Sovereign Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem®
Knights of Malta

20th December 2025

From the office of the Prince Grand Master,

To all members of the Order of St John

Dear Brothers and Sisters in St John,

As the festive season draws near, we extend our heartfelt and warmest wishes for a joyful Christmas and a hopeful New Year. This special time of year offers us a moment to pause, reflect, and renew our commitments to the values that unite us as members of this noble Order of St John, namely charity, compassion, and dedicated service to those in need.

Throughout the past year, our Order has steadfastly upheld its sacred vow to serve and aid vulnerable populations across the globe. Despite numerous challenges, we have witnessed remarkable moments of unity and unwavering commitment. Our Grand Priories in various countries have tirelessly engaged in compassionate initiatives which included gathering and delivering medical aid and equipment, supporting impoverished and marginalized communities, and fostering hope where despair once seemed overwhelming. From the lively streets of Europe to the remote and underserved regions of Africa and Asia, our members' efforts have brought relief, dignity, and renewed hope to countless lives.

I am especially proud to share that this year's investiture ceremonies held in Malta, Australia, Canada, and Sicily have played a vital role in invigorating our mission. These events welcomed new Knights and Dames into our ranks, each committed to the noble cause of helping the sick and the poor within their respective countries. Their dedication breathes new life into our centuries old tradition and ensures that the flame of our Order continues to burn brightly.

I must express that I harbour a particularly deep and heartfelt fondness for the investiture ceremony held in Malta. This event holds a special place in my memory, not only because it was a grand and momentous occasion, but also because it coincided with a significant milestone in my personal and professional journey as Grand Master. The investiture symbolized the

culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, and service, and it served as a powerful reaffirmation of my commitment to the values and principles upon which the Order is founded.

Furthermore, this ceremony was especially meaningful as it marked the tenth anniversary of my leadership of the Order. Celebrating this decade of stewardship in Malta, a place rich with history and tradition, added an extra layer of significance and emotional resonance. It was a moment to reflect on the accomplishments, challenges, and growth experienced over these ten years, while also looking forward to the future with renewed resolve. The event not only celebrated my tenure but also reinforced the bonds of fellowship and shared purpose among all members of the Order, making it an unforgettable chapter in my journey. This moment was celebrated with great joy and solemnity, culminating in a magnificent concert performed by the St Paul's Metropolitan Orchestra. The concert, titled Lullaby for Birkenau, was a mass for peace held at the historic St Paul's Metropolitan Cathedral in Mdina, conducted by Brother Maestro Mark Agius. The event was supported wholeheartedly by our Order and served as a poignant reminder of our commitment to peace and reconciliation.

In Sicily, the ceremony was held at the historic Commandery of our Order, located in the picturesque Piazza Armerina. This revered site holds a profound historical significance, serving as a symbol of our heritage and enduring legacy. Over the years, the Commandery has been meticulously preserved and is now a treasured possession of our Order, embodying centuries of tradition and dedicated service. The event not only celebrated our ongoing mission but also honoured the rich history embedded within this iconic location, reinforcing our commitment to uphold the values and traditions that have shaped our legacy in this region. Considering the challenges our Order has faced, these events not only mark new chapters in our ongoing mission but also reaffirm our enduring dedication to preserving a legacy rooted in centuries of care, charity, and service. In this way Brother Antonio Castellano, Brother Massimo Milazzo and the Grand Priory of Italy have set an example for all Grand Priories of our Order to reclaim that was given to our Order to protect.

The investiture in Canada symbolized the dedication of new members who have embraced our noble cause, strengthening the bonds of our international brotherhood.

This year, as we gather in reflection and gratitude, we also take a moment to remember and honour the cherished brothers and sisters of our Order who have departed in 2025. Their lives and contributions have left an indelible mark on our community, inspiring us to uphold the values and traditions they held dear. Among those we remember are Lieutenant Grand Master Bartha Árpád de Bonta, a dedicated leader whose unwavering commitment and service exemplified the ideals of our Order, and Prince Antal Esterházy of Galanta, whose noble spirit and unwavering dedication enriched our brotherhood. Their legacy continues to inspire us all, reminding us of the enduring bonds of brotherhood and the importance of living a life of integrity, service, and honour. Their memory remains a guiding light, reminding us of the importance of steadfast service and compassion.

The Christmas season is a profound reminder of the core values, love, hope, and charity. It is a time to reflect on our shared humanity and to renew our resolve to assist those suffering from ongoing conflicts and crises. We are deeply saddened by the continued wars in Ukraine and Gaza, which have caused immense suffering and displacement of innocent lives. During these difficult times, our resolve to provide aid, comfort, and support remains stronger than ever, inspired by the true spirit of Christmas.

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us remember that the essence of Christmas lies in kindness, generosity, and compassion. May our hearts be open to those in need, and may we stand united in hope and prayer for a future of peace and reconciliation.
As we look ahead to the year 2026, we embrace it with a spirit of hope, resilience, and compassion. With renewed strength and a collective commitment to making a positive impact, we extend our heartfelt wishes for healing, peace, and unity to all corners of the globe. May this new year be a time of renewal, not only for our Knights and Dames but also for communities striving for harmony and understanding.

Together, through collective effort and genuine compassion, we can create meaningful change in the lives of the most vulnerable. Whether through acts of kindness, volunteer work, or simply sharing a moment of understanding, each of us can make a difference. Let us be guided by the belief that our actions no matter how big or small they are can contribute to a more just, peaceful, and loving world.

Wishing you all a joyful Christmas and a hopeful, prosperous New Year.

With sincere appreciation, I send you my fraternal regards,

Yours in Christ and St John,

Sandor Habsburg-Lothringen
PGM-SHOSJ