four On The Nature of Other Orders of Saint John

49. What do our Order and all the other valid Orders of Saint John have in common?

All of the Orders of Saint John by our very names acknowledge Saint John the Baptist as our patron and protector. We are all dedicated to upholding the moral and spiritual dimensions of Christianity, especially as it is embodied in the chivalric tradition. We all embrace those ancient Knights of Saint John as worthy models of knightly duty and service. Those Saint John Orders which have remained hospitaller in practice actively work for the amelioration of pain and distress wherever they can. Additionally, all valid Orders of Saint John possess a valid fons honorum.

50. What are the other valid Orders of Saint John?

The S.M.O.M., the Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Order of Saint John, the Venerable Order of Saint John in the British Realm, the Order of Saint John in Sweden, the Order of Saint John in the Netherlands.

51. What is the S.M.O.M.?

The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, called of Rhodes, called of Malta. It is the continuation of that

Hospitaller Order founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades, insofar as it has maintained a continuous existence since that time under suzerainty of the Papacy, thus remaining both Roman Catholic and having Professed Knights. It is also the only Order of Knighthood which exercises sovereignty. Its membership is open only to worthwhile Roman Catholics, and it maintains a worldwide program of charities.

52. What is the Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Order of Saint John?

Die Balley Brandenburg des Ritterlichen Ordens Sankt Johannis vom Splital ze Jerusalem, known as the Johanniterorden, is a Lutheran Order of Saint John under the authority of the Crown of Prussia whose Grand Master (Herrenmeister) is always a Prince of the House of Hohenzollern. At the Reformation it Protestantized itself, although its links to the Knights of Malta were not entirely severed until the Napoleonic wars. The Grand Bailiwick was abolished and its properties reverted to Prussia in 1812, and in its place King Frederick William III created the Prussian Order of Saint John. In 1852, this Order was reconstituted as the Bailiwick; but, as it is open to Lutheran noblemen, it remains a Prussian Order quite distinct from the S.M.O.M. The Order, after several breaks in succession, came under protection of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1959.

53. What is the Venerable Order of Saint John in the British Realm?

Begun in 1831 as a private initiative by certain gentlemen in England who claimed that they were restoring the English Langue of the historic Knights of Malta (which claim was not then recognized by the British Crown or ever since by the S.M.O.M.), they succeeded by way of their charitable activities in securing a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria in 1888. This Order is generally regarded as a national body, enjoying the protection and fons honoum of the British Crown, with a Prince of the Royal Family serving as its Grand Prior. It is a large and influential Order doing much good, especially known for its Saint John Ambulance Brigade. While not restricted to any one denomination, its membership is drawn from the territories of the British Crown. This Order also solicits honorary or affiliated memberships in the United States.

54. What is the Swedish Order of Saint John?

Known as the Johanniterorden i Sverige, this is a national Order which detached itself from the Prussian Johanniterorden in 1946. It exists under the sovereignty of the King of Sweden, who is its High Protector, and membership in it is restricted to Swedish noblemen who are Lutheran.

55. What is the Order of Saint John in the Netherlands?

Known as the Johanniter Orde in Nederland, it is a national and Evangelical Order. Like its Sweden counterpart, it disassociated itself from the Prussian Johanniterorden at the end of the Second World War. Since then it has enjoyed protection and fons honorum of the Dutch Crown, with a Prince of the Royal Family serving as its Grand Master.

56. Are there invalid Orders of Saint John?

Yes. In a sense this is a tribute to the prestige and fame of that great and distinguished Order which grew out of that ancient Hospital in Jerusalem, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. Some of these "orders" base their claims on descent from long dormant or extinct units of the ancient Knights of Malta, or go back even further to when the Knights of Saint John were still on Rhodes, or claim descent from the suppressed Russian Commanderies of the early XIXth century. Some have respective memberships who do good works, while others, unfortunately, are led by self-seeking promoters who are only interested in separating the unwary from their money. What separates the valid from the invalid, however, is the ability to create true Knights. Thus, the common element of all valid Orders of Saint John is that they all partake of the fons honorum (See above no. 6) from a legitimate Sovereign: the invalid "orders" do not.

