

---

# Hospitaller: Knights of St. John (Part 1)

*"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against supernatural wickedness in high places."*

-- Ephesians 6: 10-12

## A supplement for For Church Knight: the Cainite Crusade otherwise known as **Militia Christi**

Written and compiled by Jamie Seidel (omicron@adelaide.dialix.oz.au) October 1996

### Chapter One: Introduction

*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

-- Thessalonians 5: 1-6

What are the Hospitallers? The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta is the oldest Order of Chivalry in existence. It is also the third oldest surviving Religious Order in Christendom.

But the Hospitallers are made up of monks with a difference. They have not abandoned the world; nor are they priests. They wear no distinguishing costume other than the cross. The Knights of St. John are free to move about the world, but at the same time are expected to respect their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. It is a strange and difficult vocation.

They are men of the sword whose job is fighting, protecting and serving. But they are also men of charity, aiding the sick and in distress whenever encountered.

### Theme

The knights carry the eight-pointed white cross emblazoned upon their chest: the four arms signifying their Christian virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; the eight points representing the beatitudes these virtues bestowed; and in its colour the incandescent whiteness of knightly purity. These are ideals that often seem to have no place in the society of the World of Darkness.

But the struggle to preserve and promote the inherent goodness of mankind is one that cannot be abandoned. The Militant Orders know that Armageddon will come once humanity reaches its lowest ebb.

The Knights of Christ must delay this. While Judgement Day is inevitable, every single human soul is incredibly valuable. Each and every one must be given the chance to redeem itself.

For this to happen, mankind must be kept free of the soulless -- the vampires, the shapechangers and all other Hellspawn.

When the Final Day dawns upon mankind, the Knights Hospitaller picture themselves fighting a desperate but valiant rear-guard action -- beating off the minions of evil from the last free souls as they flee toward the comfort and protection of their Lord.

## Mood

In the duties of a Knight Hospitaller, the term *Noblesse Oblige* (noble obligation) found positive meaning - they really are defenders of the faithful, the weak, the pious, the humble, the good, servants of the sick, the maimed and the diseased. Righteousness is the core of the Knight of St. John.

They see their service not as a tedious responsibility, but as a vitally necessary contribution to the well-being of mankind. Humility and devotion is a way of life. Even though death and despair forever surrounds them.

The historical Hospitaller was more than just a knight like any other. Even more so than the Templars and Teutones, the knights of St. John took their monastic role very seriously -- particularly their vow to serve the poor and the sick.

It was this vow that led the Order of St. John into conflict with vampires and other supernatural creatures. Vampires held particular repugnance as they fed on those least capable of defending themselves -- the poor -- and inflicted great suffering and pain upon their victims.

Nothing spurs on the righteous indignation of a knight of St. John more than the sight of a sick and weakened blood-doll. Mankind has been marked by God to be more than just a food animal. Any demon that seeks to corrupt the proper order of things deserves eternal expulsion from God's creation.

This concern for the welfare of the general populace earned the knights of St. John great respect.

This devotion and sense of honour still holds true today. The old ways are the best ways for they are unspoiled by "modern" philosophies and beliefs. Tradition is strong, pure and reliable.

Ever vigilant and always prepared, the Hospitallers refuse to submit to the "ways of the world." The Knights of St. John consider themselves a fortress of the Faith: with the despairing hordes Satan's servants crashing against the walls of belief and devotion. But it must be remembered the fortress exists only to provide sanctuary to the weak and helpless: not as an icon to the Order's own piety.

In these days of atheism and apathy, fewer and fewer seek this refuge. Despair and unbelief has a chokehold upon society.

But the Knights must hold the gate against the Apocalypse until the last free soul is safely through.

## The Ancient Order

No religious vocation was needed to enter the ranks of the Hospitallers, no aptitude for hospital work, for fighting, for administration, for holiness. The intrinsic nobility of the candidate, revealed by an unsullied

pedigree, was, in the glorious legend of Medieval Europe, sufficient to ensure a noble's capacity for all these things.

The knights of Malta were privileged beings, subject to discipline according to the statutes of the Order and not the laws of the land. While immune from the attentions of local police, it did not mean he was free to do whatever he liked. If he broke the rules, he could be arrested -- but only at the direct command of the Pilier (commander) of his particular Tongue (division). He would stand trial before his equals, and, if convicted, could only be jailed in the towers of St. Angelo and St. Elmo in Valetta, Malta.

The supreme penalty was dismissal from the Order, but life imprisonment was more common.

But the international flavour of the Hospitallers wilted under the nationalism of the monarchs of Europe: only in Malta were national differences ignored, for they were Knight Hospitallers first and foremost on an island where all Christian monarchs were equally honoured. But even this became an anachronism by 1798, with the wars of Europe reflected in the internal relations of members of the Order.

By the end of the 18th century, there were too few good men in the Order to keep it effective and useful. The really good men made careers for themselves in the service of their own monarchs, while the mediocre stood out for their rights and lived correct, dutiful but unrewarding lives. The lazy ones, greedy ones, the rebellious ones quarrelled among themselves, and, with little else to do, tore the fabric of the Order, thread by thread, to tatters.

## **The Modern Order**

Though the Militant Religious Orders no longer wage open war, most of them survive in some form. The Hospitallers have proved the best at weathering the cruel storms of time -- not least because of their strict tradition of charity. While losing most of its power with the fall of Malta, the Order still remained active.

The Order's professed knights still live a monastic life, while those not under vows contribute greatly to hospitaller activities ranging from Peru to Pakistan, from California to the Caucasus -- funding and administering hospitals, ambulance brigades and medical relief efforts. Often before them are the active Knights of St. John: sent in to "clear the way" of potential harm -- particularly supernatural.

The Militant Knights of St. John live a life parallel to that of the charitable Order. Their ranks overlap, but the true nature of an active knight is concealed by the Order's overt humanitarian activities.

Knights seek to keep their activities secret, but are permitted to use any of the Order of St. John's resources in their pursuit of supernatural foe.

When not fighting Satan's servants, the knights serve the sick and needy like all other brethren.

Membership of the Order imposes the solemn duty, at all times and in all circumstances, of defending the Faith as enshrined in the teachings, doctrines and traditions of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church. Personal loyalty to His Holiness the Pope as Christ's Vicar on Earth is a duty that takes precedence over every other obligation. If the knights remain steadfast in their duty of serving the Church and their Rule, they will enter a second millennium of service to Our Lords the Sick -- and will survive for centuries to come.

## **The Ancient Enemy**

It took more than a century for the new unity experienced in the defeat of the Templars to embody itself in a common vampiric council.

It was 1435 which saw the formal unification of the established Clans under the Camarilla. The most senior vampires of each Clan held a seat on its high council, with their most trusted servants helping to form and enact its policy.

The first move of this council was to establish a new law of Masquerade. As many as possible Cainites were contacted and informed of ways and means to conceal their presence from the authorities and the Church.

This was to take several centuries to fully enact, but time is something vampires have plenty of.

But all through this time the Hospitallers were a thorn in the Camarilla's side. These knights roamed Europe, free of all secular control.

It did not matter if a local prince was under a vampire's prey: his word had no hold over a Knight of St. John. Open conflict would have only brought down the anger of the Church -- with the ensuing Edict attracting Inquisitors and witch-hunters of all kinds and traditions.

The first organised action against the Hospitallers was to have the Clans based in the Eastern Mediterranean manipulate their subjects to invade Rhodes in 1444. This invasion was repulsed.

In fact, the Order of the Hospital seemed almost impervious to direct assault. Even when expelled from Rhodes, it found for itself a new impregnable fortress on Malta. The Camarilla searched in vain for a "hook" on which to lay charges similar to those used to bring down the Templars. But the Hospitallers were too popular for their charitous work. By occupying a strategic island in the middle of the Mediterranean, turning a European monarch against the Order would not work either -- any assault would precipitate a continent-wide war.

In the 18th century the Camarilla decided to adopt a new approach: destroy the Order from within. It was much too difficult to insert "plants" within the Order. But the youthful and high-spirited novices were prone to the same weaknesses of all their age, particularly beautiful women.

Some of the more obscure bloodlines associated with the Camarilla were called into action. Their combined talents as the Amazons gradually weakened the moral strength upon which the Order was based. Inevitably, the Order fell.

Now, the Amazons remain a threat -- holding status within the Camarilla as knight-hunters.

## **Chapter Two: Knights of the Cross**

### **Armoured Monks of Charity**

*They were religious, obliged to take monastic vows; they were soldiers obliged to have both the physique and the means for their profession. In the service of God all men are equal, but in the service of the Hospitallers, tradition, inheritance and skill with the sword and lance were pre-eminent qualities.*

*-- Roderick Cavaliero, *The Last of the Crusaders**

What was to become the largest and most influential of all the Militant Orders had its origins in 1048 as a hospital for pilgrims set up in the heart of Jerusalem by Benedictine monks.

These pious monks came from the Italian merchant town of Amalfi, and were sponsored by merchants who wanted to ensure Europe's pilgrims would live long enough to pay their fare for the trip "home."

It was immediately recognised by both Christian and Moslem alike for its generous and devoted charity work: though their techniques were "primitive."

By the time of the First Crusade in the late 1090s, the struggling band of medical monks was led by Brother Gerard de Amalfi.

Legend has it that Brother Gerard was not expelled from Jerusalem like other Christians when the Crusaders laid siege to it in 1099. He was allowed to stay to provide medical assistance for the city's residence. But he did not only help the sick, hungry and wounded of the city. The Order's traditions tell of him providing bread to the Crusaders by having loaves thrown over the walls during the night. The legend says:

". . . it was said that, together with the other inhabitants, he was ordered to help defend Jerusalem. He knew that the crusaders outside the walls were hungry, and so each day took small loaves up on to the parapet and hurled these at the Franks instead of stones. He was seen by the Arab guards who arrested him and took him before the governor. But when the loaves were produced in evidence of his crime, they had turned into stones and he was released."

Whatever role Brother Gerard played in the siege, he was certainly held in high regard by the Crusaders and the fortunes of his hospital improved dramatically after the city fell.

Many dying men made lavish gifts to the small band of monks that tried to comfort them in their last hours and many who recovered felt compelled to shower the monks in money and land.

The sainthood of Brother Gerard has been stressed by the Order ever since and there is little doubt he was a good and pious man. He was also a good organiser and very practical. Before he died in 1120 he had firmly laid the foundations of an Order that was to endure into the 20th century. Daughter houses began to appear in Europe along the pilgrim routes -- especially at the major Mediterranean ports.

His epitaph reads: "Here lies Gerard, the most humble man in the East and the servant of the poor." This became the unofficial motto of the Hospitallers for 800 years. His successor, Raymond du Puy, built upon the foundations so well laid by his predecessor. Under his guidance the Hospitallers took on prevention, instead of cure. Like the emerging Templars, the Hospitallers began recruiting knights who had stayed after the first crusade to live in the Holy Land. As these recruits did not make useful nurses or terribly pious monks, the role of guardian to travelling pilgrim seemed highly appropriate.

The first firm step toward becoming a Militant Order occurred in 1136 when the border castle of Bethgeblin in southern Palestine was bequeathed to the Order, who, in turn, had to provide for its defence.

By 1178 the militant arm of the monastic order had grown to its full potential. It is recorded as sending 500 fully armed and mounted knights together with about 1000 supporting troops on a crusade into Egypt.

## **Guardians of Outremer**

Every crusade since the Order was established contained a core contingent of Hospitallers, often numbering about 300 knights. Along with the Templars, these knights acted as the disciplined officers of

the visiting armies brought from Europe. They were also the most feared for their organised tactics, obedient discipline and fanatical dedication.

Not all of the Order's campaigns were defensive. The Master of the Hospitallers, like his Templar counterpart, was removed enough from the murk of politics to objectively analyse threats to Christendom's tenuous hold on the Holy Land. Several times the Hospitallers and Templars banded together to launch "interdictory" raids and campaigns in order to prevent neighbouring Moslem nations from becoming "too strong." The aim was to disrupt the assembly of armies that would be much too large for the kingdom of Jerusalem to meet head-on at a later date.

By the end of the 12th century the Hospitallers were rivalled only by the Templars in terms of wealth and power. Even in Jerusalem, a large military barracks was positioned alongside their famous hospital.

During the Order's 200 years defending the Holy Land it acquired and built a strong "curtain" of castles extending from north to south, guarding important passes and crossroads. The most famous of these, Crak de Chevallier, is recognised as the strongest concentric castle ever built.

But all the strongest castles in the world could not hold Outremer. There simply were never enough knights to garrison them all and provide a standing army to intercept any invader.

With Outremer engaged in a long civil war for the last 50 years of its existence, defeat eventually became simply a matter of time. The Orders pursued their own policies while princes and barons fought over the right to rule. Cooperation came too late.

## **The Order in the Middle Ages**

The name of the Order, until the 18th century, was "Holy Order (or Religion) of [the Hospital of] Saint-John of Jerusalem," modified in the late 15th C by the addition of "and of the Sepulchre of Christ" to reflect the incorporation in 1489 of the Order of the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre (distinct from the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre). The Grand-Master was made Prince of the Holy German Empire in 1607, a title which carried with it the rank of Serene Highness; in 1630, the Pope granted the Grand-Master the rank of Eminence, similar to that of the cardinals. In 1741, the Grand-Master combined the two into Most Eminent Highness, a style which is still used today. In 1301, the Order had organized itself in seven Langues: Provence, Auvergne, France, Spain, Italy, England and Germany, with a Pilier at the head of each, holding one of the top six offices of the order: Grand Commander, Marshal, Hospitaller, Drapier, Admiral, Turcopolier (Germany did not have an office; the Treasurer was never ascribed to a Langue).

The Langues corresponded to regional groupings of priories, the priories themselves groupings of commanderies. The commanderies could simply be estates, or houses where lay people were allowed to live and share some of the spiritual life of the Order (the corrodaries), or men and women who did not meet the nobiliary requirements (the confratres or donats), or where novitiates prepared for their vows. Some houses were convents of monks and nuns. The Langues were expected to send a set number of Knights to the main Convent.

The requirements to be a knight were initially to be of knightly family, but over time they became more stringent: in the 1350s nobility of both parents, in 1428 nobility of four generations on the father's side, in 1550 nobility of four quarters (all grandparents). The Langues each had their own requirements which could be stiffer: the French called for 8 quarters, the Italians 200 years in all four lines, the Germans 16 quarters, etc. In the 17th century nobility of robe or office was excluded.

Knights entered the novitiate, took simple vows after 1 year and solemn vows after the age of 21. Professed members (be they knights, chaplains or sergeants) were called "of Justice." The sergeants wore the "half-cross." Individuals who did not meet the nobiliary requirements but had otherwise distinguished

themselves could be made Knights of Grace (the painter Caravaggio in 1608), while Knights of Justice who had to renounce their vows and marry for family obligations could become Knights of Devotion. The Donats were also entitled to the half-cross. In the 1630s there were about 1700 knights in the Order.

## The Rule and Customs

*It was party chance, partly a robust constitution that kept the Knights of St. John going for so long.*  
-- Roderick Cavaliero, *The Last of the Crusaders*

The early statutes of the Order demanded exceptional qualities from its members. They were religious, obliged to take monastic vows; they were soldiers obliged to have both the physique and means for their profession. In the service of God all men are equal, but in the service of the Hospitallers, inheritance and skill with the sword and lance were pre-eminent qualities. The Order of St. John was a democracy, but the membership of this democracy was open only to the well-born. To become a Knight of the Order one had to prove an unblemished, noble and Catholic parentage. Maltese nobles were not allowed to become Knights, though any Maltese could join the order as a Man-at-Arm, retainer or cleric.

## Conduct and Vows

The Knights had to take the following vows:

- ◊ Poverty
- ◊ Chastity
- ◊ Obedience

Secondary, though equally enforced, to these vital words were the following clauses:

- ◊ Never to wage war against any other Christian.
- ◊ Never to gamble and incur debts.
- ◊ Never to shrink from battle.
- ◊ Never to lower the Order's flag.
- ◊ Never retreat
- ◊ Never to surrender
- ◊ Never to ask for quarter.
- ◊ Never to ignore the sick or unfortunate.

The Order took these vows very seriously, as this incident illustrates: In July 1570, while cruising in the vicinity of Malta, heedless of the warning of the Turkish fleet lying nearby, Chevalier Jean Francois de St. Clement was surprised by an overwhelming force led by Lucciali, a Turkish general. Clement fled ignominiously after losing three ships -- the Capitana, the San Giovanni and the Sant'Anna -- only the Santa Maria della Vittoria escaped capture. In the disaster that followed, eight knights and large number of Maltese soldiers and sailors, perished.

A general outburst of indignation ensued on the island, and on his return to Malta, St. Clement barely escaped being lynched. He was tried, found guilty, and was stripped of his habit. Condemned to death, he was strangled in prison, and, his body, enclosed in a sack filled with stones, was thrown into the sea a few miles outside Grand Harbour.

## **The Rule**

The Rule of the Hospital of St. John was revised in 1130 by Pope Innocent II, the same that granted the Order its banner of a white cross on a red background. This rule divided the Order into three distinct categories, Knights of Justice, Conventual Chaplains and Serving Brothers.

The Hospitaller Rule was very different from that of the Templars -- from which it drew no inspiration. Knights did not have to wear short hair and long beards. But their garb was uniform and unadorned.

Rules relating to women and contact with those outside the Order were strict, but not to the extent of secrecy applied by the Templars. In fact, most individual knights were given much greater personal responsibility than many other Orders. Even Sergeants (serving brothers) could command an Estate in Europe.

## **Uniform and Dress**

The garb of the Knights Hospitaller changed significantly during the centuries. For the first 100 years of its existence, knights wore simple black surcoats and great-cloaks with a white Latin Cross on the chest and left shoulder.

In the 13th century the black uniform changed to red, with the white cross adopting its recognisable eight-pointed form. Many variations of this uniform were developed according to changes in armour types and needs.

By the 16th century, knights outside of Rhodes or Malta were allowed to wear the secular dress of their kingdom or province. But they were required to wear about their neck a black collar with the Maltese Cross as a symbol of their status. The knights stationed in the convents of Malta faced stricter standards of dress. The Rule stipulated no brocade or cloth of gold or silver, no lace fringes or trimmings, no gold or silver buttons, nor knots of bow or thread were permitted. The penalty for breaching this rule was three-years confinement in St. Elmo and the awarding of the offending garment to the person who informed. Needless to say, the Rule was effective in abolishing fashion competition among the knights of varying nations.

On ceremonial occasions in the presence of kings, queens and Cardinals, knights wore their full formal dress: captains of the galleys appeared in red surcoats and gold braid, the officers wore tricornes and white stockings, all with a red silk soubrevest blazoned with the white cross of St. John.

In the convents they were expected to wear their standard habit, a black cloak with a white cross embroidered over their left shoulder, black vest, breeches and hose. They could carry a sword, though it was attached to a stole that hung from the neck down the left side, embroidered with the symbols of the passion. This costume was worn on formal, though not ceremonial, occasions.

Clothes worn while travelling could be modestly cut in the fashion of the day, with the Order's cross about their neck.

## **Freedom to Act**

The privileges enjoyed by Hospitallers for more than 500 years provided a unique opportunity to track-down and eliminate supernatural abominations among the varied communities of Europe.



Knights of the Order were above the law. They were answerable only to their Pilier, Grand Master and ultimately the Pope.

No constable, duke, king or emperor could legally lay their hands on a Knight of Malta for any reason. They could only make formal complaints to the superior officers of the Order.

This freedom gave the knights great flexibility in openly defying the schemes and machinations of their supernatural opponents: whether they were economic, social or physical actions.

Knights could, and would, go where they liked when they liked. They were not subject to tolls on bridges or ferries. They did not have to pay for transportation by river barge, unless travelling in large groups.

Even towns under Church Edict -- religious banishment and siege -- were open to the attention of an inquiring knight. Excommunicated men and women, strictly shunned under Church law, could be spoken to and assisted. The Templars were even allowed to recruit from among their ranks.

All this has changed with the nationalisation of Europe and the decline of the power of the Church. Now the Knights of Malta have to rely upon other sources of strength and support. Instead of immunity from the law, knights now have to rely upon diplomatic immunity to get themselves out of difficult situations. Travel across national borders in Europe has recently been made easier with the Union, but the Order's own passports are respected enough to allow access without question into most countries. Commoners no longer fear the horse-mounted knights of the Church, but the international network of relief and ambulance agencies ensure support is always near to hand. The world has changed, and the Order with it.

## **The Rule of the Order of St. John**

This is the constitution ordained by Blessed Raymond Du Puy 1120-60:

In the name of God, I Raymond Servant of Christ's poor and Warden of the Hospital of Jerusalem, with the counsel of all the Chapter, both clerical and lay brethren, have established these commandments in the House of the Hospital of Jerusalem..

1. How the brethren should make their profession: Firstly, I ordain that all the brethren, engaging in the service of the poor, should keep the three things with the aid of God which they have promised to God, that is to say, chastity and obedience, which means whatever thing is commanded them by their masters, and to live without property of their own: because God will require these three things of them at the Last Judgement....
2. What the brethren should claim as their due: And let them not claim more as their due than bread and water and raiment, which things are promised to them. And their clothing should be humble, because Our Lord's poor, whose servants we confess ourselves to be, go naked. And it is a thing wrong and improper for the servant that he should be proud, and his Lord should be humble....
3. Concerning the conduct of the brethren and the reception of the sick: Moreover this is decreed that their conduct should be decorous in church, and that their conversation should be appropriate; that is to say, that the clerics, deacons and sub-deacons, should serve the priest at the alter in white raiment, and if the thing shall be necessary another cleric should render the service, and there should be a light every day in the church, both by day and by night, and the priest should go in white raiment to visit the sick, bearing reverently the Body of Our Lord, and the deacon and the sub-deacon, or at least an acolyte should go before, bearing a lantern with a candle burning, and the sponge with the holy water....
4. How the brethren should go abroad and behave: Moreover, when the brethren shall go to the cities and castles, let them not go alone but two or three together, and they shall not go there with those whom they

would, but with those whom their Master shall order, and when they shall become there where they would go, let them remain together as united in their conduct as in their dress. And let nothing be done in their movements which might offend the eyes of anyone, but only that which reveals their holiness. Moreover, when they shall be in a church or in a house or in any other place where there are women, let them keep guard over their modesty, and let no women wash their heads or their feet, or make their beds. May Our Lord, who dwells among his saints, keep guard over them in this matter....

5. How alms should be sought: Also let religious persons, both clerical and lay brethren, go forth to seek alms for the holy poor; also when they shall seek for a lodging (hostel), let them go to the church or to some suitable person and let them ask of him their food for charity sake, and let them buy nothing else. But if they should not find anyone who will give them the necessaries, let them buy by measure one meal only, on which they shall live....

6. Concerning the alms obtained and concerning the produce of the houses: Also let them take neither land nor security from the alms collected, but let them deliver them up to the Master with an account in writing, and let the Master deliver them up with his own account in writing to the poor in the hospital; and let the Master receive from all the Obediences the third part of the bread and wine and of all food, and that which shall be surplus should be added to the alms, and let him hand it over in Jerusalem to the poor with his own account in writing....

7. Who and in what manner they should go abroad to preach: And let not any of the brethren, of whatever Obedience they may be, go to preach or to make collections, except only those whom the Chapter and the Master of the Church shall send. And let those same brethren, who shall go to make collections, be received in whatever Obedience they shall come, and let them receive such food as the brethren have ordained among themselves, and let them demand no other thing. Also let them carry with them a light, and in whatever house they shall be lodged (herbergie), let them cause the light to burn before them....

8. Concerning the clothing and food of the brethren: Furthermore also we forbid the brethren to wear at any time brightly coloured cloth (dras ysambruns ne galembuns) or furs of animals (pennes sauvages) or fustian. Also let them not eat more than twice in the day, and let them eat no meat on Wednesdays or Saturdays, or from Septuagesima until Easter, except those who are sick or feeble; and let them never lie down naked, but clothed in shirts or linen or wool, or in other similar garments....

9. Concerning fornication: But if any of the brethren, and may such a thing never happen, through sinful passion shall fall into fornication, if he shall sin in secret, let him do his penance in secret, and let him impose upon himself suitable penance; and if it shall be well known and proved absolutely for certain, then in that town in which he shall have committed the sin, on the Sunday after Mass, when the people shall have left the church, let him be severely beaten and flogged with hard rods (verges) or leather thongs (corroies) in the sight of all by his Master or by other brethren commanded by the Master, and let him be expelled out of all our company: and afterwards if Our Lord shall enlighten the heart of that man, and he shall return to the House of the Poor, and shall confess himself to be guilty and a sinner and the transgressor against the law of God, and shall promise amendment, he should be received and for a whole year should be treated as a stranger, and the brethren should observe during this period of time whether he be satisfactory, and afterwards let them do as shall seem good to them..

10. Concerning brethren quarrelling and striking one another: Also if any brother dispute with another brother, and the Procurator of the House shall have heard the complaint, the penance should be as follows: he shall fast for seven days, the Wednesday and the Friday on bread and water, and he shall eat seated on the ground without table and without napkin (toaille). And if the brother shall strike another brother he shall fast for forty days. And if he shall depart from the House, or the Master under whose authority he shall be, wilfully and without the leave of his Master, and afterwards he shall return, he shall eat for forty days seated on the ground, and shall fast on Wednesdays and Fridays on bread and water; and for as long a time as he has been absent, let him be treated as a stranger, unless by chance the time should have been so long that the Chapter should think proper to modify it....

11. Concerning silence of the brethren: Also at table, as the Apostle says, let each one eat his bread in silence, and let him not drink after Compline. Also let the brethren keep silence in their beds.
12. Concerning brethren misbehaving: And if any brother shall not conduct himself well, and shall be admonished and corrected by his Master or by other brethren twice or three times, and if, at the instigation of the Devil, he will not amend his ways not obey, he should be sent to us on foot with a written report of his sin; and always a small allowance (procuration) should be given to him sufficient to enable him to come to us, and we will correct him; and also no brother should strike the sergeants subject to him for any fault or sin they may commit, but let the Master of the House and the brethren exact vengeance in the presence of all; but always let the sentence (justice) of the House be maintained completely.
13. Concerning brethren found with private property: And if any of the brethren have made a disposition of private property at his death, he shall have concealed it from his Master, and afterwards it shall be found upon him, let that money be tied round his neck, and let him be led naked through the Hospital of Jerusalem, or through the other houses where he dwells, and let him be beaten severely by another brother and do penance for forty days, and he shall fast on Wednesdays and Fridays on bread and water.
14. What office should be celebrated for the deceased brethren: Moreover we command that this statue should be made, which is most necessary for us all, and we ordain it in commanding that for all the brethren who die in your Obedience thirty Masses should be chanted for the soul of each; and at the first Mass each of the brethren, who shall be present, shall offer one candle with one Denier. Which Deniers, as many as there shall be, should be given to the poor for God's sake; and the priest who shall chant the Masses, if he be not of the House, should have provision in the Obedience on those days; and on completion of the office, the Master should render charity to the said priest, and let all the garments of the deceased brother be given to the poor; also let the brother priests, who shall sing the Masses, pray for his soul to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and let each of the clerics chant the Psalter, and each of the lay brothers 150 paternosters. And also concerning all other sins and matters and complaints let them judge and decide in Chapter with righteous judgement...
15. How the things here detailed are to be firmly maintained: All these things we command and ordain in the Name of Almighty God, and of the Blessed Mary, and of the Blessed St. John, and of the poor, that these same things should be kept with the utmost strictness...
16. How our lords the sick should be received and served: And in that Obedience in which the Master and the Chapter of the Hospital shall permit, when the sick man shall come there, let him be received thus, let him partake of the Holy Sacrament, first having confessed his sins to the priest, and afterwards let him be carried to bed, and there as if he were a Lord, each day before the brethren to eat, let him be refreshed with food charitably according to the ability of the House; also on every Sunday let the Epistle and the Gospel be chanted in that House, and let the House be sprinkled with holy water at the procession. Also if any of the brethren, who hold Obedience in different lands, coming to any secular person offering allegiance and giving him the money of the poor, in order that those persons should cause the said brethren to prevail by force against the Master, let such brethren be cast out of all the company..
17. How brethren may correct brethren: Also if two or more brethren shall be together, and one of them shall conduct himself outrageously be evil living, the other of the brethren should not denounce him to the people nor to the Prior, but first let him chastise him by himself, and if he would not be chastised, let him join with himself two or three brethren to chastise him. And if he should amend his ways, they should rejoice at it; but if he be not willing to amend his ways, then let him write down the guilt of the brother, and let him send it to the Master privately, and according at the Master and the Chapter shall order let it be done concerning him...
18. Concerning accusations: Let no brother accuse another brother unless he be well able to prove it; and if he shall accuse him and be unable to prove it, he is no true brother...

19. That the brethren bear on their breasts the sign of the cross: Also let all the brethren of all the Obediences, who now and henceforward shall offer themselves to God and to the Holy Hospital of Jerusalem, bear on their breasts the cross, on their cassocks (chapes) and on their mantles, to the honour of God and the Holy Cross that God by that banner (gonfanon), and through faith and works and obedience, may guard and defend us in soul and in body, with all our Christian benefactors from the power of the Devil in this world and the next. Amen..

## The Customs of the Order

By the chapter -- General of 1177 In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.. These are the customs which should be observed in the House of the Hospital of Jerusalem..

1. The first morning Mass should not be begun before it is day, nor should the Commander of any house order the priest to chant mass. And no priest should chant mass twice in a day, unless by chance the body of the dead person be there, and then in this manner, first should be chanted the mass for the day, if it be a Sunday or a day of Festival, and afterwards should be chanted that for the dead, if a body be present there. And everywhere where a deceased (brother) of the hospital shall be buried, the day of his death should be written in the calendar. And for thirty days masses should be chanted for his soul. And when the Trental shall be completed, the day the anniversary should always be celebrated for his soul, and when the church where the Trental shall be celebrated has three priests, one should celebrate the Trental, and the other two chant the masses for the day.

And if two priests only be there where the Trental should be celebrated, the service should be shared between them, and the gratuity. And when there shall be there no more than one priest, they shall obtain another a stranger to celebrate the service of the Trental.

2. And when it shall be celebrated, one besant and a new shirt and breeches, according to the custom of the House, should be given to him. And if it be impossible to find a stranger priest and the priest of the house be without the company of another priest, the Trental should be celebrated in this manner, that is to say that every day he should chant for the dead except on Sundays and days of solemn festival; and then afterwards he should make the commemoration and remembrance for the brother that is departed. But when the thirty days shall be passed, and after the number of days on which commemoration should be made only for the soul of the brother shall be fulfilled by the Trental, and there should be given to the priest the charity aforesaid. And if by chance these things should happen in Lent in the houses where there shall be no more than one priest, let it be postponed until after Easter, and then let celebration be made for the soul of the brother without delay.

3. And let the brethren always take care to have a light in the church, and let the chalice for administration be of silver, and the censor of silver.

4. And it is commanded that the bodies of pilgrims or of other Christians, who shall die after the Hour of Vespers, should be left until the next day; and in the Hospital, where they shall have died, let them not lie upon their biers without a light. And the next day before Prime they should be carried to the church, and after Mass should be buried; the biers of the dead should be like those that are in Jerusalem.

5. The bodies of the brethren should be watched in the church, and the clerics should be around them chanting their psalms, and the tapers should be lighted. Of the charity that is given to the priests for the Trental the house should retain nothing; but for the Trentals of strangers the brethren should retain the half.

6. For the public and private masses the priests should have nothing for themselves, except so much as the brethren should wish to give them of their own free will.

7. Of the payments from confessions the sixth part should be given to the priests and the clerics, not by contract but of grace; but in casales where there shall be no burgesses, and no one except one priest, the

arrangements aforesaid shall be at the discretion of the Commander of the house, and the gratuity of the clerics he shall give as shall seem good to him.

8. Of the wills and legacies, which shall be made to vicars up to one besant, the half should be given to them; but the legacies and wills, which shall be left to the Hospital, when they shall be paid over, the brethren should receive them without deduction.

## **The Eight-Pointed Cross**

An eight-pointed white enamelled cross is the badge of the Order, with the extremity of each arm indented by two points. The arms are narrow where they meet and gradually expand. The four arms represent the four cardinal Virtues:

Fortitude  
Justice  
Temperance  
Perseverance

The eight points of the Maltese cross symbolise the eight Beatitudes:

Blessed are the poor in spirit. . .  
Blessed are they that mourn. . .  
Blessed are the meek. . .  
Blessed are the righteous. . .  
Blessed are the merciful. . .  
Blessed are the pure in heart. . .  
Blessed are the peacemakers. . .  
Blessed are the persecuted. . .

And also the eight Tongues (divisions, language districts) of the Order: Aragon, Castile, England, France, Germany, Italy, Province, Spain. It is a white cross reminiscent of knightly purity.

Solemn vows were made before the cross, and to the person it symbolised, Jesu Christo.

The eight-pointed cross, now commonly known as the Maltese Cross, owes its origin to the Maritime Republic of Amalfi, Italy.

This region the birthplace of some pious merchants who founded the first hospice in Jerusalem in 1048 -- particularly the founding father of the Hospitallers Brother Gerard du Amalfi.

It has ever since been an emblem of the Knights Hospitaller.

The eight-pointed cross has generally been associated with the Order's monastic work. Knights in combat for much of their history wore a plain white Latin cross -- initially upon a black background and then on red.

It was not until the 15th and 16th Centuries that the eight-pointed cross came to be emblazoned upon a knight's armour and surcoats.

## **Novitiate**

*High spirits and horse-play were not confined to novices, and one of the major problems of life in Malta for a young Knight was finding something to do. . . It would be too much to expect five hundred Sir Galahads to survive the temptations of a free-and-easy world.*

-- Roderick Cavaliero, *The Last of the Crusaders*

Novices were usually drawn from the minor nobility of virtually all European nations. However, the only significant requirements upon application was a lack of Moslem or Jewish background.

For the first 150 years of the Order's existence, the background of members was deemed irrelevant. Nobility was considered a merit of the spirit, not of birth. Knights, novices and sergeants all wore the same black robes. While the title knight was still granted only to those of knightly heritage, the sergeants held equal rights in terms of rank, powers and privileges. It was not until the late 13th century that the Order began to adopt the strong pressures and limitations of nobility -- as the Templars had done right from the very beginning.

A youth who wished to become a Knight of Justice usually had to enroll in the Order when he was at least 16, but he had to start his novitiate before his 20th birthday.

From the late 13th century the Hospitallers required proof of nobility: "Four quarters" of high blood was often the standard set. This meant the noble birth of both the paternal and maternal grandparents. The application of this rule varied with the Tongue involved. In all cases, each candidate's application was closely scrutinised. The local priory established a committee of four knights and sergeants to examine the documents, call witnesses and to visit the candidate's family, friends and associates. The "proofs" were then sent to Malta, and re-examined by the head of each "Tongue" followed by a recruitment council.

It was finally submitted before the Venerable Council of the Order for final approval. Copies of the acceptance document were forwarded to the Holy See for papal consideration.

Only the Pope could grant special dispensation for applicants found to be of insufficiently noble blood for the status of knighthood. While not a rare occurrence, this was uncommon enough for it not to be seen as an easy option.

A novitiate was usually spent in a communal house in Jerusalem, Rhodes or Malta. Novices were under the command of the Master of Novices, always a Knight Grand Cross, and two other knights.

Exercise at swordsmanship, sabering and musketry were required three days a week. Riding and sailing were frequent additions to the course.

The rest of a novice's time was spent studying the Rule and the Gospels, assigned to assist knights and squires, or observing the procedures of the Grand Council or other governing bodies.

Once possessing suitable skills, the novice would be assigned to a "caravan" (tour of duty) with the Order's navy. This would often take two years, interspaced with duty in the Order's hospital.

Once the novitiate was over, the applicant would be assigned to his Tongue of origin and returned -- or assigned -- to a Priory. After a further six months, if all reports were favourable, the local Knight Commander or Grand Prior would accept the novice's vows. This ancient ceremony was usually carried out in the Priory church in front of a gathering of all local knights and sergeants.

Novices were generally treated well within the Order. It was recognised that these were the children and grand children of the Order's patrons. Food was good. Lodgings were good. Even holidays and free time were allowed. As many noble sons often failed to achieve knighthood, or were simply there to receive one of the best educations in Europe, looking back upon a novitiate with nostalgic enjoyment was beneficial to the Order on many levels.

Eventually the increasing freedoms conferred upon the novices would contribute toward the downfall of the Order. They were youthful, energetic and susceptible to the temptations of the world. The Camarilla knew this, and sent the Amazons to exploit this one unavoidable weakness

A limited number of boys, generally a hundred, were allowed to enter the Order at birth. These could be the children of nobles, or foundlings left at the doorsteps of any Hospital of St. John.

These children were "fostered" to relatives of the Order's officers during their youngest years, and were given an allowance to pay for access to exclusive public schools. They were raised as nobles, being taught all the intricacies of courtesy, politics and church doctrine before being sent on to Malta at age twelve

The best performing of these boys -- and those from the poorest families -- would be chosen to become one of the Grand Master's 12 pages. These pages waited upon the Master at meals and acted as messengers and "gofers" during the afternoons. All continued their formal education, at the Grand Master's expense, from senior knights and private tutors. At 15 the page was allowed to return to his family or foster family for up to a year. During this time he was expected to "digest" his experiences and training, and expected to make the decision about becoming a committed knight. Those who rejected the calling could not get away that easily: they were required to become affiliates of the Order until they had paid-back their education expenses.

Once these boys turned 16, they immediately became Knights of the Order. Initially they were given the probationary term of one year, acting in the capacity of Squires. Later, they were required to wait until their 18th birthday before becoming fully professed knights.

All pages, squires and novices were billeted in their own separate communal house, presided over by a Knight Grand Cross and two other senior knights. Their time was passed, or should have been passed, in religious services and communal prayers. They were exercised three days a week at swordsmanship, sabering and musketry. Regular boating sessions were also held, teaching vital skills of rope-handling and rudimentary navigation.

## Investiture

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

1 John 2:15-17

The candidate presents himself in smart formal dress to the gathered Chapter of knights and sergeants. A conventional church service is conducted where the applicant is absolved of his sins by a knight assigned to receive him.

The candidate would carry a lighted candle to represent Charity. This would be held throughout mass, at the end of which he would receive communion.

Once mass was given, the candle was taken away and the candidate and his knight-sponsor would approach the altar where the priest would sprinkle the sword to be awarded to the new knight with holy water.

Once the sword had been blessed the priest would turn and hand the sword to the candidate with the words:

"Receive this sword; its brightness stands for faith, its point for hope, its guard for charity. Use it well.

Take the sword in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and use it to defend yourself and the Holy Church of God and to confound the enemies of the Cross of Christ and of the Christian Faith, and never to hurt anyone unjustly with it."

The knight sponsoring would take the sword from the priest and turn to the candidate, reminding him of the seriousness of his vows before asking four questions with theological implications far beyond their words:

Are you already a member of any religious order?

Are you married?

Do you owe money? Are you an unredeemed slave?

The answers were solemn undertakings to defend the Church even at the risk of his own life and to help and defend at all times widows, children, orphans and all people in distress.

The candidate then made the following promise:

"I vow to God, to Saint Mary, to St. John the Baptist, to render henceforth, and for ever, by the grace of God, a true obedience to the Superior which it pleases Him to give me and who will be the choice of our Religion, to live without property and to guard my chastity."

The candidate was handed the unsheathed sword by the knight-sponsor as a symbol of fulfilling these undertakings. The sword was sheathed as the sponsor girded the candidate with the sword's belt as a reminder of the vow of chastity.

Kneeling in front of the sponsor, the candidate would unsheathe his sword and return it to the knight. The sword was used to touch the novice's shoulders three times while he was exhorted to fulfil his promises. The newly dubbed knight then waved the sword aloft three times as a challenge to the enemies of the Church.

The sword's blade was then wiped on the candidate's left sleeve as a sign that he carried a clean sword (and conscience). Thus the candidate was consecrated to the defence of the Church. The receiving knight then exhorts the applicant to flee from all vices and the exercise the four cardinal virtues. Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

Two fellow knights would then approach with golden spurs, which they place upon the heels of their new companion. He was reminded these spurs were meant to stimulate him in the exercise of Christian virtues, to honour God by his actions, and to show the world that he spurned all worldly things. This is why golden items were placed at his feet. The sponsor then took up a black mantle with the eight-pointed cross held outward: "Do you believe that this is the Holy Cross upon which Jesus Christ was secured and died for the redemption of our sins? This is the sign of our Order which we command you always to wear.

The black gown reminds us of our vow of obedience, while the white cross signifies our lifelong duty to carrying the cross of our Lord on our heart, so that by our right hand we may defend the holy emblem and all it stood for: eight beatitudes symbolised by the eight points of the cross, the four cardinal virtues, and the death and resurrection of our Lord."

The new knight kissed the cross and the knightly mantle was then place across his shoulders, the cross covering his heart. He was then warned:

"If ever in fighting for Jesus Christ against the enemies of the Faith he should turn his back and abandon the standard of the cross to take flight in a war so just, he will be despoiled of the Holy Sign as a prevaricator and cut off from the Order like a rotten and gangrenous limb."

The mantle was then secured around his neck.

"Receive the yoke of the Lord because it is sweet and light, under which you will find repose for your soul. We promise you only bread and water, and no delicacies, and a modest habit of no price."



Finally a long stole with various symbols of Christ's passion was handed to the knight with the advice that it should act as a reminder of Christ's suffering.

"This is a sign of the yoke that you must bear in patience and charity as benefits a worth member of our Order. Such a yoke should be a sweet burden, rewarding you with grace in this world and eternal glory in the one to come."

Finally the knight-commander would lead the new brother-knight to the steps of the alter where the priest would read Psalms 47 and 132, ending the ceremony with a blessing of all those present.

This simple ceremony was a final commitment. It could only be dissolved by death, papal dispensation or disgrace.

## Saints Among Us

*"A servant of the gentlemen that are poor or sick and a person devoted to the defence of the Catholic faith."*

-- Hospitaller rite of passage

The Hospitallers took great pride in considering the founder of their Order, Hugh de Amalfi, as a Saint.

St. Hugh of Genoa was the epitome of what a good knight of the Hospital was supposed to be. He was a mystic noted for his sense of asceticism. He always slept at the hospital near the sick, performing the humblest duties such as washing patients or laying out corpses. However, to have attained the rank of Commander of Genoa, Fra Hugh must have seen plenty of fighting.

Saint Gerland de Pologne proved that a brother knight's good qualities were not confined to nursing. The diplomat and Commander of Calatagirona had the unenviable task of representing the Master of St. John at the excommunicated Emperor Frederick's court. St. Gerland quickly developed a legendary reputation as "father to the Sicilian poor" and was famed for his gifted ability of mending broken friendships.

Another saint to emerge from the Order of the Hospital was Fra Gerard Mercati, who died in 1241. His took his position as a serving brother -- or chaplain -- of the Order to great lengths. Many sick and poor considered him to be their "guardian angel", always there to lend whatever support was needed.

Even the sisters of the Order produced a Saint. Her name was Ubaldesca, and like St. Gerland, was best noted for her ability to make friends out of anyone and mediate any crisis.

## Hierarchy

*The Order was governed by old men. That was, as well as being a weakness, also a strength, for despite its exclusive caste there were men of devotion and capacity who graduated to positions of trust through service at war and ten years statutory residence in Malta.*

-- Roderick Cavaliero, *The Last of the Crusaders*

Membership of the Order was divided into three main grades namely: Knights of Justice who were aristocrats from all over Europe. They wore the eight pointed white cross on a black background (now know as the Maltese Cross) on their chest. The second grade was that of the Conventual Chaplains who, although not necessarily of noble lineage, had still to be of "respectable origins." They worked in the hospitals, the churches, in the galleys and as clerks.

The third grade was that of Sergeants at Arms. They served as soldiers and nurses and were recruited from the common people. While not noble, a Sergeant held the right to wear the distinctive eight-pointed cross, enjoyed a vote in the Councils and was eligible for promotion to very senior rank.

The Knights were further grouped into langues or "tongues" -- loosely defined regions based on language rather than geo-political boundaries. These were Provence, Auvergne, France, Aragon, Castile, Italy, Germany and England. During the 16th C after the Reformation, the English arm ceased to exist as an effective force, as only a few Knights stayed on, disobeying their Protestant King. However a joint tongue of England and Bavaria was instituted in 1784.

The Order was governed by a Grand Master who was elected by a council for life. All the members of the Order owed allegiance only to him, and he in turn owed allegiance only to the Pope. He also had absolute authority -- though tempered by a series of committees and councils.

Sergeant-at-arms could be considered as squires to the knights in their duties and functions, or as almost-knights who fought on foot rather than horseback. They shared most of the privileges of a knight and wore a very similar uniform. The only difference was in the embellishments on the collar holding the white cross about their necks. Sergeants could earn the spurs of a full knight through valourous deeds and personal merits. Even as a sergeant they could end up commanding large estates and bodies of men. They had the right to vote in the councils of their Tongue, and to a more limited extent the higher councils and election of a Grand Master.

A Knight of Justice was the title awarded to a fully initiated member of the Order of St. John. It represented the individuals total commitment to the Order, through undertaking the vows of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity. These were the true Knights of Christ. Other knightly ranks were conferred by the Order, such as Knights of Grace, but these were mostly honorary titles.

The "Grand Cross" was a mark of a knight's seniority, mainly gained through years of service. However, outstanding feats of valour or other noteworthy performance was often rewarded with the granting of this desirable status. It was an honourific that gave the bearer the right to attend, or be selected for, most of the higher bodies of power that executed the Order's law and Rule.

The Bailiffs (Knights Captain) were the highest dignitaries of the Order. Originally the Bailiffs were the heads of the priories of the Holy Land, with Grand Priors being the heads of the European estates. After the fall of Outremer, the title was maintained for those belonging to the Order's highest ranks. In all there were 22 Bailiffs, and 22 Grand Priors. All Bailiffs (who held the Grand Cross) could sit on the Sacred Council. But the most important Bailiffs were the heads of the eight Tongues. They were given the additional title of Pilier.

The Pilier (Preceptor) was always a Bailiff Grand Cross. Each was the head of their particular Tongue, and there were always eight of them. They were usually old men by the time they were appointed through seniority to this position but they were allocated a younger Lieutenant to assist with the workload. Each of the eight positions of Pilier had a specific role associated with it: The Pilier of Italy was the Grand Admiral. The Pilier of France was the Grand Hospitaller. The Pilier of Provence was the Grand Commander and President of the Treasury. The Pilier of Auvergne was the Grand Marshal, the senior military commander of the Order. The Pilier of Castile was the Grand Chancellor, responsible for documentation and the seals. The Pilier of Aragon was the Grand Conservator, responsible for charities and daily expenditure. The Pilier of Germany was the Grand Bailiff, in charge of the fortresses and lookouts. The Pilier of England was the Grand Turcopilier, in charge of all mercenaries and affiliates of the Order.

The Grand Master held power in two capacities: Firstly as head of a religious order and as prince of a papal state -- Malta. Secondly, he was a feudal prince of a sovereign nation, equal to the princes of any European kingdom.

However, the pope held absolute spiritual dominion over the Order and had to approve every decision that affected it.

Grand Masters held office for life, and when one died another had to be elected within three days.

This limit restricted selection of a replacement to those knights on the island: a deliberate ploy to ensure a committed knight would gain the position instead of political intriguists sitting pretty in their European commanderies. But political intrigue could not be avoided: the "death watch" often dragged on for years, with hopefuls checking daily on the Grand Master's health.

Every voter in the election of a new Grand Master had to be at least 18 years old and have had completed three caravans (tours of duty).

A Grand Lieutenant was elected by the Sacred Council once the Grand Master became unable to continue his duties. This lieutenant could not take part in the election of a new Grand Master.

Each of the eight Tongues elected three Knights Grand Cross by secret ballot to represent their concerns on the elective body. The 24 representatives then nominated a President of the Election who presided over the election process -- but was put out of the running himself. At this point the Grand Lieutenant was required to stand down.

A triumvirate of one knight, one sergeant and one chaplain was then elected. This group of three chose a fourth member, and the quadrumvirate then selected a fifth . . . and so on until there were eight members of this committee -- one from each Tongue. This committee of eight then chose another eight, this time from the ranks of sergeants and knights not of Grand-Cross rank.

The final body comprised 11 knights, two chaplains and three sergeants. The President of the Election chaired their meetings and held the casting vote.

This body had to choose a new Grand Master before the end of the third day. This complicated process proved virtually immune to bribery, corruption and vote-rigging.

The Grand Master was the single-most powerful man within the Order but he was not a dictator. His activities were limited to the powers granted to him by the Rule and the various governing councils of the day. His word was final, unless in the case of a dispute between him and one of his Piliers or Bailiffs. In this case a special session of the eight Piliers -- called the Sguardo -- was summoned to determine who was in the right.

The Grand Master was addressed as Serene Highness and Eminence as he enjoyed a rank within the Church equal o that of a cardinal deacon. He was given the title Prince of the Empire by the Holy Roman Emperor in 1607. These were not empty honours: the Order recognised their value in maintaining a prominent standing among the increasingly nationalistic courts of Europe. Among his other titles were Father of the Poor, and Protector of the Gates of Malta.

The Grand master was given a modest-size palace in the heart of Valetta. He had an entourage of 12 pages to run his errands, and received a significant allowance to "keep up appearances."

A personal bodyguard of 150 hand-picked knights and sergeants were stationed in and around the palace. His personal staff included four secretaries, a master of pages, an almoner, four chaplains and an accountant. A Maltese official was also on his staff, relating news and issues affecting the island's populace. Any number of knights could be seconded to the Grand Masters service.

The Grand Master wore on ceremonial occasions a long black mantle, full like a cardinals, with an ermine-lined soutane of black silk emblazoned with the eight-pointed cross. he was girt with a silk cord and a

small crip that denoted him the Father of the Poor, and on his head was placed the fluted, flat-topped biretta that was his distinctive headgear.

The Sguardo was the council of the eight Piliers called to arbitrate and judge in any dispute involving the Grand Master and a senior officer of the Order.

The Venerable Council was the work-house of the Order's policy and decision-making actions. It was a committee of 16 made up of a Pilier and one knight from each Tongue: each with a specific role to represent such as treasurer, admiral, surgeon etc.

The Complete Council was made up of the above members of the Venerable Council, along with a further two representatives from every Tongue and a selection of knights holding the rank Grand Cross. This acted as the highest criminal court before which all offenders were tried. It could also be called upon to ratify the decisions of the Sacred Council.

The Sacred Council, comprised of every knight with the rank of Grand Cross, was responsible for policy decisions on the questions of statecraft. It was an unwieldy body, as no member could legally be excluded from any meeting. But this ensured all issues were fully and fairly discussed before a democratic decision was made.

The Chapter General was the supreme legislative authority in the Order of St. John. It was required to be held every five years, and all professed knights and sergeants that were able to attend had to do so. This was the only body that was able to amend the constitution and Rule of the Order. But the day-to-day administration of the Order was conducted by councils: leading these was the Venerable Council, made up of the Order's most senior knights. Other committees included the Congregation of War (a war planning council), along with many others.

## **Women in the Order**

Unlike the other Militant Orders, women have always been a part of the Hospitallers. Serving sisters have consistently been tending the sick from before the time the Order became militant until the present. The presence of women, often associated with charity work, was a major contributor towards the Order's long-term survival.

Initially present only in the hospital of St. John in Jerusalem, their popularity grew with the fortunes of their Order. The first nursing sisters in Europe were attached to Hospitaller commanderies, along with the knights and sergeants. Later they were given their own commanderies where they were cloistered together like other female religious houses.

The first such convent was at Sigena in Aragon, established in 1188. Their most famous was an English convent at Buckland in Somerset. It was founded by the summoning of all the nursing sisters in England and was also a headquarters of the chaplain brethren. Such commanderies were given the same status and power as those inhabited and led by knights. They also had the same responsibilities -- namely forwarding revenues to the Grand Master.

They led a contemplative life, praying for the brethren who fought the infidel. But they also served their local communities, moving among the poor and providing charity services similar to that offered by the modern Salvation Army. If the Order maintained a hospital nearby, it was the sisters who provided a continuous presence and experienced support for the visiting doctors.

Initially their habit was red and they wore the white-crossed black robe. Their habit later changed to a rich purple.

Just as the Order's relative acceptance of women in its early history served as an unexpected boon, its modern reluctance to accept women as equals is becoming a hindrance.

No active Knight, Chaplain or Serving Brother is permitted to be female. However, honorary titles and recognition of association with the Order are still conveyed through ranks such as the Knights and Dames of Magisterial Grace.

The Order's convents are still in existence, though shrinking just like all other Catholic nunneries. Many of the Order's female associates have been lost to the Templars, and, increasingly, the Teutones, as the Hospital will not allow them an active role in the fight against Satan's minions.

While the women associated with the Order cry out against this injustice, the hierarchy appears to be set firm in its position.

The Knights of St. John are not likely to capitulate on the issue until the Pope himself issues the instruction.

## **Our Lords, The Sick**

*"For the knight the poor are nothing less than Christ, incarnate in their suffering and in them he takes care of Christ."*

-- a chaplain of the Order

Assisting the sick was the *raison d'etre* of the Order of St. John. It was for this purpose that the monastic order was originally formed in about 1080, serving in this capacity even before the First Crusade and the capture of Jerusalem by Christian forces in 1099. The knights of St. John were always famous for their hospitals. During the 12th century, the hospital of Jerusalem was world famous for its size and facilities -- attracting much debate over the validity of some of its medical practices. It was here the knights learnt from the "heathen" saracens about the basic concepts of hygiene, infection control and contagious disease.

When the knights captured Rhodes in 1309 their first task was to build a new hospital -- even before attending to the walls and defenses of the city

Similar importance was placed in the hospital of Malta -- considered unmatched in size or facilities in Europe right up until the early 20th century. It offered 370 partitioned beds and 365 open beds. The average number of patients was usually about 400. In one year the Order's records show a total number of 153,333 patients being treated. "Tis so broade that twelve en may with ease walke abreast up the midst of it; and the bedds are on each syd, standing on four yron pillars, with white curtens and vallands and covering, extremely neate, and kept cleane and sweete."

It was a significant cost to tend all these people for free, but the Order's estate's provided sufficiently. But the value of the service went beyond treating the sick: the European noble families and general population saw the Hospital as a truly charitous organisation, willing to go to great expense in order to assist those in need. This probably saved the Hospitallers during the purges of the early 14th century. The Templars drew no such positive perceptions from their banking enterprises.

Knights and novices of the Order were expected to help as nurses in the hospitals maintained throughout Europe. Each Tongue had its rotational roster of duty. Even the Grand Master was expected to don the humble costume of a Hospitaller nurse and wait upon the poorest of the sick.

The Knights Hospitaller were obliged to provide for the sick and wounded of all races, creeds and colours, free of charge. No sick man was denied treatment, though if he was not of the Catholic faith he was confined to a separate ward. Slaves were admitted, as were Moslems -- both treated in the same manner as

any sick European noble. Sick knights were initially considered the same as other inpatients, but by the 18th century they were given private rooms separate from the main wards. The only mark of distinction was the allocation of two sheets to a knight, instead of the usual one. All patients were served with silver plates and goblets. This served a double purpose: reinforcing the Order's commitment to their "lords the sick", as well as the way such items showed up any dirty marks -- ensuring a higher degree of hygiene than would be expected from normal clay plateware.

The Order's modern-day disaster relief and first-aid work is no new phenomenon. In 1783 the Servants of the Poor lived up to their reputation when a sudden and cataclysmic earthquake destroyed Messina and Reggio in Calabria. The Grand Master at once ordered the galleys to sea with the doctors from the hospital, twenty chests of medical supplies and 200 beds and tents. The knights had to navigate the still-turbulent waters to land on the shattered district of Reggio, but the local bishop, who had heard the disaster was worse across the straight, sent them on to Messina. There the hillsides were covered with frightened and homeless people. However, upon hearing of the knight's arrival, the local sheriff curtly refused all offers of help on the grounds that the King of Naples had amply provided for the sufferers. He received the Hospitaller deputation in a barn with a sumptuous meal on rich furniture salvaged from the wreck of the town. Outside the famished and half-naked Sicilians crowded around the door, begging for food. Bailiff de Freson, Knight-General of the Hospitallers, was a bluff Frenchman and he unashamedly bullied the sheriff for permission to land his surgeons and set up a food kitchen. Once this was achieved, the knights had to drive off a frenzied crowd of starving men, women and children with the flats of their swords to prevent the whole operation being thrown into the sea.

The food assistance was quickly consumed, but the tents and medical attendance were greatly appreciated. De Freson sent word back to Malta for a rushed shipment of grain and biscuits.

The King of Naples, none too favourably disposed towards the Order at that time, was nudged into reluctant gratitude.

*A First Hand Account: A most valuable contribution to the research of the early history of the Order of St. John was made by Berthold Count of Waldstein-Wartenberg's book "Die Vasallen Christi" in 1988. He discovered a report of an unknown German monk, who he thinks might be identical with John of Würzburg or Theodericus, in the Bavarian State Library, Munich (Germany). The author reports, that he had been inside the walls of Jerusalem before the conquest of the Crusaders and that he himself had been admitted to the Hospital. The charity work which he experienced there was quite a contrast to the worldly life in the city itself. This encouraged him to write a tract on charity, which contains an elaborate description of the nursing care of the Order of St. John. He did not want to bother the doctors and nurses with the many questions a reporter usually asks. Therefore he just wrote down what he observed, which makes his report even more valuable. The reporter is obviously not able to distinguish between knights and serving brothers and he also mixes up their titles. He probably has not known the statutes either, although his report is in going with the prescriptions of the hospital regulations, which just reveals, that the brethren of the Order observed their Rule.*

*According to him the hospital admitted sick people of all nations, ranks and classes, men and women, Christians and Non-Christians. Every sick person, no matter what sex or religion he or she belonged to, was considered a neighbour of Christ, who had to be admitted and nursed. The Hospital is called the "Palace of the Sick" and consequently belongs to them. For the sick the best was just good enough. Therefore the hospital may also have employed oriental doctors, which encouraged the local people even more to come to the Hospital for treatment.*

*If sick people could not come to the hospital by their own means, the serving brothers of the hospital went to their home and transported them carefully to the hospital. There was even a kind of ambulance service, which accompanied the crusaders on their way. Even full time employed surgeons belonged to that service, who erected tents or canopies on the battle fields, where the casualties were brought to and even their mounts, which were then used to transport the wounded to the hospital. If those were not sufficient*

*the brethren had to put their own pack animals to the patients' disposal, thus showing that they only had lent those from their Lords, the sick, anyway.*

*As soon as the sick had arrived in the hospital the porter had to receive and treat them like Lords. They were first brought to a priest, where they could confess their sins and receive as the first food, the "remedy of heavenly medicine", i.e. Holy Communion. (This practise the Order had adopted from the Medical School of Salerno). Thereafter the sick were brought to the ward.*

*The Hospital was divided into eleven wards, which were obviously segregated according to the kind of sickness or injury of the patients. One ward had between 90 and 180 beds. Every ward was catered for by a special nursing team consisting of twelve nurses who were subject to a master. The women's ward, mainly serving as a maternity ward, was situated in a separate building. Waldstein-Wartenberg (Vasallen Christi) assumes it may have been situated in the western wing of the hospital adjacent to the Maria Latina Maior Convent. The nurses there may originally have belonged to St. Magdalene's Convent and later have become nuns of the Order of St. John.*

*The beds were big and covered with a bedspread and a linen sheet and feather cushions, so that the sick did neither "have to suffer from the roughness of the shaggy blankets nor through the hardness of the bed". The private clothing of the sick was secured in sealed bags and they were provided with coats, furs and shoes, so that they neither had to suffer from the coldness of the marble floor nor that they would make themselves dirty.*

*The nurses had to prepare the beds, to straighten the blankets and to loosen the cushions. They had to be of assistance to the sick in every respect, to cover them, to set them up and to support them in walking. Their hands were washed and dried with a towel as often as necessary. When it was time for meals a "tablecloth" was put on top of their beds. Bread was distributed in special baskets. Every sick person got his own loaf of bread, to avoid giving an unequal share. To intensify the appetite of the sick, even the sort of bread was changed frequently, so that no aversion would develop. The food for the sick was usually prepared in the monastery kitchen, where they cooked beef and mutton on Tuesdays and Thursdays, whereas Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays flummery was cooked. The members of the Order, knights, serving brothers and sisters served the food to the sick and got afterwards exactly the same food. The nurses had to watch that the food was well prepared and of good quality. When the quality of the food was poor or the sick did not have a good appetite, the nurses had to make a note of that fact and they had to see to it that the patients got supplementary food like chicken, doves, partridges, lamb, bucks, at times also eggs or fish. The nursing staff had to buy regularly pomegranates, pears, plums, chestnuts, almonds, grapes, dried figs and vegetables like lettuce, chicory, turnips, parsley, celery, cucumber, pumpkin, sweet melons etc. The treasury of the Order provided every ward with a budget of 20 to 30 Solidi per week for such additional food. The doctors of the hospital prescribed which patients had to get a special diet. Generally forbidden for all patients were beans, lintels, sea-onions, moray eels, meat from mother pigs, every smoked meat, biltong or fat meat or innards.*

*Certain Brethren had the special task to wash the head and trim the beard of every patient. They had to wash the feet and clean the soles with a pumice stone every Monday and Thursday. They had to go through all the wards during food distribution and sprinkle everybody with water and apply incense. This was done by burning Thyrus wood, the so-called oriental tree of life. This general oriental custom was supposed to disinfect, but chased away the insects in any case.*

*"Because doctors have learnt a lot and have practical knowledge," our reporter concludes, "the community of the Order entrusts the practical healing to the experience of science, that the sick might not be deprived from what is possible to man." The number and knowledge of learned European doctors was not very considerable. Therefore Jews, Arabs, Armenians and Syrians were recruited as doctors. The doctors visited the wards every morning and evening. They were accompanied by two nurses. One of them had to get the medicines, the other one had to hold the urinal (urine analysis played a central role in medical examination in those days) and write down the prescriptions.*

*The hospital employed also barbers (village quacks), which were recommended by the doctors. It was their task to bleed the patients according to the prescriptions of the doctors. {The medieval conception of patho-physiology ascribed many sickness to an imbalance of what they considered the four body liquids, blood (Latin: sanguis), phlegm (Greek: flegma [phlegma]), bile (Greek: [chole] means also anger and rage) and black bile (Greek: melaina chole [melaina chole]), which had its effect even in the mood of a person. If there was too much blood, the person is sanguine; too much phlegm makes him phlegmatic; too much bile causes one to be choleric and too much black bile makes a melancholic. To interfere with such an imbalance, e.g. through bleeding somebody was considered a necessary medical treatment.}.*

*To the very surprise of the contemporary witness, terminally ill patients were nursed with the same care as those who had a good prognosis.*

*At dusk the day shift ended and two brothers per ward took over night shift. The brothers had to light three to four lamps in the ward "in order to prevent the sick from illusions, errors and dubiousness." One of the brothers had to go round with a candle in the left and a wine jar in the right hand and call out dearly to them: "You Lords, wine from God." Whoever wanted to drink had to be served. The other brother did the same with a jug of water calling out: "You Lords, water from God." When all had quenched their thirst, both came with a copper full of warm water calling: "Warm water, in God's name." It was their task to wash the sick and they used to do it "without force, but mild persuasion". Afterwards they just had to walk around in the ward continuously to watch even those sick who were asleep. Those who were uncovered had to be covered, who was lying uncomfortably, had to be repositioned. In case of necessity the priest had to be called and the deceased had to be removed.*

*Our reporter does not mention that the priests had to pray daily after dark with the patients. In a prayer text from the 12 century the "Lords Sick" were asked to pray for peace, the fruits of the earth, the pope, the cardinals, the patriarch of Jerusalem, the delegates, archbishops and bishops, for the Master of the Order and the Holy Land, the brothers of the Order, the kings of England etc., for all pilgrims, benefactors, the prisoners of war in the hands of the Saracens, for the Sick, the donates and the Sisters, who work in the hospital, for the spiritual and financial supporters, and finally for their own parents. It seems strange, that the sick were asked to pray, but they were believed to be closer to Christ and therefore their prayers were considered more effective. After the brothers had prayed the nocturne, all brothers on night duty met to form a procession by candlelight. Together they proceeded through all wards and could notice "if one of the wardens was careless or disorderly or even antagonistic to this task." Afterwards they elected a brother from among themselves, who had to supervise them. This brother continuously walked through all wards and kept an eye on the guards, that nobody fell asleep, was careless or even behaved improperly when nursing the sick. If he discovered any mistake in the care, he amended this mistake immediately, but he was entitled to sentence the careless guard with flagellation, which was executed on the following day. Such severe punishment was imposed on those who maltreated the sick in words and deeds. Who did so repeatedly was immediately suspended from service and replaced by another brother. The evildoer was sentenced by the Hospitaller or his deputy, who had jurisdiction over all nursing and medical staff, to imprisonment of 40 days at water and bread.*

*Our reporter also mentions a hospital for women, which is situated in a separate building. His description is quite short, presumably he had no access to the department. He calls the nurses "Mothers of St. John" and nuns. They are most probably Nuns of the Order of St. John evolving from St. Magdalene's Convent. The female hospital was mainly a maternity ward. The delivering mothers got warm baths and all what they needed for their body hygiene. The commissioner of the hospital provides napkins for the newly born children which were laid into a cradle next to their mother. There was only an exception made, if the mother was poor, very ill or negligent with the infant because of her "stepmotherly harshness." In such cases the child was passed on to a wet nurse. As soon as the mother's condition had improved, the child was returned not later than a fortnight after birth. If the mother was not in a position to raise her child because of poverty, the master of the hospital visited her and arranged the transfer of the child to a foster mother. That happened quite often, as our reporter writes, with about up to one thousand children who had to be supported by the hospital at the yearly cost of twelve talents each.*



## The Inquisition

The fate of the Templars was the single greatest victory ever for the enemies of Christendom. Its significance is largely through the manner in which this victory was achieved -- by turning the Church upon itself.

In what appeared to be one deft stroke, the Inquisition fell upon the Templars like starving dogs -- ripping its pious respectability to shreds.

The Hospitallers themselves fell victim to this insidious campaign to destroy the Templars. The demonic whispers that had set the two Orders against each other so often in the Holy Land bore rich fruit once King Philip The Fair brought allegations against the Templars in 1307. The Hospitallers became suspicious that such events were pending, but did nothing to warn their Templar brothers-in-arms.

Instead, the Knights of St. John immediately set about convincing pope Clement V that they were the most worthy recipient of the Templar's lands and riches -- even before the guilty verdict was reached.

Many have considered the true motivations behind this move. Was the Order corrupted by greed? Had its key posts been infiltrated so as to prevent any serious move to aid the Templars? Or was it simply a recognition that the Hospital was equally vulnerable to political attack and that it needed to keep its head down until a new base could be established on Rhodes?

Despite later attempts to attack the reputation of the Hospitallers in a similar manner to that of the Templars, the Order stood safe and firm. For the Hospitallers had always been much closer to the community than other Militant Orders. Its hospitals still treated the sick, with its knights serving in the wards. The Order did not seem as aloof as the Templars because it was less strict about noble entry at this time. It also held a strong reputation among the women of Europe because of its nursing sisters.

This relative humility saved the Order from destruction for another 400 years. But the lessons of the Templars were quickly forgotten. Eventually the Hospitallers fell afoul of the same pride and avarice. The demonic vices of greed, lechery and arrogance took their toll. By the time Napoleon arrived in 1798 the Order had no discipline left to mount an effective resistance.

The Knights of St. John had been destroyed from within long before the first shots were fired.

---

# Hospitaller: Knights of St. John (Part 2)

*"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against supernatural wickedness in high places."*

-- Ephesians 6: 10-12

## A supplement for For Church Knight: the Cainite Crusade otherwise known as **Militia Christi**

Written and compiled by Jamie Seidel October 1996

### Chapter Three: Modern Knights of St. John

*The Orders of St. John The Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem survive to this day; their only rivals, the Order of Teutonic Knights, had succumbed to enforced inanition long before the Hospitallers ceased to be a force in European politics.*

-- Roderick Cavaliero, *The Last of the Crusaders*

The the major Orders based in Outremer were the Order of the Hospital of St. John (the Hospitallers), the Order of the Temple of Solomon (the Templars), and the Teutonic Knights. Of these three, only the Hospitallers have survived relatively intact to the present day.

But even this Order was fractured and changed by the numerous wars that spread across Europe and the division of the Reformation.

There are five modern Orders which are recognised as being direct successors to the medieval Hospitallers.

It was largely the Order's unique internal structure that permitted this survival. Each knight was assigned to a Tongue with its own commander known as a Pilier. These Tongues were just that: groups of knights speaking the same language.

With the turmoil of the Reformation gripping Europe, many Tongues fractured from the Catholic core in Rome to adopt new forms of Christianity. Among other places, this happened in England under the Anglican Church, and Germany under the Lutheran Church.

While the Sovereign Military Order originally did not recognise the validity of these break-away Tongues (or Langues), the past century has seen increasing conciliation between the "loose fragments" of the Order that has led to an of informal unity. The five Orders recognised as having valid connections to the original Knights of St. John are:

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta

The Most Venerable Order of St. John

The Johanniter Order (Bailiwick of Brandenburg)

The Johanniter Order (Netherlands)

The Johanniter Order (Sweden)

The last four of these are collectively known as the Alliance Orders. There are also about twenty very small Orders of St. John, most of which claim descent from the former Russian Orthodox Grand Priory. These are bogus or 'self-styled' orders and are not recognised by the five orders listed above nor by the International Commission on Orders and Decorations.

## **The Modern Militant Order**

All five Orders contribute members towards those knights initiated in the ways of fighting the enemies of mankind. While the thrust of each religion may vary, all militant knights must follow the same Rule and vow. The differences in belief often associated with the various Orders are permitted for worship. But the Militant Order's methods and operations are not open to dispute. Thus while the Most Venerable Order is prepared to admit women to its highest ranks, it cannot yet force the Militant Order to accept women as active knights.

These conditions have largely been accepted, with very few knights leaving because of conflicts of faith.

The Militant Order's senior hierarchy must also come from the Sovereign Military Order, though representatives of each Order are allowed positions of power on the Militant body's councils.

However, a topic of currently heated discussion is the establishment of a completely independent Militant arm, dominated by no individual Order.

## **The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta**

Monks booted and spurred, carrying swords. Diplomats and doctors wearing black cowls with large eight-pointed white crosses on their chest and shoulder. Much about the Order of St. John seems strange and out-of-place. This Order alone preserves the mystique of rank and birth in a world which finds aristocracy not merely alien, but incomprehensible. It is not merely an imitation of the emergency service the Red Cross. It is an ancient and religious gathering of noblemen committed to doing God's work on Earth.

The Revived Order The French Revolution marked the beginning of a new era for the Order. In 1792 the estates of the Order within France were confiscated. This confiscation was extended to their estates in other parts of Europe as French conquests advanced. In 1798, Bonaparte captured Malta with outrageous ease and expelled the Order. Some knights who had found refuge in St. Petersburg proclaimed the married, non-Catholic and non-knight Czar Paul I as their Grand-Master, and most surviving priories (except in Spain) acknowledged the election (1798) against the Pope's wishes. The Czar even created an Orthodox priory in 1799, and bestowed membership most liberally. He died assassinated in 1801. His successor Alexander I declined to assume the grand-mastership and instead turned to the Pope to name a new grand-master. Pius VII appointed Giovanni Tommasi in 1803, and the Grand-Master reformed the Convent (the heart of the order) in Messina. On his death in 1805, a new Grand Master was elected but the Pope refused to recognize him, and the Mastership fell into a 70-year hiatus, the Order being governed instead by elected lieutenants. In the next years, various attempts at reestablishing territorial sovereignty failed. In 1814, contrary to expectations, Malta remained in British hands and the Order settled in Catania. Various plans to settle in Elba or Greece floundered. Relations between the Lieutenancy in Messina (and from 1826 in Ferrara) and the knights in France and Spain were severed. Remnants of the Order were finally

offered a home by the Pope in the old Maltese embassy at Rome in 1831. Starting in the 1860s a number of national associations sprang up in various European countries, replacing the old system of Langues, and in 1879 the Pope appointed the existing Lieutenant as Grand Master. Good relations were maintained with the Italian government which accorded extra-territoriality to the Palazzo Malta, and finally signed a treaty modelled on the Lateran Treaty in 1930. It was in the period between 1798 and 1961 that the Order thus acquired its present character. In particular, forms of membership which did not require solemn vows or even proofs of nobility were created or vastly extended: knights of honor and devotion, conventual chaplains ad honorem, knights of magistral grace and donats. Among professed knights, a series of three ranks was created: knight, commander, and bailli-grand-cross. In the category of knights of honor and devotion, a rank of honorary bailli-grand-cross was created, as well as a rank of grand-cross among the knights of magistral grace. Membership grew as follows:

	1880	1900	1921	1932	1949
-Professed-					
Knights of Justice	99	84	55	65	63
Conventual Chaplains	18	13	7	6	9
Chaplains of Obedience	43	138	37	15	6
Donats of Justice	11	16	9	4	6
-Non Professed-					
Knights of Honor	969	1078	1175	1563	1883
Dames of Honor	119	111	155	196	272
Knights of Magistral Grace.	23	37	95	444	1500
Donats	78	111	294	308	1090
Honorary chaplains	3	9	16	58	150
Total	1363	1597	1843	2658	4979

The growth in Knights of Magistral Grace and Donats (the ranks which do not require nobility) is particularly striking. As a result, in 1961 the total membership stood at 7557, of which less than 1% were professed. The present status and organization of the order dates from 1961.

Among its other activities, the headquarters in Rome runs the AIOM, an international campaign against hunger, misery, sickness and ignorance. This organisation regularly sends medical stores to many Third World countries as well as provides special help to Portugal and Poland.

The Order is also in the forefront of the struggle against leprosy, with an emphasis on rehabilitation. Other missions include pilgrimages to Lourdes; an institute of hospital study and research; and a School of Paediatrics.

Each of the national associations of the Order organises charitable activities within its region. The work of these associations, including those in Germany (where the Malteser-Hilfsdienst has over 66,000 active workers), Austria, Brazil, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Italy and the east coast of the United States, is focussed on first aid, medical facilities, and the fight against poverty.

Most sponsor modern hospitals and all provide retirement and nursing homes for the ill and aged.

The Sovereign Order is currently expanding and widening its influence. While essentially suffering an "aimless" existence since Malta was taken by Napoleon in 1798, the Order is re-emerging in places such as the United Kingdom and Poland. Led for the first time in its history by an English Grand Master (equivalent to Cardinal), his grasp of modern diplomacy and a willingness to form consensus with other organisations and institutions have given the Order renewed international standing. The numbers of Knights, both professed and lay, are on the increase once again. It has taken almost two centuries before this recovery begun, but it has begun. The Sovereign Militant Order now numbers almost 10,000 members

in five Grand Priories, three Bailiwicks and 37 National Associations in Europe and the Americas. When combined with the affiliated Orders of St. John, membership approaches 100,000.

Because it is a Sovereign entity, the Order of St. John is subject to international law and is governed in accordance to its own code of laws.

The Order has been an internationally recognized sovereign entity since the Verona Convention of 1820, although without territorial basis. Three of its possessions, the Palazzo Malta (The Order's Headquarters in Rome), via Condotti (Rome) and the Villa Malta, also in Rome, enjoy extra-territorial status in Italy since 1869. It also owns The fortress Sant'Angelo in Malta since 1991. It mints coins, which do not circulate, but it also prints stamps accepted by 45 national post offices. The Order enjoys recognition from, and diplomatic relations with, 67 countries (including Spain, Italy, Russia, Austria, Egypt, Brazil), has legations in 6 countries (including France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland), and is an observer at the UN since 1994.

But it is sovereignty that allows the Order to pursue its religious and charitable missions on a world-wide scale. The dedication to aiding the sick, leprous, emigrants, refugees and exiles, abandoned children and the destitute, those stricken by natural disasters and war casualties allows members of the Order to enter almost any nation unquestioned.

The Sovereign Militant Order exchanges ambassadors with more than 40 countries, issues its own passports and has internationally recognised laws.

Traditionally the Sovereign Order has been based on knightly nobility, with one of the conditions of entry being proof of up to 16 quarterings (a traceable noble heritage on both sides of the family of 400 to 600 years).

Today its membership is open to all devout Catholics of proven commitment and worth through the introduction of several new classes of knight.

The members of the Order are divided into various classes. The brothers of the first class are professed religious, in terms of canon law, as members of a monastic Order of the Church.

The vast majority of the members (about 10,000) are in the second and third classes. These are laymen who in other orders would be called confratres or tertiaries. They are grouped in six grand priories, three sub-priories, and thirty-six national associations.

The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order, whose present constitution dates from June 24, 1961, consists of three distinct entities or categories. The knightly classes are:

1. A Religious Order: its members, Knights of Justice and Conventual Chaplains, once they have made solemn vows, are called professed. They are headed by an elected Grand Master and the Sovereign Council. There are currently 38 Knights of Justice, with 16 quarters of nobility, recruited from the Knights of Obedience and the Knights of Honour and Devotion. Among the Knights of Justice one finds Knights Commanders and Knights Grand Cross. The heads of the Langues were called Baillis.
2. A Religious Institute of Laymen: its members, the Knights of Obedience and Donats of Justice, have promised obedience to their superiors, and submit to religious exercises prescribed by them. This category was created in 1960, and membership is limited to 500. Some members are in the Sovereign Council.
3. An International Order of Chivalry: the Grand Master confers knighthoods to mostly Catholic men and women around the world. There are over 10,000 knights and dames, grouped in 39 national associations. There are three categories, each with ranks of knights, commanders, grand-cross and bailli. They are, in decreasing order of nobiliary requirement:

1. Honour and Devotion
2. Grace and Devotion (created in 1959)
3. Magistral Grace, non-nobles; comprises 60% of the total membership of 11,500 in the order.

There are also similar ranks for chaplains:

1. Conventual Chaplains ad honorem
2. Magistral Chaplains (or of Magistral Obedience, or Grace)
3. Donats of Devotion (3 classes)

First Class:

- ◊ Knights of Justice Professed (have taken full vows): Knights completely devoted to monastic life within the Order.
- ◊ Professed Conventual Chaplains: Priests from the gentry that have taken full vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.
- ◊ Ad Honorum (lay brothers): Brothers who have taken monastic vows to serve the Order. At one time this included those considered to be Sergeants -- non-noble knights.

Second Class:

- ◊ Knights of Obedience: Bound to the Order through vows of Obedience to their superior officers and the hierarchy of the Order. Their vows are temporary as they can be lifted by the Order. Open to married men.
- ◊ Donats of Justice: Secular nobility and Knights who serve the Order and have vowed to obey its officers. They have no rights, but their knightly privileges are recognised. Entitled to wear a half-cross. Are allowed to marry.

Third Class:

- ◊ Knights and Dames of Honour and Devotion: Catholic members of noble families that are avowed members of the Order, without vows of Poverty or Chastity.
- ◊ Knights and Dames of Grace and Devotion: Catholic members of the Order who are nominated by the Pope or other high ranking church officials who must take vows of Obedience.
- ◊ Knights and Dames of Magistral Grace: Members without proof of nobility . They have vowed to serve the Order and receive some of its privileges.
- ◊ Donats of Devotion: Unavowed associates and employees of the Order that help conduct its business. Can wear a half-cross.

## Rank Structure

Knights Grand Cross:

Grand Master

Seneschal

Knights Pilier:

Grand Chancellor

Grand Conservator

Grand Commander

Grand Admiral

Turcopilier  
Grand Bailiff  
Grand Priors (provincial commander)  
Capitular Bailiffs (provincial representatives)  
Knights Small Cross  
Knight Commander (estate commander)  
Knight Commissioners  
Knight Castellan  
Knight Captains (naval)  
Knights:  
Knight Lieutenant  
Knight

## Awards of Chivalry

There are also Orders of Merit, with both military and civilian application, which recognise affiliates with the Sovereign Order. They do not imply a profession of faith or membership of the Order.

The Cross of Malta *pro merito melitensi* for services to the Order's charitable works. This decoration has three ranks: Collar (for heads of state), Cross (including Grand-Cross, Grand-Officer, Commander, Officer and Cross of Merit), and Cross *pro piis meritis* for members of the clergy (including Grand-Cross and Cross). The insignia of the decoration is a white cross moline with a red roundel in its center bearing a white Maltese cross.

The Collar (for heads of state)

The Cross (with swords for military awards)

- Grand Cross of Merit
- Grand Officer
- Commander
- Cross of Merit
- The Grand Cross (for clergy)
- The Cross of Pious Merit

The "Metal" Cross (conduct awards)

- The Gold Cross
- The Silver Cross
- The Bronze Cross

## Hierarchy of the Order

The Grand Master and the bailiffs who govern the 10,000 knights, dames and chaplains are mostly knights of Justice -- noblemen who take vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

These knights of Justice continue to be the core of the Order. They number about 40 and follow their profession in Rome and Valetta. Some of these Knights form part of the "Invisible Order", which consists of about 100 knights actively pursuing the Cainite Crusade.

The Order is governed by the Grand-Master and the Sovereign Council, which includes members *ex officio* and elected members. The Order's four officers are the Grand-Commander, the Grand-Chancellor, the Hospitaller and the Receiver of the Common Treasury.

The 78th Grand Master of the Order of St. John is the first Englishman to hold this rank in 7 centuries. Elected in 1988, he is a descendant of Sir Edward Bellingham, Knight of Malta and last Commander of

Dinmore in Herefordshire from 1530 to 1540. His election received great attention in Italy, and he earned the popular title of "papa crociato" -- the Crusade Pope. In 1993 the Grand Priory of England was restored and shares its headquarters in St. John Gate, Clerkenwell, with the Most Venerable Order of St. John. This indicates the growing numbers of full knights in the Order: a good sign for the future.

## Badge and Arms of Office

The badge of the Order consists of a white-enamelled eight-pointed cross quartered by the fleur-de-lys and surmounted by a crown. It is suspended from a shield bearing a Latin cross at its centre.

The star (large medallion on the lower left chest) is a white enamelled eight-pointed cross suspended by a ribbon of black silk.

The badge and star vary for the Orders of Merit to signify their loose association with the Sovereign Order, mainly through the use of a large white Latin Cross as backdrop to the Maltese cross, crimson silk and bordering white stripes.

A military trophy of flags and arms are reserved for knights of Justice and knights of Honour and Devotion. Knights of Grace replace this with a gold bow.

## Heraldry of the Order

The arms of the Order are Gules a cross argent. The full arms show the shield surrounded by a chaplet and placed over a cross of Malta, all within a mantle and surmounted by a closed crown. In 1776, when the (religious) order of Saint-Antoine in France was united with Malta, a double-headed eagle displayed holding in each beak a Tau was added behind the shield; the eagle had been granted to Saint-Antoine by Maximilian I. The eagle appears on 18th century coins from Malta, but disappeared in the 19th century. The Grand-Master (a title which replaced Master in the late 15th century) adopted a ducal coronet in 1581. In 1741, the Grand-Master for the first time used a closed crown over his arms. Grand-Masters quarter their arms with those of the order (Gules a cross argent) since the 14th century. They have added a ducal coronet to their arms in 1581, and a closed crown in 1741. Since the 18th century, they have also added a princely mantle behind their arms. Two Grand Masters who were made cardinals, Pierre d'Aubusson and Hughes Loubens de Verdalle, also displayed the cardinal's hat over their arms.

The insignia comes in four varieties:

1. A white Maltese cross surmounted by a closed crown and above it by a trophy of armour and flags with an escutcheon of the Order in the center; for Knights of Justice, Obedience and Honour and Devotion
2. A white Maltese cross surmounted by a closed crown and above it an escutcheon of the Order with an antique helmet and two swords per saltire above it; for Knights of Grace and Devotion
3. A white Maltese cross surmounted by a closed crown and above it a golden tie with an escutcheon of the Order in the middle: for Knights of Magistral Grace, Donats of Justice, Chaplains ad honorem, Donats of Devotion 1st class
4. A white Maltese cross surmounted by a closed crown: for Chaplains of Magistral Grace, Donats of Devotion 2d and 3d class.

Only the professed members (and perhaps the Knights and Chaplains of Obedience as well) are entitled to place a cross of Malta behind their arms. Knights Commanders also surround their shield with the chaplet from which hangs their insignia. Baillis quarter their arms with those of the order. Professed Chaplains surround their shield with a chaplet from which hangs their insignia. Professed knights have the full cross hanging from a black ribbon. The non-professed categories of knights have their insignia hanging from a



black ribbon (with no cross behind the shield), but Knights Grand-Cross or Bailiffs within each class edge the ribbon with gold and add a chief with the arms of the Order (chef de la religion) to their coat.

## **Uniform**

The uniform of a modern knight of Magistral Grace comprises a military-style jacket of red cloth with cuffs, lapels and a collar of black velvet. It is closed in front by 12 buttons embossed with the cross of the Order. The trousers are black and long with golden braid and red stripes on the sides. The belt is embroidered with gold lace. The shoulder lapels are fringed. A cocked hat and spurs complete the uniform. The cowl is a light woollen tunic with white silk cuffs and the Cross of the Order embroidered in front. A Knight Grand Cross of Magistral Grace is defined by gold embroidered cuffs, lapels and collar.

Knights of Honour and Devotion have the same uniform and gold variations as a Grand Cross, though they have different patterns embroidered on the facings of the cuffs, lapels and collar. The mantle for all knights is a long black cloak reaching below the knee, with silk lapels, velvet collar and a gold chain fastening in the middle. The Cross of the Order is embroidered in red and white yarn on the left side.

Knights of Justice wear the same uniform, though with white trim and facings to represent the purity of their vows.

First Class members can wear their red uniform and a black choir mantel with a solid white cross on the shoulder. Those not in vows wear black habits with a white cross in outline on their breast.

## **The Most Venerable Order of St. John**

The Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (generally known as The Order of St. John) came into existence in 1831 as a result of initiatives taken by some French Knights of Malta, who intended to set up a non-Catholic priory in England, along the lines of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg and of a short-lived Russian Orthodox Grand Priory. The French knights' activities were disowned by the Grand Magistery in Rome, but the English priory remained in being and attracted the support of the royal family. Its headquarters are in London, and its Sovereign Head is HM Queen Elizabeth II. It has six priories, two commanderies, and forty St. John Councils throughout the English-speaking world; there is also a St. John Society in the United States of America. It manages two foundations: the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, and St. John Ambulance Service in about fifty countries throughout the Commonwealth. The latter provides ambulance units -- there are about 60,000 members of the Ambulance Brigade in England alone -- and training in first aid. Through a joint committee with the Red Cross it is active on behalf of disabled servicemen.

The Membership The six classes of the Order are:

1. Bailiff Grand Cross, Dame Grand Cross
2. Knight of Justice, Knight of Grace, Dame of Justice, Dame of Grace, Sub-Prelate, Chaplain
3. Commander Brother, Commander Sister
4. Officer Brother, Officer Sister, Sub-Chaplain
5. Serving Brother, Serving Sister
6. Esquire, Donat

The "proof" for the rank of Justice within the Second Class is either paternal nobility or the right to bear a properly recorded coat-of-arms. The only practical difference between the two ranks is that a Knight or Dame of Justice can nominate two personal esquires whereas the Knights or Dames of Grace can only nominate one such esquire. Bailiffs and Knights of Justice and Grace receive the accolade but membership

of the Order does not confer any rank, title or precedence. Post-nominal letters signifying membership should only be used for correspondence within the Order.

The Most Venerable Order is the only one of the Orders of St. John which does not have a sectarian restriction on membership; it is open to any suitable candidate professing one of the major Christian denominations. British subjects, Dominion subjects, citizens of the Republics of Ireland and South Africa who are Christians become full members of the Order, non-Christians admitted to the Order and all other non-British or non-Dominion subjects are admitted as Associates. These were the same decorations as full members although until recently their ribbon was differenced by a central white stripe. Promotions in the Order are made primarily on the basis of service, with the vast majority of the membership (other than in the United States) being admitted as serving-brother or sister. If a member has distinguished himself or herself towards the Order, promotion to the rank of officer brother or sister may follow after one year or to a higher rank when the nominee is appointed to an important executive responsibility, although in most cases it takes four to ten years. Promotion to the rank of commander may follow for an average of one third of the officers, and takes from four to ten years -- recently the time between promotions has been extended. Particularly distinguished and prominent members, and those who have served the Order outstandingly for many years, may be promoted to knight or dame; however this honour is given to only five percent of the membership (twenty percent in the United States). Occasionally members are admitted in the higher grades, particularly following appointment to a high office from the Crown, such as Lords Lieutenant who become County Presidents and Lieutenant-Governors in Canada; however senior members of the armed forces and other public officials are normally admitted in a serving grade.

## **The Government of the Order**

The Order is governed by the Grand Prior, who is appointed by the Sovereign Head after consultation with the Grand Prior's Advisory Council and holds office during the Sovereign's pleasure or until his resignation. Under the Grand Prior are the Great Officers (the Lord Prior, the Bailiff of Egle, the Chancellor and the Prelate), the Council and the Chapter General. The principal Officers of the Order are: Grand Prior, Lord Prior, Chancellor, Bailiff of Egle, Prelate, Hospitaller, Secretary-General, Receiver-General, Chief Commander (St. John Ambulance), Almoner, Prior of Scotland, Prior of Wales, Commander of Ards.

The Headquarters of the Order are situated at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London.

## **St. John Ambulance**

St. John Ambulance is an amalgamation of the St. John Ambulance Association and the St. John Ambulance Brigade. The Association was formed in 1877 to provide training in first aid and home nursing not only to members of the Brigade but also the police, fire service, railways, industry and schools. In 1989, for example, 185,000 people were taught basic or advance first aid in Britain and hundreds of thousands more overseas, while 54,000 British school children earned certificates in basic first aid. The formal foundation of the St. John Ambulance Brigade dates from 1887. It grew from an earlier voluntary ambulance service provided in the mining and pottery districts of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire. Today there are approximately 300,000 members world-wide, serving as volunteers and providing medical and emergency services at public occasions, sporting events and natural disasters and accidents. The recently formed junior cadet organisation (the Badgers) is the fastest growing youth group in Great Britain. The Brigade is the largest volunteer ambulance organisation in the world and, although it does receive government subsidies in some countries (Canada, for example, where it provides a nationwide ambulance service), it is still largely supported by private donations.

## **St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem**

The Ophthalmic Hospital was founded in 1882 on a site provided by grant of the Turkish Sultan and within a decade it had become so well-established that patients came from across the Middle East. With the outbreak of the First World War the Turkish authorities closed the Hospital, confiscating all its equipment and supplies and then, in 1917, destroying it with explosives shortly before General Allenby captured the city. The Hospital moved twice over the following half-century, its present building being opened in 1960 thanks to the generosity of members of the Order and some of the leading oil companies.

The Hospital mainly serves the Palestinians living in the territories illegally occupied by Israeli forces and who are not entitled to receive Israeli free medical or hospital aid. With eighty beds it performs more than 50,000 out-patient procedures and nearly 6,000 major operations per annum (excluding much of the eye-lid surgery), as well as sending regular mobile clinics into the West Bank and Gaza Strip and engaging in important research work into diabetes related blindness. While the majority of operations are for trachoma and its side-effects, recently a substantial number have been related to injuries incurred during the Intifada, often to small children and the elderly. The annual expenditure (1989) to run the Hospital comes to almost \$3,500,000 (a fraction of what it would cost to run a comparable hospital in Britain or the US) and support of the Hospital is the principal charitable object of the American Society; however subsidies from the Jordanian Government and the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNWRA) are essential. Although the staff of the Hospital in Jerusalem are paid, it could not function without the dedication of both doctors and nurses. The Hospitaller, who is responsible for its administration and well-being, is one of the most important of the executive officers of the Order. The commitments of the Hospital in Jerusalem are increasing annually, mainly due to greater demands on its services made by the unfortunate Palestinians. The difficulties which the staff of the Hospital encounter in carrying out their humanitarian responsibilities cannot be underestimated. The government of Israel has chosen to impose many bureaucratic regulations and financial charges and has imposed an import tax in excess of 100% on donated eyes for corneal grafts as well as other medical supplies, ambulances and motor vehicles (although these are all gifts to the Hospital). Despite the impediments imposed by the Israelis and the atmosphere of hatred which still pervades much of the area in which the Hospital operates, the Order is determined to maintain this essential service to the poor and sick of every religious denomination in the holiest city of Christendom.

### **The American Society of St. John**

At the end of 1990 the American Society had over 600 members, of whom 66 were knights (4 of Justice) and 56 were dames. The grade of serving brother and serving sister has not been introduced in the United States. The membership of the Order extends across the country and is informally divided into two groups, one based in New York and the other in San Francisco. Most of the members have some British connection and the vast majority are Episcopalians, although there are both Roman Catholic and Presbyterian members among the other Christian denominations represented. No direct activities have yet been organised by the Society, whose principal object is to raise funds for the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. Membership is not merely a passive honour, however, but involves a direct personal commitment to the ideals represented by nine centuries of the Order's history and an obligation to support the Society's charitable endeavours. The Society is registered as a non-profit organisation for Federal tax purposes.

The administrative offices of the Society are maintained at the Diocesan House of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

In 1995 it was announced that HM The Queen, as Sovereign Head of the Order of St. John, had given her approval for the American Society of St. John to be elevated to the status of a Priory. This is the first time that a Priory has been created in a non-Commonwealth country and reflects the importance of the American members to the overall work of the Order.

### **The Order of St. John in Canada**

The Ambulance Brigade of the Order is of great importance in Canada. There are more than 11,000 uniformed Brigade volunteers and, in the Association, 12,000 non-uniformed volunteers and over 9,000 nationally certified instructors with almost 300 permanently salaried staff members. The Saint John Ambulance Association has been most effective, providing first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation training to more than 460,000 Canadians in one recent year alone.

The Commandery of Canada was established in 1934 and raised to a Priory in 1946; the Governor-General of Canada has always been the Prior of Canada (although this was not a statutory requirement). Once nomination to membership has been approved by Chapter-General and the Grand Prior, they receive the royal approval through the Governor-General acting in the name of the Queen of Canada; the Governor-General then informs Her Majesty that he has performed this act in her name. Announcements of admissions and promotions are made in the official government publication, the Canadian Gazette. Executive responsibility for the conduct of affairs of the Priory is delegated by the Prior to the Chancellor, or, on certain occasions, to one of the executive officers. The Priory has Councils in each of the Provinces, the Northwest Territories and the National Capital Region.

### **The Order of St. John in Australia**

St. John Ambulance in Australia has a large public following of volunteers, both as paramedic ambulance officers and attendance staff. Every State has its own branch, and the Order's arms are even incorporated into Government-run ambulance services. The Order has strong organisational relationships with government medical services. However, there are relatively few knights of the Order. Most are high-ranking members of St. John Ambulance

### **The Johanniter Order (Bailiwick of Brandenburg)**

The Bailiwick of Brandenburg was originally a province of the medieval Order of St. John, but at the time of the Reformation it broke away and adopted Protestantism. Die Bailey Brandenburg des Ritterlichen Ordens Sankt Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem was recognised by the crown of Prussia in 1852, and since the fall of the German monarchy it has been recognised by the Federal German Republic.

Besides seventeen associations in Germany, the Order has four outside (the Finnish, French and Swiss, which are officially recognised in their respective countries, and the Hungarian in exile). Its headquarters are in Bonn; its head, styled Der Herrenmeister, is His Royal Highness Prince Wilhelm Karl of Prussia.

The Order runs thirteen hospitals with 3,200 beds in the Federal Republic, together with fourteen old peoples' homes with 1,500 places. It manages the Johanniter-Unfal-Hilfsgemeinschaft with 1,650 participants. It co-operates with the German associations of the Order of Malta, and it engages in work in Africa as well as in Germany.

### **Hungarian Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St. John (Johanniter)**

The Hungarian Knights' of Jerusalem almshouse was founded in 1135 and their first hospital in Hungary was opened in 1147.

Two hundred years later, at the fatal battle of Muhi in 1241 when Hungary was unable to stop the assault of Djenghiz Khan's Mongols, the Knights of the Hungarian Tongue saved their king and escorted him to safety on the Adriatic coast.

With the collapse of the Crusader Kingdoms in the early 14th century the Tongue was driven out of the Holy Land.

It established its seat successively on the islands of Cyprus, Rhodes, and finally Malta, and with its fleet became a military power to be reckoned with. (the island was lost to Napoleon Bonaparte, when the Knights, faithful to their vows not to fight Christian powers, surrendered to the attacking French in 1798.)

From the parent stem of what is today the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, headquartered in Rome, the Hungarian Order branched off in the mid-sixteenth century through those Knights who accepted the Reformation of the Church. They grouped themselves around the historically independent-minded Bailiwick of Brandenburg. The present Order of St. John of the Hospital at Jerusalem (Johanniter) today has "commanderies" or Associations in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, France and Finland.

The Order is a relatively small group of 3,000 Knights. (The Hungarian Association numbers a little over 100). Members join it only by invitation. They must have a firm Christian commitment.

After a period of probation and a formal investiture, they follow a strict discipline of service. The Order in turn sponsors and directs service organisations which enlist thousands of other people who are also inspired by the ideals of the Order. Allied "Johanniterorder" are active in Holland and in Sweden. In England, the Grand Priory of the Order of St. John in the British realm eventually evolved into the Most Venerable Order of St. John of Jerusalem, with an Association in the United States. Close links are maintained with the Roman Catholic branch, the Sovereign Military Order of the Knights of Malta.

Irrespective of their confessions, the orders -- linked in an "Alliance" -- carry forward the same traditions and profess the same principles, the foremost being "to serve our lords, the sick and the poor."

After World War II, with Hungary in the Soviet orbit, the Hungarian Association of the Order became an "Association in Exile," with members settling in all countries of the world, held together by their shared commitment.

It was repatriated to a changed Hungary in 1992. It found the health care system, previously on a par with Western Europe, reduced to the level of Soviet standards. With limited manpower and means, caring for results rather than recognition, it is resuming its traditional activities.

Its current objectives are to seek out and sponsor eventually-self-supporting pilot projects directed toward the handicapped and the infirm, initiate training programs, and provide ongoing support to health-care delivery projects in under-served communities.

## **The Johanniter Order (Netherlands)**

Johanniter Order in Nederland, originally subject to the Bailiwick of Brandenburg, was founded as an independent Order in 1946.

Its headquarters are in The Hague, and its head is HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

Its foundations include a hospital and homes for elderly disabled people and spastic children. It co-operates with the Dutch association of the Order of Malta and with the Commandery of Utrecht of the Teutonic Order.

## **The Johanniter Order (Sweden)**

Johanniterorden i Sverige, also once part of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg, was embodied by Royal Charter in 1946. Its headquarters are in Stockholm, and the High Patron is HM King Carl XVI Gustaf. It

supports many Swedish Christian charitable organisations, particularly those in cities involved in the care of the old and the sick.

---

# Hospitaller: Knights of St. John (Part 3)

*"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against supernatural wickedness in high places."*

-- Ephesians 6: 10-12

## A supplement for For Church Knight: the Cainite Crusade otherwise known as **Militia Christi**

Written and compiled by Jamie Seidel October 1996

### Chapter Four: The Order through the Ages

#### Bastion of the Faith

*"Perhaps the best preserved and most wholly admirable castle in the world."*  
-- T. E. Lawrence

In 1142 Count Raymond II of Tripoli donated the great fortress of Qalat al-Hosen to the new Knights of St. John. The Order, rapidly gaining wealth, spend an enormous sum rebuilding the castle which they renamed Krak des-Chevaliers.

It became known as "the supreme achievement of medieval military architecture" for its massive curtain-walls and bastions. It contains a cloister, a chapter house, and a magnificent chamber -- possibly the castellan's apartment -- whose delicate rib-vaulting recalls the monestaries of high France. The strictly regular design was a wonderment to all nobles and knightly pilgrims: and they took the idea of regular and concentric plans back to Europe as the prototype for a further 300 years of castle building. At the centre was a whole castle in itself, with corner towers and a small central courtyard: a plan based on Roman times. The novelty consisted in surrounding this central bastion with a second line of walls which were a wider and lower replica of the first.

These walls stand on the verge of a precipis that falls on all sides into the Valley of Boquee. Its hilltop position provides a broad view of all who approach -- giving up to a day warning. The strongest defences were placed on the southern side, as a second and higher hill faced that direction.

A moat between 25 and 50 feet wide filled the space between the inner and outer walls. While defensive in nature, it was also a valuable water supply for both the inhabitants and livestock during any siege. Wells in the central courtyard provided most drinking water, while huge hall-sized ovens were used to bake bread.

What appears to be an insignificant gateway is a lethal ruse. Behind it is Krak's most elaborate defence: an enclosed ramp that climbs past two hairpin bends to the inner walls. At successive stages were arrow slits, portcullises and rock-fall traps. Intended to house a fighting force of up to 2000 men, it rarely held more

than 300. At full strength, the castle contained about 60 knights, a similar number of sergeants, and a troop of mercenaries.

In 1271, this great Hospitaller castle -- sadly undergarrisoned -- capitulated due to a ruse by the Mameluk leader Baybars. False letters and Moslems disguised as envoys convinced the castellan to open the gates. The invaders rushed through. The knights, on realising their error, retreated to a northern tower where they held out for some considerable time. But Baybars had catapults set up in the courtyard, and the tower fell into the valley.

This defeat marked the death-knell of the Order in the Holy Land, where it never recovered its strength.

## **Rhodes: Island Paradise**

*In 1308 The Hospitallers moved to Rhodes, which they conquered from the Byzantines. There they stayed for 214 years, a thorn in the Ottoman flank, building themselves a huge, gaunt, fortress-like city, and taking to sea in galleys to become pirates in Christ and a force of terror and destruction in the Levant.*  
-- *The Last of the Crusaders*, Roderick Cavaliero

Rhodes is one of the most beautiful islands in the Mediterranean sea. Sitting only 10 miles south of Turkey, the channel between the island and Cape Alypo carried a large part of the regions merchant shipping.

Rhodes was well suited for the new tasks of the Knights of St. John. Since being expelled a few years earlier from the Holy Land, the Order needed a new base from which further Crusades could be launched and raiding missions conducted.

If the knights could no longer meet their foe on the land, they would fight them on the sea. Rhodes was to become the Order's home for 200 years. The islanders knew the sea as well as their own land, toiling on its waters from the age they were able to walk. Thus, the inhabitants were among the best sailors of the known world.

The island was about 45 miles long and about 20 miles wide at its widest point. It was rich with olive and carob trees, not to mention its bountiful vines. The island was covered with fertile plains supporting herds of sheep and cattle. The hills were covered in pine forests, and the climate was comfortable.

The island's highest point, Mt. Anavaro, was at its heart. From here, Crete could be seen on a clear day and movements on the Asia Minor mainland observed.

While there were numerous hamlets about the island, there was only one city: Rhodes, at the eastern end. Once one of the seven wonders of the ancient world had stood above its natural harbour -- a massive bronze figure of the Sun-God Helios.

The Knights of St. John were to fortify the city substantially, using the skills of stonework and masonry acquired and developed in the Holy Land.

The main harbour was completely enclosed by stone walls and chain barriers, protecting ships from all forms of attack. A natural rise was the perfect site for a citadel to overlook and defend the surrounding lands.

Grand Master Fulk de Villaret led the Order on its attack on the island. The first landings were made in the summer of 1307. But by the end of the year only a small portion of the east coast had fallen to them.

By November the fortress of Mount Phileremos had fallen. Legend claims the knights used the same ruse as Ulysses -- hiding among a flock of sheep wearing sheepskins. It took a further two years for the city of



Rhodes to fall -- placing a great drain on the Order's already weakened resources. In the end, the Order had to mortgage all of the revenues of its European estates for 20 years to raise funds for the invasion.

The resistance proved the city was eminently defensible. Even before it fell, the knights were planning improvements to its walls.

Eventually the island fell through the grace of God, not through the Order's military actions.

A ship of Rhodian reinforcements had been blown off course and captured by Cypriot knights. With their reinforcements gone and supplies dwindling, the Rhodians accepted the Order's conditions of surrender and opened the gates.

The Rhodians, although defeated, were not hostile. The three years of invasion had caused little bloodshed, and the knights gave them a great deal of autonomy. The Order had other business to conduct.

Although heavily in debt, Grand Master de Villaret was happy. For the first time since they had been expelled from the Holy Land, the Order was in possession of a permanent home -- and a pretty and prosperous one at that.

Pope Clement IV confirmed the Order's possession of the island, giving them Sovereign ownership of the land and government.

The Order's first project was the construction of a new hospital in the heart of the city of Rhodes.

## **Progress**

Rhodes was surrounded by islets, many upon which the knights built keeps and lookout towers. Rhodes was like an inner citadel, surrounded by outer bastions and moats. A fortress was also established on the coast of the Turkish mainland as a means of forward defence and early warning.

The Hospitallers underwent a reorganisation -- though based on its original form. The knights and sergeants were split into different divisions (Tongues) according to the language they spoke and the regions of Europe from which they came. The head of these Tongues was known as a Pilier. Together with the Bishop of the Order, the Prior of the Conventual Church, the Bailiffs of the Convents and the senior Knights Grand Cross, they formed the council to the Grand Master. From among the Piliers were chosen an Admiral, Hospitaller, Grand Commander and Turcopilier, among other positions.

Novices had to serve a two year probationary period, a year of which must be spent at sea. Upon completion of their "apprenticeship" they could be sent anywhere in Europe, to one of the many commanderies, or asked to stay on Rhodes.

Each Tongue built its own fortified hostel, or auberges. Common sleeping quarters were only used by knights of low rank or novices. Most senior knights had their own apartments.

With the abundance of the island's food, the Order's austerity was quickly relaxed. Meat, fish, eggs, cheese, wine and white bread were part of their staple diet.

The ancient Byzantine fortifications were strengthened and extended. Stocks and provisions taken in, catapults and ballista prepared. After all, they were a militant order.

## **Dragonslayer**

About 1342, a battle took place that was to pass into folk legend. It was not a fight against a Moslem enemy.

Instead, a knight from Provence, Dieudonne de Gozon, slew a dragon . . .

A dragon had established its lair in a valley south of the city of Rhodes. In the manner of its kind, it was given to preying upon the local peasantry -- particularly fair maidens. A number of knights ventured out from time to time to confront this beast, but all had lost their lives.

The Grand Master ordered that the beast be left alone and that nearby residents should be evacuated.

But de Gozon was determined to free Rhodes of this menace.

He built a model of the creature according to the descriptions of those who had seen it. He then trained his dogs to attack it.

When he felt he knew enough about this creature and that his dogs were suitably trained, Dieudonne ventured forth unto the valley.

He found the dragon in its lair. As the creature fought off the attacking dogs, de Gozon approached and hacked it to death with his sword.

For his disobedience, de Gozon was expelled from the Order. However, the citizens of Rhodes were outraged that such a valiant service would be rewarded with punishment. The Grand Master was forced to reinstate him. Ever afterward, de Gozon was referred to in the Order's records as "the Dragonslayer." He went on to become Grand Master in 1346.

Later historians of the Order determined the dragon to be a were-crocodile from the Nile River. A decade earlier a large number of Egyptians had died in a flood -- filling the river with their bodies. Crocodiles do not know how to stop eating, and thus can become bloated far beyond their normal size.

This creature, grown fat on the easy pickings, had begun to wander the Mediterranean to find a source of food rich enough to sustain it. The sheep of Rhodes would have been the nearest easily available source.

## **A Most Defendable Fortress**

Rhodes was always ready for an attack. A guardship plowed its waters ceaselessly; there was a tall watchtower on Mt. Simi, and Rhodian merchants knew every rumour circulating in the eastern Mediterranean.

The brethren's seamanship often enabled them to outsail and outfight far larger forces. In 1440 a sultan of Egypt sent a fleet after the "thieving hounds" of Rhodes. After destroying several villages on outlying islands, the 18 Egyptian galleys attacked the convent city itself.

As soon as the attacking fleet was sighted, the Marshal of the Order Fra Louis de Saint Sebastien led out the entire Hospitaller battle-squadron of eight galleys and four armed cargo vessels. Firing his guns and playing martial music, the unexpectedly aggressive sight so unnerved the Mameluk Egyptians that they ran in close to the shore and tied their boats together. Here they held-off the brethren until nightfall, when they sought to slip out of the Rhodes archipelago. Fra Louis sailed hard throughout the night, using the Order's skilled seamanship and local knowledge to intercept the Mameluks.

Again the Egyptians sought the shelter of shore and a shallow cove. Fra Lous had his men-at-arms gathered aboard the lighter galleys and launched an attack. In the battle that ensued, 700 Mameluks died in exchange for 60 Rhodians.

## The Spirit Never Dies

The legend of Rhodes' defiance against the otherwise unstoppable Turkish advance was fed by many examples of heroism and creativity.

In 1503 a Turkish corsair called Jamali raided the Island. But strategic outposts of mounted knights forced him to turn his attention to the outlying island of Leros. This islet-rock only had two knights in its tiny keep -- an elderly, bed-ridden commander and an 18-year-old probationary brother called Paolo Simeoni. The young knight led a force of five servants in manning the defences. But the keep's walls began to collapse by nightfall of the first day of the attack.

Next morning, when the infidel awoke, they were astonished to see a large contingent of brethren ready and waiting for them in the breach. The corsairs hastily set sail.

Fra Paolo had gathered the entire islet's population and dressed them in the red surcoats of the Order stored within the keep's walls.

During the final assaults on Rhodes after the failure of the first truce, the death and despair among the rubble gave rise to another story of extraordinary defiance. The Order tells the story of an English brother's Greek mistress. The knight had crawled to her half-destroyed hut to die after receiving mortal wounds at the rubble the knights called a wall. Upon her lover's death, the woman cut their two children's throats to prevent them from a fate of rape and slavery at the hands of the Turks. She next donned his armour, took his sword and shield, and went to the walls. It is said she fought valiantly alongside the remaining knights holding the breach, where she stood against another assault and was killed.

In the summer of 1444 an Egyptian armada landed 18,000 men on Rhodes. They devastated the island before investing the city and its convent. Fortunately for the Order, a group of reinforcements had just arrived from Burgundy. After six weeks the Mameluk guns breached the massive curtain-walls and the grand Master, Jean Bonpars de Lastic, realised a general assault was imminent.

Before dawn on August 24, he assembled his troops silently in the darkness outside the ramparts. The brethren, wearing their leather coats with metal studs (brigandines) and steel hats and wielding their swords, gathered with their pike-toting Rhodian sailors and arbalestier-bearing sergeants and mercenaries.

With trumpets braying, kettledrums and cymbals clashing, the formidable little army crashed headlong into the sleeping Mameluk camp.

Despite being vastly outnumbered, it was over quickly. Hundreds were cut-down by the exulting brethren who captured all the invading force's supplies and siege equipment. The first great siege had ended as a farce.

By 1479 the Turks were so annoyed by the constant harassment of their shipping and coastal towns that Sultan Mehmet II was determined to settle his accounts.

He had a worthy opponent in Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson. Remarkable as a soldier, administrator and as a diplomat, d'Aubusson's greatest gifts were realism and leadership. He combined magnetic appeal with a magnificent appearance. Many said he was the perfect embodiment of health and chivalry.

As the storm-clouds of preparing Turks gathered on the horizon, Aubusson was only able to muster about 600 brethren with a further 1500 mercenaries and militia. Civilians were put to work deepening ditches, demolishing buildings close to the city walls, installing new artillery and laying up stocks of food and ammunition. But the Turks considered the garrison hopelessly inadequate.

In April, 1480, lookouts on Rhodes sighted the enemy warships. By May 23, about 70,000 men had been landed on the island -- supported by 50 galleys.

After pitching camp on the highest point overlooking the city of Rhodes, Mehmet determined the Fort of St. Nicholas on the promontory flanking the outer harbour was the key to the siege. Once this tower had fallen, the city could not receive any resupply or reinforcements from the sea.

Three brass "basilisks" -- the period's most modern and powerful artillery -- were positioned opposite the tower to lob it with marble balls of more than a half-metre diameter.

Shortly after the siege began, the Turk's master-gunner -- a German by the name of Meister Georg -- appeared before the walls of Rhodes begging for sanctuary and forgiveness. But he was a double agent, sent to determine where the guns would do the most damage and to spread fear through boasts of the Turkish army's size and power. But Grand Master d'Aubusson had him watched.

Eventually, he was caught attempting to fire messages over the walls attached to arrows. Tried and convicted before the senior officers of the Order, he was hung for treason. After the Turkish guns had battered a wide breach in the fort's walls, the Turkish commander, Viser Misac, ordered the first assault.

Turkish galleys sailed in to the port to land troops on both sides of the promontory. Wading ashore, their feet were impaled on ships' nails and old knives set in timber and laid on the sea bed by the knight's and Rhodians. Halting in pain and confusion, they became easy targets for the hand-gunners and arbalesters on the walls. Others in the breach were decimated by a pre-prepared cross-fire of batteries before having to face a counter-attack led by the Grand Master. His helmet knocked off by a cannon ball, Fra Pierre d'Aubusson joked about the improved prospects of promotion for the Order's senior knights before returning to the fight.

Eventually, the Turkish ships fled before a flotilla of fire-ships sent out by the Order and the thoroughly demoralised assailants of the wall were called back from the slaughter-house that had been thought to be a breach.

The Turks next tried to build a pontoon between the shore and the Tower of St. Nicholas. But an English sailor for the Order dived into the sea one night and removed the pontoon's anchor. The Turks awoke to see the pontoon being smashed against the rocks by the morning tide.

On June 18 an all-out night assault was tried. The Turks attacked all along the mole in a swarm of light craft and a towed pontoon, supported by galleys which provided naval bombardment. The darkness was lit by a weird glow of naphtha and molten lead, flickering gunfire and the flames of incendiary ships. Several enemy galleys were set alight and the city's artillery sank at least four.

The battle raged from midnight until 10am the next morning. It was reported that the Turks lost 2500 men, including the son-in-law of the Sultan who had led the attack on the fort.

Viser Misac was so depressed by the failed attack that he sat brooding in his tent for three days straight.

The siege was a vicious one. The Grand Master's palace had been demolished by the bombardment -- and the destruction of the Order's wine cellar upset many knights. The relentless bombardment and the undermining of the wall's foundation by sappers eventually had the desired effect. The walls began to crumble.

Grand Master d'Aubusson had a ditch dug behind the main wall, and a second wall hastily erected behind it -- made from demolished dwellings and inns, as well as from timbers of damaged boats. Knight, chaplain and civilian took part in the desperate work -- led by their Grand Master.

A rain of incendiary arrows and grenades set the city alight. But women and children were organised into rapid-response fire-brigade teams and were able to keep the flames from spreading.

Old-fashioned catapults were built to supplement the surviving artillery. These catapults, considered museum pieces at the time, devastated the timber and earth bunkers protecting the Turkish artillery and engineers.

Some Italian Knights despaired at Rhodes prospects. They approached d'Aubusson, begging him to negotiate with the enemy. The Grand Master offered them a galley to run the blockade if they wished. With a mix of bullying and coaxing, he restored the Italians' spirit and sent them back to the walls.

Two Turkish "deserters" claimed Mehmet himself was on the way with 100,000 troops. But d'Aubusson did not believe it. The deserters then tried in turn convince the Italian knight Filelfo to murder the Grand Master. The knight immediately reported the incident and the garrison lynched the spies before d'Aubusson could have them hauled off to prison.

After six weeks of bombardment the south-east wall was little more than rubble. An envoy was sent to the Hospitallers congratulating them on a good defence, offering generous terms for surrender. Misac offered the knights their freedom, but as allies of the Turks. Further resistance would result in their complete annihilation, he said. Grand Master d'Aubusson sent the envoy back with the answer that attackers could only expect the same reception they had received at the Fort of St. Nicholas, and that the sultan had an odd way of making friends and allies. Anyway, the brethren were ready for his assault, he claimed.

Misac had the city bombarded non-stop for an entire day and night. A hour before dawn on July 28, scaling parties crept forward silently.

The exhausted garrison was asleep. The guards were easily rushed. The breach and a suburb was easily captured.

But Fra Pierre d'Aubusson's personal example and determination caused the defenders to rally. Despite taking severe wounds, he led his knights in a successful push to expel the invaders.

Vizer Misac, his standard captured, took little comfort from the news that half the garrison's defenders had died in the attack. He had lost 3500 killed and 30,000 wounded. News that the Grand Master's own wounds were not fatal proved to be the final straw. In despair, he gave up and abandoned the island.

## **A Glorious Defense**

The walls of Rhodes lay in ruins, and the Turks held its ramparts. But Grand Master Fra Pierre d'Aubusson was there immediately.

Gripping a half-pike, shouting to his brethren that they must save Rhodes or be buried in its ruins, he led an impromptu counter-attack.

First on the ladder climbing the now captured wall, he was knocked down by bullet and blade twice. But he climbed back up.

Soon knights and Turks were at each others throats all along the shattered rampart. But the knights were virtually dropping from exhaustion.

Elbowing his way forward in his gilt armour (still preserved by the Order as a relic), followed by three standard bearers and a handful of brethren, the Grand Master used himself as a human barrier to stem the advancing Turks and as a living banner to rally the knights behind him.

Misac was so frustrated that he ordered an entire company of his best troops to stop at nothing but to kill d'Aubusson.

The Grand Master went down, wounded in three places. But all the brethren, mercenaries and civilian militia that were left standing abandoned their posts to rescue him. Before they could reach him, d'Aubusson was down again -- this time with two terrible wounds including a punctured lung.

The desperate brethren hurled themselves upon the startled Turks. The Turkish soldiers were convinced the glinting armour reflecting the blood-red rays of the setting sun was a host of vengeful angels sent to administer divine punishment. They broke and ran. The knights followed -- shouting their old battle-cry St. Jean! St. Jean! -- storming the Vizer's camp and capturing his standard.

The breach was left behind them, unguarded, but quiet -- peaceful.

*"Nothing in the world was so well lost as Rhodes"*

-- Holy Roman Emperor Charles V

Fra Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Grand Master of the Hospitallers, learnt in 1521 that the Turks were building a massive invasion fleet in preparation of invading Rhodes. Villiers immediately set about strengthening his own defenses and calling in the brethren from all over Europe.

Among those recruited to help defend Rhodes was Gabriele Tadini de Martinengo, the greatest military engineer of his day. Despite frenzied attempts by Turkish agents to prevent him from arriving, he was so impressed by the Order that he asked to become a member. He was accepted. Martinengo immediately set about strengthening the defenses -- including many ingenious devices that could help fill a breach or strengthen a weakened wall.

Despite this preparation, Villiers' forces were only slightly larger than those of d'Aubusson's in the siege 40 years earlier. Villiers had mustered 500 brethren, 1000 men-at-arms and a small force of local militia. However, the city's fortifications were now much stronger and its firepower immeasurably superior.

On June 26, 1522, two days after the feast of St. John, the Turkish armada of some 600 vessels was seen approaching the island.

After leading the citizens of Rhodes in sermon, Villiers rode through the streets in his gilt armour -- inspecting the brethren standing at attention before their posts. The people of Rhodes were encouraged to see that, once again, the Order's Grand Master was going to lead the defence from the front.

Contemporaries believed the Turks had amassed a force of 140,000 men and 60,000 labourers. It was led by Suleiman's brother-in-law, Mustafa Pasha. But the Grand Vizer himself arrived on July 28 to personally oversee the defeat of this ancient thorn in his empire's side.

The Turks settled down to a steady bombardment of the wall of Aragon on the sea's edge. Engineers swiftly began to dig under the wall's foundations. But Fra Martinengo had set up drums with little bells and carefully placed bowls of water to detect any subterranean activity. Once located, he would set the Order's own engineers to dig counter-tunnels to stop the Turkish sappers.

However, one Turkish mine succeeded. A huge explosive charge was set off under the bastion of England and a large portion of the wall came crashing down -- filling the moat. The Turks immediately attacked and soon captured the breach. By chance Grand Master Villiers had been leading a service in a nearby church. Seizing his half-pike like d'Aubusson had done almost half-a-century before, he rushed out to see seven horsetail Turkish standards waving from the ruined wall.

Fortunately for Rhodes, the English brothers were valiantly holding an inner barricade established only days earlier by Fra Martinengo.

Brethren came rushing from nearby bastions and followed Villiers and his standard bearer in a crushing counter-attack.

The Turks abandoned their standards and the breach, fleeing before the on-rushing knights. Frustrated, Mustafa Pasha slashed at his fleeing soldiers with his own sword. The knights mourned the death by mortal wounds of the magisterial standard bearer, though his precious standard had not been lost. The Turks had lost many men, including 5 sanjak beys (horse-tail banners).

Twice more Mustapha led his men on the badly damaged bastion of England. Thousands of troops swarmed over the barricades, but the Turcopolier Fra John Buck counter-charged from the rubble. The Turks gave ground, but Mustapha rallied them about his standard. The Order too received help, this time from the nearby German bastion led by Fra von Waldner.

The Pasha fought like a lion until his own men dragged him away. The Turks losses were high, but so were the garrison's -- including Buck and von Waldner.

On September 24 Mustapha decided to risk everything and ordered an all-out assault as the Sultan Suleiman looked on from the hills. Artillery pounded the walls mercilessly, then from out of the smoke rushed thousands of troops.

But Grand Master Villiers came up to the walls with 200 fresh troops -- hurling back the assault. Suleiman himself was forced to order the retreat. More than 2000 Turkish corpses were left behind.

Burning with shame, Suleiman ordered his entire army into parade formation to have his brother-in-law Mustapha Pasha shot to death with arrows. Only after his most senior general begged for Pasha's life did he relent.

After appointing a new general, Ahmed Pasha, Suleiman ordered the siege to continue. Turkish slaves, led by a young slave girl, revolted and attempted to set fire to the city. But they were caught and executed by the knights.

But most seriously, the servant of the Order's Grand Chancellor was captured trying to shoot messages over the wall to the Turks. Fra Andrea d'Amara, who had lost the election to Grand Mastership to Villiers and held a personal grudge against him, was found guilty of treason. He was formally stripped of his habit, degraded from his vows and then publicly beheaded.

Another disaster occurred when the invaluable Gabriele Martinengo was shot through the eye while attempting to shore-up the bastion of Aragon during a general assault. Severely wounded, he was out of action for weeks.

The Grand Master moved his headquarters into the crumbling tower and stayed there for five weeks, sleeping on a straw mat among the rubble.

Reinforcements of 12 knights and 100 men-at-arms ran the blockade to offer some relief.

Once Martinengo was back on his feet, he and the Grand Master appeared everywhere -- urging on their exhausted troops.

For a time it seemed to the knights that their prayers had been answered. Rain had turned the Turkish camp into a sea of mud and the city was spared attack for several days. Suleiman despaired. He had lost thousands of men to the brethren, and many more to plague and the cold weather.

A Turkish officer was sent to the walls to offer good terms for surrender, telling the garrison it was doomed. A knight-commander shouted back: "The brethren of St. John only do business with their swords".

*". . . most of our men were slain, we had no powder nor . . . manner of munycone nor vitalles, but all on by brede and water; we wer as men desperat determyned to dye upon them in the felde rather than be put*

*upon the stakes, for we doubted he would give us our lives considering they were slain so many of his men . . . "*

-- English brother Nicholas Roberts.

After an approach by the civilian mayor of Rhodes and Suleiman's offer for peace, Grand Master Villiers summoned his senior council.

Though determined to die fighting, Villiers was prepared to accept the majority decision of this council of representatives. As each Bailiff made their report of disastrous losses, it became clear the garrison could not hold out much longer.

"Having seen and considered the great pounding the town has suffered, having seen how large the breach is and how the enemy's trenches are inside the town to a depth of 100 feet with a breadth of more than 70 feet, having also seen they have broken through the wall in two other places, that the greater part of our men-at-arms -- both knights and all others -- are dead or wounded and supplies exhausted, that mere workmen are taking their place, it is impossible to resist any longer unless some relief force comes to make the Turk strike camp". Thus stated Fra Gabriel Martinengo who had become the popular de-facto Grand Marshal of the defence.

The excited debate that followed centred upon the theme "die to the last man or save the people of Rhodes."

Suddenly, the Greek bishop and a delegation of weeping citizens appeared at the doors of the council chambers, begging the brethren to capitulate.

"Fra Philippe fell downe and almost ded" recorded Fra Jacques, Bastard of Bourbon. After Villiers recovered, he and the Bailiffs finally agreed "it would be a thing more agreeable to God to sue for peace and protect the lives of simple people, of women and children.

A truce was established, but within a week it was broken by the Turks. On December 16 Fra Nicholas Fairfax ran the blockade with a cargo of wine and 100 Cretian men-at-arms. It was all he could find.

By now the walls and buildings were all rubble, the brethren were living in muddy holes where they attempted to find shelter from the snow and sleet.

On December 17, the Turks launched another general assault.

Again, the knights somehow managed to hurl them back.

On December 20, Grand Master Villiers asked for a new truce. Suleiman's terms were generous: in return for Rhodes, the brethren were free to leave with all their goods. The Turks even offered ships.

After Villiers was entertained by Suleiman in his grand pavilion, the Grand Master offered the Sultan the hospitality of the city. Disdaining an escort, Suleiman accompanied Villiers on a tour of the city and observed the pathetic barricades that had held out against his troops for so long.

Suleiman was so moved by Villier's courage and ability that he offered him command of the Turkish armies. "A great prince would be dishonoured by employing such a renegade," Villiers is said to have replied.

On the night of January 1, 1523, a single trumpet sounded the retreat from the highest standing point in the city. To the amazement of the Turks, the brethren marched out in parade order with burnished armour, banners flying and drums beating.



The knights abandoned their city and their Hospital with the honours of war. Oxen dragged the cart-loads of archives, carularies, deeds and benefactions to their waiting ships. The Grand Master stepped off Rhodes in full view of the respectful Turks in the middle of a snowstorm.

Later, Suleiman remarked how sorry he was to make "that fine old man" leave his home.

## **Malta: Island Fortress**

*". . . under the discipline of the Order that island emerged into fame and opulence; the noble and warlike monks were renowned by land an sea; and the bulwark of Christendom provoked and repelled the arms of the Turks and Saracens."*

-- Edward Gibbon.

Strategically situated at the centre of the Mediterranean, Malta has always attracted the attention of maritime powers. At the cross-roads of the Mediterranean, the small Maltese archipelago commands the trade routes, not only between east and west, but between north and south.

Its Grand Harbour and other ancillary harbours and anchorages the finest fleet base in the central Mediterranean -- making it even more strategically important.

It possesses as a result a wealth of history out of all proportion to its small size.

In A.D. 60, the Apostle Paul was shipwrecked off Malta and the Islands were gradually converted to Christianity. Held by the Carthaginians, Phoenicians, Romans and European monarchs, no power influenced the Maltese as much as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

It was the Knights whom in effect put Malta on the map. It was the knights whom have left, not only their physical marks on Malta, but their psychological mark on the Maltese.

It was the knights who brought the "Golden Age" upon Malta, and it was the with the Knights that the Maltese were able to throw back the armies of the Ottoman empire in 1565.

The heroic resistance of the Islands during the Turkish attack of brought the island great fame -- and a reputation that it upheld during the desperate days of World War II.

## **The Arrival of the Knights**

"Malta is a rock; it is no good for us; it is wholly barren and unfortified." reported the returning scout.

"Don't you see" Valette responded, "The whole island is a natural fortress! We can only improve upon it." At first, the unfertile, unpromising island at the centre of the Mediterranean was looked upon with disdain by the Knights of St. John. How could it compare with the lush paradise of their lost island??

It was a small island of 95 square miles with a few pine trees and some fresh water springs. It was unable to feed itself, and it was far from the homelands of the enemies of Christendom. But it offered a deep water anchorage -- a perfect natural harbour. The terrain was ideal to defend the waterways from both sea and from land. Fortification was to prove well sighted and effective. Charles V's offer was the knights only hope. Virtually given the island for the nominal tithe of one Maltese falcon per year, it provided an opportunity to continue the fight against the Ottomans.

## **The Great Siege**

While the royalty of Europe did not recognise Malta's strategic importance in 1565, Suleiman of the Ottoman Empire did.

Between May and September he spent an estimated 30,000 lives in an attempt to take the island from the recently arrived Knights of St. John. The Siege was one of the most fierce of history.

The very barrenness that the knights had initially looked upon with such disdain assisted them. The invaders had no shelter and little clean water. Its isolation also helped -- being far from any source of resupply.

At the beginning of the siege the Order had about 540 knights and sergeants dispersed through its three main fortifications -- St. Angelo, St. Michaels and Fort St. Elmo. There were also 1000 Spanish foot soldiers and about 3000 Maltese militia.

The army of the ageing Suleiman is estimated as between 30,000 and 40,000 men strong. A further 4000 Iayalars -- Moslem religious fanatics -- were used as suicide shock-troops. The force was transported to Malta in over 250 ships.

On May 18, 1565, the fleet of the Grande Turke was sighted by watchmen in Fort St. Elmo. A small message boat was immediately dispatched to Sicily, announcing "The siege has begun. The Turkish fleet numbers 200 vessels. We await your help."

Within days mounted scouting parties of the Order were establishing the size and nature of the army. No attempt was made to stop the establishment of a beachhead.

Small forts of St. John closed their gates all around the island. The main harbour -- later to be called Valetta -- was at this time really only a cluster of forts and fortified peninsulas.

This chain of forts always enabled the Knights to maintain contact with each other and foreign governments. Not all could be besieged at the same time.

A captured knight of St. John, Adrien de la Riviere, was tortured to reveal the weakest point of the island's defence. Under the hot iron, he told the Grande Turke to attack the bastion of Castile first -- as it was the most exposed of the defenses.

The Sultan's army attacked -- and hundreds died in a humiliating defeat. The bastion was the most heavily defended because of its exposed position, and Riviere knew this. The Turkish commanders had him beaten to death.

This embarrassment sowed seeds of discontent between two of the Sultan's principal commanders. Their inability to reach consent led to poor planning and conduct of attacks. The Fort of St. Elmo, at the head of one of the peninsulas forming Grand Harbour, was chosen as the main focus of the attack. This left smaller forces to assault the main body of the Knight's in their fortified towns on the other side of the harbour.

St. Elmo was not expected to hold out for long against the massed firepower of the Turkish cannons. But it did. It lasted 33 days. In the process, it bought the remaining knights much valuable time.

After St. Elmo fell, the main bulk of the Sultan's army was brought against the Birgu peninsula and the Fort of St. Angelo it contained.

The defence was led by Grand Master La Valette. The Turkish fleet now freely sailed Grand Harbour, harried only by St. Angelo's guns. The Order's own navy was safely tied up under its walls.

On July 15 an all-out assault was launched on the position, by land and sea. The Turkish boats were snarled and impaled upon half-sunken snares and stakes. Gunners and arquebusiers opened up a withering fire as the boats approached. Maltese swimmers upturned boats and fought hand-to-hand at the base of the

walls. The attack was routed. A few days later, a force of Turks attempted to sail under St. Angelo to land troops on the unexposed and weakly defended side of the peninsula. A hidden battery had been prepared for just such a move and 800 of the Sultan's crack troops were massacred on the water. At dawn on August 20, Turkish guns opened up on the fortifications for most of the day. When the guns fell silent, the Turks attacked en masse. For six hours the battle raged and some Turks even managed to establish themselves in a breach of the walls. But a rallying charge of knights expelled them from their hard-won position.

A second attack swarmed onto the Order's tiring defenders. The outer walls fell, but the advancing Turks found themselves under a murderous crossfire from well-placed secondary walls and revertments.

The Turkish victory seemed to hang suspended in the air. La Valette had committed all his resources, and had nothing left in reserve. As the knights slowly gave ground and more Turks massed through the breached walls, a trumpet call rang out. The Turkish began to retreat!

To the amazement of the defenders who felt sure their last hour had come, the whole Turkish army was seen in full-scale retreat -- running toward their base camp. They could thank their brother knights of a small cavalry fort at Mdina. The local Knight Captain, hearing the massive cannonade in the morning, realised a major assault was in progress. In an attempt to create a diversion, he led his small band of mounted knights to attack the Turkish base camp. Finding it undefended, they killed most of the camp's inhabitants (cooks, prostitutes, guards and skilled workmen), set fire to the tents and supply dumps, hamstringed the horses and burst water barrels. By the time the retreating army arrived, the knights had disappeared back to Mdina.

The Turkish cannon assault soon continued. La Valette had the bridges between the bastions blown up. He knew the next assault would be the last.

On August 18 a mine exploded underneath the main bastion of the defensive wall - opening a breach through which the Turks were already pouring.

The Grand Master himself led a countercharge into the breach. The 70 year-old man wore only a light helmet and no breastplate. Knights, Maltese militia and townspeople rallied to his side -- and approached the breach at a run. Wounded in the leg by a grenade burst, La Valette stayed to spur the defenders on.

Urged by his officers to retreat, La Valette pointed his sword to some Turkish standards and said: "Never will I withdraw so long as those banners wave in the wind."

The fight continued well on into the night. The town resembled a scene from Dante's Inferno. But the conditions were similar for the Turks. During the long hours the knights managed to regain their lost ground, pushing the Turks back outside the walls. On September 6, 1565, the shattered Turkish army was seen to withdraw. Their army was tired, sick and poorly provisioned. Their support and comforts had been destroyed. So had their spirit.

When the sails of a fleet appeared upon the horizon, raised by European monarchs who finally agreed that the island could not be allowed to fall, the Ottomans were already leaving.

September 8 marked the lifting of the siege.

The victory of Grand Master Jean de la Valette made the Knights of Rhodes into the Knights of Malta and established them once again as a formidable Mediterranean power. Suleiman determined that an attack would be successful only in his own hands. But he died before the invasion could be launched.

The results of the siege were to last a further 135 years, and the glory of the victory was maintained by the Order until they were expelled from the island in 1798.

## Saint Elmo's Fire

The small "star" fort of four main salients broken into bastion form was an old design against which the Sultan's army had had much experience. Hasty earthworks had been thrown up around the fort to make approach more difficult, including ditches spanned by drawbridges.

Difficulties were encountered by the Turks from the start. The rugged peninsula had very little earth that could be formed into embankments to protect the artillery being massed against the small fort. This left them exposed to cannon from St. Elmo itself. As the Turks prepared their position, so did the small contingent of knights and Maltese. Night and day was spent reinforcing the ramparts, producing gunpowder and positioning cannon.

The Hospitaller Grand Master La Valette knew the fort could not hold out for long. But he also knew the longer it held out, the more chance the island had to survive. By late May the little fort was under constant bombardment: the flares and explosions in full sight of the main body of knights on the other side of the harbour. Within days parts of St. Elmo's walls were starting to crumble.

La Valette received a delegation of knights from St. Elmo who had secretly slipped across the harbour to tell him that the fort was untenable. La Valette bent icy scorn upon the knights, who, in their shame, begged to be allowed to return to their bastion.

After they left, La Valette told the council he knew full well that the fort was doomed, but stated no ground should be given up without the maximum cost to the enemy. Fresh troops were ferried across the harbour every night in small boats and the wounded evacuated. This nightly transfusion helped the fort hold on.

Smoking under the hot midday sun and ringed with fire at night, St. Elmo looked like a volcano rising out of the dry limestone rock.

To the Turks it seemed incredible that such a small fort could hold out for so long. But their best engineers were then brought into the fray.

Early in June the defensive pit and outer counterscarp were in Turkish hands. The main defences of the fort were being continually probed. The nightly resupply was cut-off by Turkish patrol boats.

On June 21 the Knights of St. John dressed in their formal robes and celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi as they had always done. Knights around the island prayed for their brothers in St. Elmo not to perish utterly under the merciless sword of the Infidel. The following day saw a massive assault launched against the fort -- led by the fanatical Loyalists. St. Elmo disappeared under a swirling cloud of dust and smoke. Yet to the astonishment of the watching knights and to the Turks, the fort emerged with the Cross of St. John still flying above its crumbling ruins.

La Valette was so astonished at the fort's endurance that he endeavoured to send relief across the harbour under cover of darkness. But the fort was totally surrounded. On June 23, a large force of Turkish ships massed about the base of St. Elmo's peninsula. They opened fire on the fort at the same time as the main land battery. This last, fatal, cannonade went on for hours. In the awesome silence that followed, La Valette could hear the cry's of the Turkish Imams calling upon the faithful to conquer or die in the name of Islam.

By now there were no more than 100 defenders left alive in the fort, nearly all of them wounded.

Two of the crippled knights, De Guaras and Miranda, had themselves carried in chairs into the breach so that they could confront the enemy to the last.

Wave after wave of the finest troops in the Sultan's army hurled themselves against the "small and weak star fort."

To the astonishment of the Turkish commanders, it took a further hour for St. Elmo to die.

When all was over, the last standing knight lit the coloured signal beacon that told La Valette that the Turks were within St. Elmo's walls.

Despite orders that all of the defenders were to be put to death, a few were captured and sent into slavery. Some of these were later rescued or escaped, and told the story of the fort's last hours.

The Turkish commanders had the bodies of the knights decapitated and then nailed to wooden crosses in mockery of the crucifixion. These were set adrift in the harbour. Four of these bodies were washed up at the foot of St. Angelo: two of them recognised by their own brothers.

La Valette responded to the intimidation: "You see, there can be no turning back. We either survive in Malta or we all perish to a man!"

But it was a poor victory. The commander of the Turkish assault, the famous Dragut, had been struck on the head by a splinter of rock thrown up from a counter-battery from St. Angelo. He is said to have survived until word reached him of St. Elmo's fall when he "raised his eyes to heaven as if in thankfulness and immediately expired."

The siege had bought valuable time. On the very night St. Elmo fell, a relief force of 1000 knights, mercenaries, and most importantly, skilled gunners, covertly landed on the island.

Thousands of Turkish soldiers had died in the attack, including many irreplaceable commanders. The master gunner of the army had fallen to St. Elmo's cannon, as had the leader of the Iyalars.

While the Turks had bought passage to one of the best sheltered docks on the island, the price had been too high. St. Elmo had proven the key point in the defence. During the 33 days that the small fortress had held out, the Turks had incurred immense losses -- and it was now high summer.

The army was thirsty, and the limestone terrain of Malta was blindingly bright and hot. Morale plummeted as the army had to move a large and difficult distance to attack the main bastions of the knights on the other side of the harbour.

The surviving commander of the Turkish invasion and veteran of Rhodes, Mustapha Pasha, is said to have looked out from the ruins of St. Elmo, across the harbour toward the thundering guns of fort St. Angelo and said: "Allah! If so small a son has cost so dear, what price shall we have to pay for so large a father?"

## **Corsairs of the Mediterranean**

At Malta the Order's already sizeable navy grew further in importance. The galleys of St. John soon became the fear of the Eastern Mediterranean once again. The Hospitallers lived and fought hard, operating a navy of a standard second to none. No ship ever struck her colours and surrendered to the enemy. Death was preferred to defeat. In one instance a large galley of the Order was surprised and captured, its knight's locked below. Instead of submitting to defeat, the knights knocked out the planking of the bottom hull -- killing themselves and hundreds of Turkish warriors on the decks.

Commanding one of the Order's warships became a symbol of great status throughout Europe. All knights had to serve a "caravan" as part of their novitiate, consisting of a six month cruise raiding the Islamic coast and suppressing the pirate nations.

It was this naval role that ensured the Order's survival. First, the knights did a valuable job in keeping the waters clear. Secondly, the navy of the Order provided a first-rate training ground for a number of potential officers in the navies of the Christian powers. Thirdly, and probably most important, Malta's strategic value meant that if she were held by any other non-neutral nation, war would result.

## **The Fall of Malta**

*The last years in Malta . . . reveal a gradual and steady decline, a story of spoiled hopes and blind fears, of bursts of vigour and long periods of listlessness and dispute. It is a sad story of a worthy machine running down.*

-- Roderick Cavaliero, *The Last of the Crusaders*

The Knight's of St. John had spent 130 years turning Malta into an almost impregnable fortress of stone, sea and barren terrain -- creating a reputation for invulnerability from foreign invasion.

But the defeat of the Hospitallers came from within.

The Order had not been tested seriously for almost a hundred years. The pirates had been silenced and the Islamic nations of Palestine and North Africa were signatories of peace with much of Europe.

But Malta's strategic importance shifted -- it was now seen as a balance of power between the Imperial ambitions of France and England.

The middle years of the 18th century were marked by mismanagement, internal dissent and the virtual abandonment of the vows of Poverty and Chastity.

Grand Masters and the Pilier's of the different Tongues frivolously spent the Order's money on festivals, feasts, and non-stop partying. Rich ornamentation and displays of over-generosity were rife.

With the French Revolution of 1780, much of the Order's income dried up. But the spending went on.

Defenses were neglected, canons were left to rust, military exercises were abandoned and Knight Commanders spent so much time away from their units that little or no discipline was present.

The last Grand Master of Malta and only German to ever attain that rank, Ferdinand von Hompesch, 54, was a popularist -- making decisions that pleased people in the short term.

Despite his previous disputes with the Order's hierarchy, von Hompesch was still an honourable man. While he did little in his short reign to reimpose the Rule upon his knights, he realised the moral rot had destroyed any chance of putting up a fight. Instead he placed his faith in his God and in his diplomatic ministers -- seeking treaties and support from other nations. His call for financial and military support from the remaining European Hospitaller commanderies went unheeded.

Von Hompesch was overwhelmed in the face of treachery, disobedience and disloyalty. He offered little leadership in the face of increasing uncertainty and defections among the knights. A strong 5th column among French knights actively sought to destabilise the Maltese population.

However, it is doubtful the Hospitallers would have resisted firmly even if they could. The very core of the Order's existence was to fight the enemies of Christendom. This was also the core of von Hompesch's problem: France and England were Christian nations. By the time Bonaparte's vast fleet arrived off the shores of Valetta, demanding provisions and water, von Hompesch had lost all ability to lead. He sat in his chambers, listening to all appeals, but saying little. The French attacked and met minimal resistance.

The 1798 capitulation to Napoleon Bonaparte, and the subsequent French occupation, was brief.

The Maltese rose in rebellion and with British naval help defeated the French garrison. Despite desperate attempts to regain the island for the Order, the British and the Maltese refused. The Knights had become an anachronism.

## **Aftermath**

The Islands remained a British colony between 1800 and 1964. The epic defence of the Islands during World War II is well remembered. The Islands achieved independence in 1964 and in 1974 they became a republic within the Commonwealth.

During the 1970s and 1980s the Maltese Government returned several properties to the Sovereign Militant Order of St. John, including their famous church and mausoleum. The Order was also given back Fort St. Angelo as an official residence on the Island with access to the Chapel of St. John.

---

# Hospitaller: Knights of St. John (Part 4)

*"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against supernatural wickedness in high places."*

-- Ephesians 6: 10-12

## A supplement for For Church Knight: the Cainite Crusade otherwise known as **Militia Christi**

Written and compiled by Jamie Seidel October 1996

### Chapter Five: Defenders of the Faith

#### The Modern Order

*And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

-- Revelations 6:8

When Napoleon swept through the Mediterranean, the Knights who had withstood the Turks two and a quarter centuries before were unable to offer resistance. They were summarily expelled by Napoleon, who claimed Malta for France, only to lose it again to the British fleet under Horatio Nelson.

A period of confusion ensued. For the Order of St. John. After being expelled from Malta in 1798 the Knights of St. John were homeless for the third time in their history. It was not until 1834 that the Knights were able to establish for themselves a new base in Rome.

Despite the loss of their island, the knights adopted the additional title Order of Malta to differentiate themselves from the "breakaway" Protestant Orders of St. John being formed in Britain and Germany. With their last military stronghold now in British hands, they devoted themselves once again to hospital work. During the century that followed, this work earned them considerable prestige as they were the only organised medical-based relief force available in the world.

With the Order removed from its seat of power, the shadowy forces behind the governments of all Europe acted with resolve to finally rid themselves of this thorn of faith in their side. The Templars had been overthrown in 1307 and the Teutones were already in deep decline. Now the opportunity to prevent the Knights of Malta from re-establishing themselves beckoned.

Although the weak Grand Master Fra Ferdinand von Hompesch zu Bolheim never abdicated his position after the fall of Malta, a group of disillusioned knights illegally elected the Emperor of Russia as Grand Master in 1799. When this bizarre episode ended with Emperor Paul's death in 1801, the future began to



look brighter. The British had recaptured Malta. However, the powerful nation refused to return it to the Knights.

Now all the influence of Ventrue and Toreador political intrigues was brought to bear against the Order. The French priories had already been confiscated after the French Revolution as the Order had been found guilty of attempting to help King Louis XVI escape. When Napoleon conquered Italy, he saw that the Order's property there was also confiscated. In 1802 the government of Spain confiscated the Order's property in that country. This was followed by Germany, Venice and Lombardy in 1806. In 1810 the priory of Russia was confiscated, with the handful of knight-commanders retreating to their grand priory in Sicily. However, even this was taken from them in 1826, followed by the priory of Portugal in 1834.

With only the grand priory of Bohemia and some Austrian commanderies left in the Order's possession, it began to look as though there was very little future left for the Knights of Malta.

Nevertheless, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta refused to despair. It was resolved to prepare the Order for an existence of exile -- a life made possible because of its diverse membership from among the nobles of Catholic Christendom. Despite the rantings of politicians, the general public still held sympathy for the Knights of Malta. Authors and political commentators stoically defended the Order against the constant barrage of political attack and character assassination.

This resolve paid off, first with the re-establishment of the Grand Priory of Rome in 1816.

The Ventrue and Toreador had over-played their hand. The influence of the Vatican began to bite back, with new governments and royal families restoring confiscated properties to the Order. The Grand Priories of Naples, Sicily, Lombardy and Venice were restored in 1839 -- three years after a new headquarters was established in the former Embassy of St. John at the Palazzo Malta, Rome. Austria, Italy, Germany and Finland followed suit.

But the Order itself was in disarray. It had not been able to organise a Grand Chapter for the legal election of a Grand Master. A papally appointed Lieutenant Master was to lead the Order until the early 20th century when a gathering of Knights of Justice was once again possible. By 1921 the Order's strength had recovered, with 1800 members of all grades -- among them 40 Knights of Justice and 250 Knights of Honour and Devotion.

In the 1930s the League of Nations talked about returning Rhodes to the Order, as part of Turkey's reparations for World War I. This idea was raised again after World War II, though it came to nothing. Fortunately the Maltese look back on the days the knights ruled over them with a sense of nostalgic pride. The fortress and chapel of St. Angelo was returned to the Order in the 1950s -- much to the consternation of Ventrue involved with Napoleon's successful invasion.

The prestige of the Order was such that, after World War II, the fledgling United Nations even considered handing over Jerusalem to the Order to hold as an open city for Jew, Palestinian, Moslem and Christian alike. However, non-Christian nations wouldn't have a bar of it.

In 1979 the Sovereign Military Order numbered 9562 full knights, a thousand of whom were American and more than three thousand of which were Italian. In 1992, the Order had grown to more than 12,000 full knights with most of that growth coming from the United States. The number of Knights of Justice remains steady, with about 50 having taken the full vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience just as their brother-knights did 700 years ago.

## **The Cleansing Crusade**

The Hospitallers were among the first to perceive the existence of vampires and their slaves within the Holy Land. Wounded pilgrims brought to its Jerusalem hospital often bore marks stranger than any sword

blow. The Hospitallers, remarkably advanced in medical knowledge for their era, rapidly recognised one of these ailments as blood loss.

Other deluded pilgrims told tales of demons of the night that lurked the crossroads between Jerusalem and the sea. Until now, no-one paid much attention to these obviously sun-struck individuals. But a spate of blood-loss victims caused the Hospitallers, at this time non-militant, to ask the Templars to extend their patrols into the evenings.

The results were instantaneous. The first patrol disturbed a feeding vampire. It cost the lives of several knights before the creature was detained and questioned -- only to smoulder into ashes as the morning sun rose.

This event, more than any other, propelled the Hospitallers into adopting the sword of knighthood. This was a new and serious threat. Simple men-at-arms were not sufficient to combat the supernatural enemies of the Church. Only a knight strong in both the sword and the Word could face a demon without peril to his own soul.

The Holy Land was in turmoil. It was a lonely outpost in a pagan world. Enemies surrounded it on all sides, except from the sea. The Hospitallers massed their knights and sergeants against the armies of man. But several bands of knights roamed the country side and towns at night -- looking for an enemy of a far more threatening kind.

The black-clad knights became greatly feared by all creatures of the night. Only their expulsion from this ancient land would ensure the bite of their sword would no longer be felt. Many dark plots were hatched to this end.

## **Renewed Strength**

Today, from their headquarters at Palazzo Malta in Rome overlooking the Vatican, the Order is once again emerging as a a strong military force: though this time covert.

There is an emergency aid section to provide help in case of natural disaster. There are hospitals and leper camps run by the Order in many countries. And, like their brother Protestant Orders of St. John in Britain, Germany, Holland and Sweden, the Knights of Malta has its own ambulance service. In Northern Ireland, ambulances of the English order of St. John and of the Sovereign Militant Order are on the streets simultaneously, ministering to the needs of their respective denominations and communities.

Under international law, the current status of the Knights of Malta is still that of an independent sovereign principality. The Grand Master is recognised as a head of state, with a secular rank equivalent to a prince and an ecclesiastical rank equivalent to a cardinal. The Order maintains formal diplomatic relations with more than 40 countries, especially in Africa and in Latin America, and in those countries its envoys enjoy standard diplomatic privileges.

## **Renewed Purpose**

Unlike purely charitable institutions, the members of the Order of Malta have a very special and particular responsibility to "lead an exemplary Catholic life, and to follow the magisterium of the Church" (Grand Master Bertie, 21 April 1989). This duty and both the honor and obligations of membership require the Order, its knights, dames and donats, to provide an example of leadership. The eight-pointed white Cross is a badge of religion, distinguishing those who bear it as members of a religious Order of the Roman Catholic Church and, as such, confers a direct, personal responsibility. Recent events in Eastern Europe have left a moral vacuum and a potential breakdown of society which the Order of Malta is well-placed to counter. The Order, unlike many of the leaders of the Church, never compromised with the communist

regimes and, with its long-standing historic connections in the countries concerned, is now in a position to embark upon a new mission, restoring civilized Christian values to these severely disrupted societies.

A deep religious commitment and extensive hospitaller and humanitarian activities, however, cannot be considered the only obligations of knights of Malta. The Order has always included the word "Military" in its title, and with good reason; in the words of a senior member of the British Association it is necessary "not only to support good works but to fight evil" and the Order is well placed to play an active role not only on a local, national level but in the international sphere.

## **Eternal Warfare**

*"From my Saviour's Cross I draw my noble blood -- from it, as page and as soldier I was a monk. I accounted it all my joy and all my riches. By it I overcame the Grand turk in battle."*

-- fra Gabriel

## **Knights of Charity and Justice**

With the Order's re-awakening to the Cainite threat, it has exploited its international recruiting network to establish a core of knights devoted to hunting down and removing their corrupt influence from humanity. But their original vocation is still impressed upon them -- that it is the sick and poor who gave the orders, and it is the duty of the brethren to obey them.

This places a much greater level of demand upon a Knight of St. John than his Templar or Teutonic brethren. Singleness of purpose is not a luxury a Hospitaller can enjoy.

But the Order of Malta's position is also highly advantageous. The international reach of its diplomatic and relief agencies provides a vital supportive base to almost all covert operations. While the reach of this influence is not as widespread as that of the Templars association with Freemasonry, it is much more valid and legally recognisable. It is also less subject to the internal power-plays and hidden agendas so rife among the brother masons.

## **Intelligence**

The 21st Century Order of Malta is, needless to say, ideally placed for intelligence work. Its network of membership is international and at the same time well organised. Its hospital and medical services often place it strategically at points of crisis -- as in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. Its membership extends from medical staff and ambulance drivers to important figures in politics, business, diplomacy and finance who have access to spheres that ordinary priests would not.

Much of this intelligence gathering activity is not traditional espionage and counter-espionage work. The Order's very structure functions as an ideal conduit for intelligence gathering procedures. A great deal of it simply comes from "informal" chats between members. Thus, for example, a cardinal and a high-ranking intelligence officer, both of whom happen to be knights, may come together at one or another of the Order's social functions. Each may introduce the other to an influential banker or a prominent politician. In this way a project may be implemented and coordinated without any official directives or vulnerable reports and assessment files. The lack of such tell-tale paperwork trails is incredibly valuable in maintaining secrecy about exactly what the Order knows and is up to. The freedom of the Order to manoeuvre in such ways is facilitated by its diplomatic prestige, its relatively low profile, its international networks and the respect attached to its humanitarian endeavours.

In consequence, the Knights of Malta are closely associated with the Vatican's own Intelligence Department.

The Order has become a primary channel of communication between the Vatican and the CIA, and it is a relationship the knights do not attempt to hide. In 1946 the CIA's station chief in Rome received a decoration from the Order for his counter-intelligence work. Another CIA operative, Dr Luigi Gedda, also received this award. In 1948 the Knights awarded their highest decoration, the Grand Cross of Merit, to General Reinhard Gehlen, head of the West German Secret Service -- at the time little more than a branch of the CIA. Gehlen had previously been in charge of Hitler's spy network in Russia. Cardinal Francis Spellman in New York -- a CIA operative when in Guatemala -- became "Spiritual Adviser" to the American Knights of Malta in the 1950s. This was an unfortunate association for the Order, and Spellman joined with another American cardinal in an attempt to take-over the Order for their own political purposes. It is also not uncommon for Directors of the CIA to be members of the Order. In the early 1980s director William Casey was a knight, as was his predecessor John McCone. Many existing members hold positions such as deputy chief of counter intelligence, internal affairs director and coordinator of threat assessment. Many US diplomats also hold membership of the Order -- making many US embassies "friendly" toward the knight's activities in remote regions of the world. Other knights include the former chief of French Intelligence, former chiefs of the Italian Secret Service and chiefs of the Spanish Military Intelligence.

Originally only a channel for the Vatican, the Order formally organised its own Intelligence wing during the 1960s. While supplying the Vatican with diplomatic and political information, it also serves to provide the Order with much detail on supernatural influences in a wide variety of areas. While the number of operatives is small, they are often ideally placed to relay information gathered by other intelligence services. Like most secret service operatives, their links to the Order are deeply hidden and only revealed under the most extreme circumstances.

## **Political Shadow-Play**

The Order of St. John has long since realised that it will encounter a Cainite's political machinations long before any tangible link is drawn to an individual. To this end the Order's own political strength must be brought to play.

It was the Templars failure to recognise this appreciably that contributed toward their spectacular demise. The Hospitallers themselves were almost brought down at a time when its popularity and diplomatic support was at a low ebb.

Political intrigue is a delicate balance of reputation, honour, public perceptions and personal alliances. It is just such a game that the Order's diplomatic corp plays with high stakes.

In many ways the efforts of the Order's diplomats, intelligence operatives and political associates are far more significant than the role of knight-combatants. For it is from the halls of power, and the shadowy rooms behind them, that comes the greatest threat of the supernatural. Despots such as Hitler and Pol Pot are the tools through which evil advances its cause. The Order must find ways to destroy the schemes of Corruption before they bare their bloody fruit. Often this means abandoning a covert hunt for those directly involved and exposing the Order's hand by directly blocking dangerous power plays.

It is rare for such shadowy manipulators of politics and power to reveal themselves in such a way as to allow combatant Knights to slip behind their guard.

## **Knight-Combatants**

The modern knights on the cutting-edge of the fight against evil come from all social castes, classes and backgrounds. What is common between them are their devotion to a cause: the eradication of the cainite curse upon mankind.

This core group of combatant knights is carefully hidden within the existing structure of the Sovereign Militant Order. While they answer to their own Knight Marshal, they are dispersed throughout the Order's other humanitarian operations. When not wearing their intimidating combat uniform of fire retardant suit, mask, helmet and body armour, these knights can be found at the surgeon's table conducting eye-operations for the destitute and homeless. Others can be found at diplomatic gatherings in the ballrooms of the world, or distributing food-aid to the hungry victims of natural and man-made disasters. But all are ready at a moments notice to don their fighting gear and help rid the world of another corrupt spirit.

While the "above the law" status they once enjoyed and the freedom of movement it conveyed is long gone, the reach and reputation of the Order's humanitarian mission has restored a high degree of mobility to operations. Diplomatic immunity, direct influence with the world's leading bureaucrats and governments -- and a certain tolerance allowed because of its indispensable charity work -- allows knights to move about with little impediment. Only the most overt breach of secrecy and security cannot be "covered up." In such cases, knights realise that they must be left to their own resources in order to protect the Knights of Malta from any damaging public exposure.

## **New Novitiate**

No religious vocation, no aptitude for hospital work, for fighting or for administration is needed to enter the ranks of the Hospitallers. Nor is nobility a necessary pre-requisite. But they are all highly advantageous traits -- especially in a Knight of Justice. What is required is an inherent holiness, a strong and true desire to assist those in need and to maintain God's law. Once in the Order, however, the applicant's skills and talents are assessed so that they can be trained to reach their maximum potential.

The upper grades of the Order are still fastidiously aristocratic. The most senior knights must display a coat of arms dating back at least 300 years in unbroken succession from father to son. But in the New Worlds of America and Australia, the knights consist almost entirely of Knights of Magistral Grace who are not asked for proofs of nobility.

## **Application**

Membership of most Militant Orders is by invitation only. However, the Hospitallers are too large and well-known an organisation for this to be realistic.

The Order has many segments, including disaster relief, hospital service, medical research and diplomatic attachments, around the world.

It is impossible to extend in-depth background checks to every member.

Also, the militant monks of the Hospitallers are much more visible than those of the Templars and Teutones. They have an undeniable public profile, especially among the public of Rome and the nobility of Italy, England, Germany and Hungary in particular.

As a result, they have many more applicants for the "quaint" role of monastic knight. While the vast majority of these are little more than dreamers, extremists and pranksters, the Hospitallers also attract the attention of disaffected Inquisitors, concerned priests and motivated members of diverse congregations.

Some of the Order's best operatives have simply "stepped in off the street."

Each candidate's application is closely scrutinised. A commission of four members of the Order is set up to examine each case. It calls witnesses and visits the candidate's family, workplace, congregation and friends.

Special dispensations can be granted by the papacy to compensate for a lack of nobility, a previous divorce or other similar barriers for the rank of Knight of Justice. If dispensations cannot or will not be granted, it is still possible for the applicant to become a lay-brother who has taken the same stringent vows as the Knights, but only earns the title of sergeant. Lay brothers still possess votes in the councils, are allowed high-ranking positions and are held in great respect. In fact, a Sergeant First Class actually out-ranks a Knight of Grace and Devotion.

It is also still theoretically possible for a sergeant to be elected as Grand Master.

## **Proofs**

The Sovereign Militant Order still requires proof of nobility for its Knights of Justice and Knights of Obedience. Knights of Grace and Devotion, however, need only to subject themselves for an analysis of their genetic history to determine any Lycanthrope extraction or tainted Ghoul heritage.

## **Training**

Novices are usually assigned to a chapter house close to their place of origin. The local Knight Commander would begin instruction in the traditions and requirements of the Order while encouraging the novice to determine his fields of expertise.

Once the Commander feels the novice is ready (usually after six months), he is sent to Rome where an individualised training course is devised. The novice may spend the next three to four years in study, attending secular and church universities. Three days a week are set aside for combat training. The novice must stay in a common house if aspiring to be a Knight of Justice, while other applicants may receive dispensation to stay with friends or family.

Novices rarely get a chance to choose their own field or career. Their talents and abilities are assessed before being directed toward the fields of medical relief, research, diplomacy, espionage or combat. Each field has specific areas of training, all provided for (overtly or covertly) through the Vatican's own resources and training facilities.

## **The Fully Fledged Knight**

The organisation and structure of the Order has changed little over the centuries. The political structures and ranks are the same. Grand Masters hold their same status, as do Knights Grand Cross, Piliars and Commanders. The only difference is that the formal side of the Order is smaller than the numbers of honorary members, associates and charitable works staff. A knight is more likely to end up commanding a hospital than an estate, and leading a troop of ambulance officers than mercenaries.

## **Class Structure**

The Order of St. John is still a hereditary-based organisation. To represent this noble class structure in the modern world, three separate classes of knight have been created -- with sub-categories representing the type of vow undertaken. These classes are:

First Class: (allowed Gifts, Prayers and Rituals) Knights of Justice Professed, Conventual Chaplains, Ad Honorum (lay brothers)

Second Class: (allowed Gifts and Prayers) Knights of Obedience, Donats of Justice

Third Class: (allowed Gifts) Knights and Dames of Honour and Devotion, Knights and Dames of Grace and Devotion, Knights and Dames of Magistral Grace, Donats of Devotion

## **Rank Structure**

Each class of knight is divided into a common rank structure. This rank structure has three Tiers based on seniority, or length of service. These are Knights Grand Cross, Small Cross and Knights. Within these Tiers are specific titles, such as Grand Master, Commander etc. Only the ranks of Grand Master and Seneschal are restricted to any one Class -- Knights of Justice These ranks are, in order of seniority:

Knights Grand Cross:

Grand Master

Seneschal

Knights Pilier:

Grand Chancellor

Grand Conservator

Grand Commander

Grand Admiral

Turcopilier

Grand Pilier

Grand Priors (provincial commander)

Capitular Piliers (provincial legates)

Knights Small Cross

Knight Commander (estate commander)

Knight Commissioners

Knight Castellan

Knight Captains (naval)

Knights:

Knight Lieutenant

Knight

## **Personal Equipment**

Hospitallers, by nature, tend toward lighter and more traditional weaponry in their crusade against Corruption. As such, the sword and bow are often items of choice to the exclusion of all other. This is not merely an anachronistic affectation: it fits well with both the demands of their "underground" conflict and the strong code of conduct and responsibility Hospitallers subject themselves to.

## **The Sword**

The sword remains the most efficient method of dealing final death against a vampire. It is also an incredibly precise weapon -- with little or no chance of "collateral damage." Swords also tend to be much less of a threat in untrained hands than a gun. One subtle advantage is that swords are regarded as an item

of curiosity: not lethality. It is much easier to get a gleaming longsword through customs than a fully optioned automatic shotgun.

## **The Bow**

Archery is a world recognised sport -- as is competition shooting. However, the bow has less of a lethal "reputation" than guns: a curiosity, less a concern. Bows require careful aim and action. While regarded as a drawback by the Teutones, the Hospitallers are attracted to the consideration and careful thought needed before a shaft is let fly. While providing a reduced chance of harming unlucky innocents through ricochet and unspent bullets, a shaft has a more than powerful enough effect on the enemy.

## **The Shield**

A small "forearm shield" is an important recent addition to the knight's personal equipment. Reaching from the hand to the elbow, the oval-shaped titanium and kevlar sheet offers protection against both bladed and ballistic weapons. It's collapsible design allows it to fold in half for discrete storage with the sword and bow.

## **The Bag**

A shoulder bag based on a design used by archers has been developed to "openly conceal" the knights "tools." With pouches for all necessary extras (such as gaffa tape), the bag is highly portable and convenient. The fact that everything is neatly packed "in the open" helps convince any inquiring minds that the items are for "recreational" use only.

## **Hospitaller Creed**

Do not hurt  
    where holding is enough;  
do not wound  
    where hurting is enough;  
do not maim  
    where wounding is enough;  
and kill not  
    where maiming is enough;  
the true knight of Christ is one  
    who does not need to kill.

The Order of St. John's humanitarian background has had a strong influence on the modern character of its knights.

Only two hundred years ago, Hospitallers joyfully went into battle wielding blunderbuss, rapier and pistol in order to kill in the name of their God.

Now their attitude has changed.

Killing is seen as an act of last resort. Nurture and redemption is the true reason for the existence of the Order. Ghouls and other slaves of the enemy are to be pitied and protected as they have often succumbed only to human weakness -- not evil.



While the true servants of Satan can only be expelled by the sword, even some vampires and lycantropes have demonstrated true repentance and a desire to be saved from what they have become. All things deserve the best chance for life.

## **Espionage Operations**

The single largest area of intelligence gathering for the Order is simply the debriefing of its members. Many diplomatic attache' serve only to move among members of the Order of Malta that hold positions high in intelligence, military fields, politics and finance. These attache' are ideally placed to link obscure pieces of information gleaned through "informal" chats with these sympathetic "ears." If a lead is considered important, the "old-mates" network is exploited to arrange interviews or "social chats" with other powerful figures in whatever field is involved. This form of intelligence gathering is among the most rewarding and dangerous. The information trails are often difficult to unravel, but it is a process that is hard to trace -- if the operative is discrete in his line of questioning. If a subject becomes suspicious, however, the attache' situation may deteriorate dramatically.

However, old-style field-work is still a vital component. A fireside chat over a glass of red wine may reveal without a doubt an intrigue to damage the Order's interests, but the paperwork and physical evidence is necessary before any substantial action to block the move can be made.

Such operatives are scattered throughout the world, living normal lives as "sleepers" until the Order calls their services. Only then are their finely tuned skills called into play -- often involving evidence gathering in the time-honoured James Bond style.

Also helping in the information gathering task are groups of telephone and fax interceptors -- including the ubiquitous white-vans full of delicate detection devices.

Recently added to this scene has been a handful of highly skilled computer hackers. These unconventional individuals are given much leeway within the Order, operating in the glow of their computer screens in darkened rooms to penetrate the computer networks of major banks, political parties, interest groups and individuals to unravel the trails of intrigue that are invariably stretch across international boundaries.

But most important among all intelligence operatives is the counter-espionage unit. Comprising a small group of the most trusted knights, this unit seeks to expose the plants, sleepers and spies within the Order itself. The diversity, size and dispersion of its relief agencies leave the Order of St. John open to such penetration. While the dictates of true faith protects the core, it is not impossible for a false member to cause the knights great harm and scandal through their behaviour, intelligence gathering or incitement. The Knights of St. John are well aware of the dangers of rot within their own organisation. The loss of Malta stands as mute testimony toward letting one's own guard down.

## **Research Operations**

With a wealth of medical expertise at its fingertips, it is hardly surprising the Militant Order has chosen its best biologists, DNA analysts and researchers to undertake a detailed study of what makes supernatural creatures "tick."

These experts have combined with similar Vatican research teams and share facilities in underground vaults below the holy city itself. The strictest security is imposed upon this site. Knights from all three Orders guard the only entrance. Most Vatican residents believe this is the Militant Order's armoury. High-

tech sensors and screening devices monitor every inch of the three-storey premises and regular random checks are conducted on all rooms and records.

Along with vaults containing evil relics -- such as human-skin books of demon lore -- are repositories for tissue, blood and hair samples taken from encounter scenes. Several complete Kindred and Lycanthrope corpses are also held.

In depth analysis of these specimens are starting to bear results. A chemical compound has been synthesised that is believed to be capable of forcing a were creature to undergo its change. Similar substances are under development to congeal blood infected with the essence of vampirism -- now understood to be a powerful gene-altering virus. Among the doctors and research scientists are some of the Church's top Theologians: hoping to formulate new prayers based upon their greater understanding. In recent years the wards surrounding the facility have been frequently "tested," raising fears of an impending assault.

## **Inter-Order Cooperation**

The three international Militant Orders have shared a long and turbulent history. While established to serve a common purpose, their individual goals have often caused clashes of pride. Under the spirit of renewed purpose that currently prevails, the Orders are cooperating at a level never seen before. It is hoped relationships stay that way as the Orders expand and mature once again.

## **Templars**

The Hospitallers and Knights Templar have had a difficult past -- a fact unfortunately reflected in modern operations. A suspicion still lingers among the Knights of the Temple that the Hospital was more than a little involved in the conspiracy to overthrow the Order in the early 14th century. The fact that no similar charges were laid against the Hospitallers and that most Templar property was quickly handed over to it is still a cause of resentment. This, combined with the traditional sense of competition between the two oldest and largest Militant Orders, still "colours" their relationship. In modern times this division is embodied in the differing senses of religion: the Hospitallers maintain a strict observance of traditional ways while the Temple follows an almost heretical approach of tolerance and individual determination. The Templar lifestyle, while devout, is by no means monastic. In times of weakness, Knights of St. John have been known to heap scorn on their "lax" counterparts. The Sovereign Militant Order feels the Grand Master of the Temple is less than fully forthcoming about his true intentions, knowledge and strength. But no request for assistance or support has yet been turned down.

## **Teutonic Knights**

Little rivalry mars the history of the Hospital and the Teutonic Knights. Each Order had its own separate arena of operations: mainly Rhodes and Poland, preventing their purposes from clashing. In fact, these two Orders possibly have the strongest relationship of the three. The Teutonic Knights are still largely adherent to their traditional ways, though reform processes are under way. The cooperation between the Deutchritter and the Hospitaller Bailiwick of Brandenburg during World War II has left a deep respect between many senior knights -- as well as the common sense of loss for those executed under Adolf Hitler. The Hospitallers often rely upon Teutonic combat teams to supplement their own forces in more hostile regions.

## **Order Personalities**

*"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."*

-- Edmund Burke, 1729-97.

### **Grand Master Fra Andrew Bertie**

Fra Andrew was elected as the first English Grand Master of the Order for seven centuries in 1988. One of seven British Knights of Justice, Fra Andrew has gained much popularity among the Italian and English publics as the "crusader pope." Among his achievements has been the consolidation of the Order's renewed militant activities and the expansion of scientific research into the nature of its supernatural enemies. But most of the Grand Master's time is necessarily taken up with the more public face of the Order of St. John -- such as matters of state, diplomatic negotiations for its charity services and coordination of relief efforts. His presence is also often required in Rome as a papal advisor and delegate to cardinal committees.

His reign has been one of firm conservatism, adhering to the tried and true ways of the Rule and Customs - - but understanding enough to accept the necessary changes within the Order that reflect the world about it.

### **Grand Marshal Juan Cerda**

Formerly the deputy director of French Military Counter-Intelligence, Juan Cerda has held a long career in the Order's own espionage service. This background has had a heavy influence on the Order's militant activities. Most surgical strikes and cleansing actions have been closely tied to espionage related missions. Fra Cerda is fully aware that simply hacking off a vampire's head is not a total solution. First, the creature's far reaching power structure must be dismantled and its evil influence lanced from society before it is itself destroyed. Otherwise, the reins are simply left behind for another to pick up. The Grand Marshal has created a small but highly efficient core of knights-combatant. The only major criticism raised against his style is that of over-reliance upon the Order's affiliate members. Concern is often raised that these people, including pilots, diplomats and bankers, are not reliable enough to entrust with the fate of a knight-combatant. But Fra Cerda remains unconcerned -- maintaining faith in the abilities of the Order's counter-intelligence operatives to expose any such bad seeds.

### **Grand Commander Martin Kalvern**

One of the first Americans to gain a significant rank within the Sovereign Militant Order, Fra Kalvern has brought the radical and direct approach of his countrymen to the position of Grand Commander. Fra Kalvern knows what he is talking about, and doesn't attempt to hide it. When it comes to matters of medical policy, emergency relief requirements and operation of the Order's hospitals, his actions are fast and to the point. While his techniques often upset the sentiments of staid European conservatives who believe in a more subtle approach to such issues, he is recognised as at least being efficient. However, his direct manner has often brought him in conflict with Fra Cerda. Fra Kalvern does not like the idea of medicos and relief teams "piggy-backing" knights. His outspoken belief is that such actions endanger the Order's reputation. The situation has degenerated into a power-play between the two men, with one citing military imperatives and the other medical privilege. While the Order's operations have not yet been severely affected by this conflict, many fear the argument will soon get out of hand.

### **Dame Duanne Vilelle**

The prioress of the Order's nuns and decorated Dame of Devotion, Mother Vilelle is a stoic believer in the clear definitions between male and female responsibilities within the Catholic Church. No sister dares whisper of inequality and unfairness under her stern leadership.

## Femmes Fatale

*"Guard yourself at night time, against the evil women, who, completely enveloped in their mantles and filling all the streets, pursue their abominable trade of allurements, importuning the passers-by while seeking to cloak their sins under pretext of begging alms."*

-- Knight of Justice Camillo Spreti to a nephew who had just become a novice in Malta.

Celibacy is not an easy vow to uphold. It goes against all earthy desires. But a knight becomes wedded to the Church when he takes his monastic vows. Celibacy is a mark of commitment -- a sacrifice made to demonstrate a knight's devotion to their cause.

Among knights it has an added advantage: no mourning widows upon their deaths. Such a lack of emotional ties also promotes courage and boldness among the brethren.

But celibacy is a weak link in the chain of a knight's vows. The vow of obedience can be upheld, even grudgingly. The vow of poverty is acceptable as all the knight's basic material needs are met by the order. But maintaining chastity is reliant purely upon the individual's willpower and devotion.

The Amazons were deliberately brought in by the Camarilla to exploit this weakness. Young novices, generally in their late teens, naturally found conventual life difficult. With the hormones of puberty still boiling in their veins, the attraction of a beautiful woman was almost magnetic. However, as all knights and novices took on their vows voluntarily, such temptation was more of a torment than a failing.

Unless it was encouraged.

The finely honed arts of allurements and arousal were brought to bear upon the knights of Malta with devastating effect. The powers of Ekstasis and Succubae provoked many a jealous duel to the death, encouraged broken vows and even dealt in death themselves when the opportunity arose. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned!

## Chapter Six: Hospitaller Characterisation

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand,  
Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the  
foundation of the world:*

*For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat:*

*I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:*

*I was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

*Naked, and ye clothed me:*

*I was sick, and ye visited me:*

*I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying,  
Lord, when saw we thee hungered, and fed thee?  
or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

*When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in?  
or naked, and clothed thee?*

*Or when saw we thee sick,  
or in prison, and came unto thee?  
And the King shall answer and say unto them,  
Verily I say unto you,  
Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these,  
my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*  
-- Matthew 25: 34-40

## **Stereotype**

### **Historical**

The knights of the Hospital were a strange hybrid of warrior, medic and monk -- unique within Christendom. The original knightly members that joined after the First Crusade were probably attracted to the idea of serving the innocent and unwell in God's own land. Treating the sick as though they were Christ was considered as holy an act as tending Christ himself. It was a sure path to salvation. But the younger sons of Dukes and Barons spent all their lives learning about the noble art of war. It was difficult to put aside their knightly profession completely. This restless few soon discovered a new way to serve their God. Surely, preventing the poor from harm was equally as pious as tending them afterwards? By guarding the pilgrims, were knights not guarding God himself?

The Hospitallers took this logic one step further than the Templars. Fighting for the innocent was not an end unto itself. Great works of charity were to set the Hospitallers apart, and helped attract those of a more pious nature.

Perhaps this is why the Hospitallers was the only Order to have any of its members achieve Sainthood.

### **Modern**

The fundamental changes within society that mark the 20th and 21st centuries has also had an impact upon the make-up of the Order of St. John. Nobility is no longer considered a major definition within society. But certain classes of the Order remain eligible only to those with such a heritage. Nor are there younger sons of Dukes and Barons unlikely to inherit the land necessary for them to continue their knightly profession.

Instead, the modern recruits of the Hospitallers are drawn from a diverse range of civilian backgrounds. Be they common or noble, many have experience first hand the power of evil that infests this world. Many priests who become convinced that the threat of vampirism must be dealt with join the Order instead of the Inquisition because of its more humanitarian stance. Many doctors and social workers have found their way into the ranks of the militant monks -- often due to their experiences as part of St. John relief efforts in lands such as Somalia, the Middle East, Central America and Eastern Europe.

These new knights have strong personal motivations to serve God and mankind -- so much so that they are prepared to learn the art of war to prolong the survival of God's peace.

Putting aside the scalpel for the sword is not an easy task. Learning combat skills and attaining the degrees of fitness necessary takes time. As a result, the members of the Hospitallers tend to be older than the other Orders, but tend to hold more formal training and degrees from their civilian lives.

Like the knights of old, the Hospitallers emphasis on charity and humanitarian motives tends to attract a much more orthodox and caring class of recruit than the other Orders.

The perspective of these knights of St. John is also different. The emphasis is not upon ridding the world of the supernatural, but of protecting the innocent. Often this can result in the appearance that the Hospitallers are not as committed to the Cainite Crusade as the Templars and Teutones. But these perceptions are wrong.

Caring for the sick, providing for the destitute and comforting those in despair is what makes God's word worthwhile. Abandoning these crowning ideals for the sake of pursuing spawn of the devil is considered repugnant.

People come first.

Demons come last.

## **Character Class**

Because the Sovereign Order of Malta is both a humanitarian agency and a Militant Order, the rank structure is somewhat complicated. It is possible to be a devoted Knight of Justice, without any militant role. It is also possible to be a simple Donat of Devotion, wielding a sword in the Cainite Crusade.

### **Associate**

Knights of Grace and Devotion hold an honorary office, with little other than a vow to respect the Order and its policies. Other associates include noble Donats of Justice and commoners with the title Donats of Devotion. Attributes 6/4/3, Abilities 11/7/4, Backgrounds 5, Freebie 21, Virtues 7.

### **Novice**

The term Novice is a broad one for the Order of St. John. It includes several classes of member, both militant and charitous. It includes Knights of Grace and Devotion and Knights of Honour and Devotion. Attributes 6/4/3, Abilities 13/9/7, Background 6, Faith 1\*, Freebie 24, Virtues 7.

### **Knight**

The base rank of knight covers several classes of militant and humanitarian members within the Sovereign Order. These include the Knights of Justice, Knights of Obedience and the Ad Honorum (sergeants). Attributes 7/5/4, Abilities 19/15/11, Background 7, Faith 5\*, Freebie 27, Virtues 9.

## **Training**

Hospitallers generally enter the Order after achieving well respected positions within civilian life. This means many members are well versed in medicine, bureaucracy, theology, politics and/or science. The Order seeks to capitalise upon existing knowledge and skills through providing further training in related areas. Almost all new novices must be introduced into the world of supernatural warfare. The Order has several training facilities in its palace outside of Rome and under the headquarters in Malta.

However, most advanced training is done under the auspices of their Teutonic brothers at Marienburg castle -- an aptly remote and excellently equipped training ground.

To gain competency, a Knight must be trained in either a Major Knowledge/Skill to the level of five dots, or trained in two minor Special Skills to a level of four each.

All Knights must also be fluent in Latin and have demonstrated a clear devotion to their Code of Honour.

## Religious Powers

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord,  
and in the power of his might.  
Put on the whole armour of God,  
that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.  
For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,  
but against principalities, against powers,  
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,  
against spiritual wickedness in high places.*  
-- Ephesians 6: 10-12

## The Powers of Faith

Faith has a multitude of effects, even at the lowest levels. At its minimum it can be added to a character's Willpower and Virtue Rolls. In times of great need, if a character is entirely without Willpower points, then Faith points may be substituted.

Faith points that are lost in this manner are regained by simple acts of devotion. If the use of Faith as Willpower was successful, then lost Faith should be returned as easily as Willpower. If the use of Faith was a failure, then it should require more acts of devotion on the part of the character to regain it.

## Penance

These acts of devotion are examples of what can be done to restore an individual's Faith. Always guided by the tenets of one religion, the common theme is one of self-sacrifice and contemplation.

Novenna: Utterance of a series of prayers for nine days in a row.

Meditation: Reading a chapter from the Gospels and meditating on its meaning and importance for an afternoon.

Almsgiving: Donating personal monies, time or skills to a charitable service.

Eucharist: Daily attendance in the Divine Liturgy for a week.

Confessional: Taking the time to consider and repent one's sins in a procedure accepted by their religious beliefs.

Flagellation: Generally only applicable for Medieval times, though some modern strict-observance monks continue the practice.

## Hospitaller Hierarchy of Sins

Storytellers may ask for a conscience roll based upon actions performed by a character during an encounter. Determine a difficulty rating based on the situation. But the standard is usually a 6. The following modifiers apply.

- 2 An innocent is endangered as a result.
- 1 Foe attacks without provocation
- 1 Foe displays inhuman powers
- 1 Foe is proven to be immoral
- +1 Foe engages in kind-hearted activities
- +2 Foe does not act at all in self defence

Conscience rolls should become a common event in Church Knight games. Was a little bit of sadistic pleasure involved? Was revenge too strong a motive? Was there really a better way out of the situation?

## Pooling Faith

Chaplains can be the recipients of the combined Faith of those joining with him/her in a prayer or ritual. Some GM's may also allow those of Preceptor rank or higher to focus such a pool.

If the Faithful do choose to act in concert, all participants must be of the same religious tradition. This includes all those who call their religion Christian. But a Jew and a Christian cannot pool. Those who pool their Faith operate under the Faith rating of the member with the highest Faith rating, plus one level of Faith per participant.

This means that a band of knights with one chaplain (Faith 6) and three knight-sergeants (Faith 5) do not add up to a total of 21 Faith. The correct "pooled" Faith is 9. The roll is conducted by each player (the Chaplain rolls 6 die, each knight-sergeant 1).

This "pooled" Faith can be used for basic Faith actions, Beatific related powers and miracles. It cannot be used for Gifts or Prayers. Militant Order Rituals involve a different form of pooling Faith. Some Storytellers may wish to limit pooled Faith. Particularly for Militiae Christi, where there should be plenty of Faith present anyway.

One option is to simply limit pooled Faith to the action of requesting a miracle. Otherwise, a cap on the total amount of Faith that can be pooled can be put in place. Since Faith 10 is the highest attainable, perhaps no pool should exceed this.

## Holy Ground

A mortal with Faith on Holy Ground can add the site's Faith rating to their own. This adds to all basic, Beatific and Miracle rolls. It also adds to the Faith component of Gift, Prayer and Ritual Rolls. But it has no effect upon piety checks, either positive or negative. Holy Ground Faith levels do not allow a knight to attain the powers associated with higher levels of Faith.

Holy Ground also has effects upon supernaturals.

**Vampires:** Holy Ground is inherently repulsive to a vampire. It can resist a vampire's presence on its own merit, or supplement the powers of any of the Faithful attempting to defend the site. This works the same way as outlined earlier under the Faith section. Vampires who fail on their Courage roll to counter the repelling influence of Holy Ground must attempt to get out of its radius as quickly as possible. A botch on the Courage roll results in a derangement. If a vampire has True Faith, he can enter the site without a



problem. But only a non-supernatural will still benefit from the power of Holy Ground if the vampire is exposed.

**Werewolves:** One major complication is caused by Holy Ground for shapechangers. When attempting to Rage, their difficulty is increased by the Holy Ground's Faith Rating. Umbral difficulties also increase according to the Faith level.

**Mages:** Holy Ground does not cause any particular direct difficulty for mages. However, Holy Ground does have its own countermagick dice pool equal to that of the Faith Level. This can also be added to the countermagick ability of a Knight or Novice.

**Wraiths:** Wraiths which are skinriding a mortal will have to make a Willpower roll, or expend a Willpower point, for every turn (difficulty the Holy Ground's Faith rating) on that site. It is also easier to ward Holy Ground than most other sites. Add the Faith of the site to the Knights Faith and Willpower ratings when establishing such a Ward.

**Demons:** Holy Ground is most inhospitable to demons and other infernal creatures. Any such creature wishing to enter Holy Ground must make a Willpower roll (Difficulty of 6 + the site's rating: maximum 9) each turn it is there. Even if successful, the Holy Ground's Faith rating must be subtracted from every dice action used by the demon.

## **Re-Consecrating Desecrated Ground**

Holy Ground can become "spoiled" through blasphemy and violence. This can vary from simple graffiti through to rape and occult rituals. While the ground is still considered Holy, it has most certainly been desecrated -- reducing any benefit the ground may have offered the Faithful. The loss in rank of the Holy Ground should be proportionate to the act committed. The Storyteller can roll the site's Faith with the following difficulties:

- 6 Minor blasphemy (graffiti)
- 7 Major blasphemy (serious damage)
- 8 Rape or Murder
- 9 Demonic summoning

If the roll is a success then no Faith is lost. If the roll is a failure, subtract one Faith for minor blasphemy, 2 for major blasphemy, 3 for rape or murder and four for demonic summoning. Exceeding the site's Faith rating does not produce evil ground. A botch causes total loss of the site's Faith rating.

Reconsecration involves a Chaplain conducting purification prayers and rituals on the Holy Ground. This spurrs the Ground to re-roll its remaining Faith, with the number of successes restoring lost levels. For sites that have lost all Faith, the rituals must involve one week of prayers and rituals, with the Chaplain rolling their own Faith to restore the ground's lost levels.

## **Conventual Chaplains**

One often forgotten component of the Militant Orders is the role of Chaplain. Each Order has been granted the extraordinary right to have their own priests -- chaplains initiated into the secrets of their particular Rule.

These chaplains serve an important purpose: ensuring the spiritual well-being of the Knights and Novices as they fight eternal evil. They understand the pressures and trials that Knights of Christ must face. Thus, in the confessional and on the pulpit, they know what solice the soul of their unique congregation requires.

**Dominus Vobiscum:** Chaplains, as with most priests, are permitted to pass blessings upon another character -- even if that character does not have Faith. Hospitaller priests, following the Catholic Tradition, will usually consist of a sign of the cross being gestured above the person as a short prayer is uttered.

System: Roll Faith (Difficulty 8)

#### Successes Result

- 1 The character feels better, but nothing else happens.
- 2 A temporary Willpower point is gained.
- 3 A temporary Willpower point is granted, as is one additional die on any one Ability roll made.
- 4 A temporary Willpower point is granted along with two additional dice on any one Dodge or Soak that must be made.
- 5 A temporary Willpower point is granted, plus three additional dice on one upcoming Dodge or Soak.

### Via Medicamenti

This ritual is one commonly found among the Conventual Chaplains of the Hospitallers. Known as "The Way of Remedy," this ritual combines with medical knowledge to knit bones, stop bleeding and actually reverse serious wounds. However, supernatural causes of aggravated wounds cannot be healed in this fashion.

While the knights of many Orders have means to heal themselves under extreme circumstances, this is a much gentler and less demanding method.

System: Roll Manipulation + Intuition.

Cost: One willpower point per ailment.

- \* You can soothe minor pains.
- \*\* Sprains and minor infections heal quickly. Those Bruised, Hurt or Injured heal twice as quickly.
- \*\*\* All injuries up to Crippled heal twice as fast. You can temporarily lessen the dice penalties by one level for damage through to Crippled. Incapacitated characters can get to their feet and move. The wounds still require treatment, though.
- \*\*\*\* You can heal chronic diseases such as arthritis, but it takes time and effort. Even Incapacitated characters will heal twice as fast as normal, and you touch banishes all but the worst pain.
- \*\*\*\*\* You can heal even deadly conditions such as spinal cancer, but it takes a lot out of you and requires weeks of treatment. Broken bones and major trauma can be healed within one week.

### Holy Water

Holy water is simply relatively clean water, usually from a spring or well. This water is usually placed in a holy reliquary next to a baptismal font. Historically, this holy water was freely available for any members of a parish to use. In modern times, it is not as freely available.

Water blessed by any priest -- even without True Faith -- will have a Faith rating of 1. If blessed by a bishop, or blessed on a major holy site, the water will have Faith of 2.

Water blessed by a priest with True Faith will gain a Faith rating equal to that of 1 point for every 2 the priest possesses. Holy water does not act like a holy relic: its Faith rating does not supplement that of its bearer.

Holy water remains "fresh" for about a month on holy ground and deteriorates faster elsewhere (2 weeks in normal terrain, days on "tainted" ground).

#### Faith Effect

- \* Causes discomfort to supernaturals, noticed by a mortal making a Perception + Empathy roll, difficulty of target's Willpower.
- \*\* Can inflict aggravated damage equal to the water's Faith rating.
- \*\*\* An unbroken line of holy water of this value can form a barrier against all manner of dark creatures. Opponents must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 10) to step over this barrier.
- \*\*\*\* The presence of this water will affect ghouls and even humans of low humanity.
- \*\*\*\*\* When sprinkled about, the holy water forms a "safe zone" from supernatural powers (immune to Presence, Dominate, Obfuscate etc). However, creatures can use powers that affect themselves (Fortitude, Potence etc). The effect is only for one day and one night.

### Graal Water

This is a form of holy water that has its powers specifically focussed on healing. While inherently holy, the water does not have the same properties as holy water. Its healing properties are dramatically effective, however.

Use the wielder's Faith + Medicine (difficulty 6 for normal damage, 9 for aggravated). Successes equal levels healed.

The Faith rating of Graal water is affected in the same manner as holy water (graal water Faith = Faith of maker etc). It also deteriorates, though at half the rate of holy water. Its properties also vary with Faith rating:

Faith	Properties
*+	Standard roll.
*****	-1 for normal difficulty.
*****	-1 for aggravated difficulty.
*****	-2 for normal difficulty.
*****	-2 for both normal and aggravated.

Graal water has an opposite effect upon the supernatural "enemies" of the Church. Instead of raising Health Levels, it will lower them.

### Relics

Almost 2000 years of history has caused the Church to amass a vast array of relics associated with its greatest and finest members. It is not the relic itself that generates its power: but the Faith of those who believe in its association with the powers of good. Some of these relics are particularly useful in the Order's pursuit of the Cainite Crusade.

Relics were particularly important during the Middle Ages. To have something associated with the Saints was to ease one's own path to heaven. Almost every noble spent great portions of their treasuries attaining such dubious relics upon the conquest of the Holy Land. Whether or not it is truly associated with what it is said to be, it is the belief of the masses that counts. For example, scientists have produced some questionable evidence that the Shroud of Turin is a Middle Ages forgery. Whether it is genuine or fake

makes no difference. Because people have and still do believe in it, its Faith rating remains at 6. Unfortunately, the same applies to pagan idols. Statues of Baal -- dormant for centuries -- can still contain the Faith of their worshippers.

**The Relic:** Most relics are associated with the Saints. Only the most holy of relics are associated with Christ himself. These often take the form of a mummified portion of the Saint's body, such as a fingerbone (or hand, in the case of St. John). Others are pieces of personal property owned by a Saint, such as his sword, robes, cross or rings. The most holy of relics are those associated with the One True Cross.

**The Reliquary:** Holy objects such as bones or fragments are used to contain and protect the relic. It is often a simple box, or equally as often an ornate and bejeweled container. Many reliquaries are unportable because of their size and weight. Others are simply too fragile, risking damage to the relic inside. Some, such as Crusader Swords, are designed to carry the relic safely into battle.

**The Power of Relics:** Relics have a permanent Faith Rating, much like Holy Ground. It supplements the Faith of a Knight or Chaplain, with the added benefit of allowing these faithful the use of abilities associated with that higher ranking. Most relics with a militant history, such as a dagger or sword, can inflict aggravated damage. Other relics have strange and inexplicable powers, often mimicking those associated with its original owner. Supernaturals directly touching a relic must soak aggravated damage (on the relic's Faith roll). Only a Strength roll (diff 8) with 5 successes can destroy a relic.

## Holy Relics

St. John the Baptist was adopted as the patron of the Order of the Hospital, and his feast-day became the most solemn festival in their calendar. The Hospitallers even went to the extent of purchasing his mummified arm from the Ottoman Emperor Bajazet to become their most treasured relic. It survives even today.

Shortly after the Knights of St. John were repulsed from the Holy Land, Dieudonne de Gozon slew an incarnation of Satan himself: a dragon. Combining his faith with his intelligence and creativity, he succeeded where many other knights had failed. His sword is preserved as an icon to the deed that earned him the title Dragonslayer.

The seemingly miraculous successful defence of Rhodes in 1479 by Grand Master d'Aubusson gave rise to another notable relic for the Order. The battered armour he wore during his inspired last stand -- and during which angels are said to have come out of the setting sun to repulse the Turks from the breached walls -- is a treasured icon to this glorious time.

When the Hospitallers were forced out of Rhodes they safely took with them their precious icon of Our Lady of Phlermo and the hand of St. John the baptist. The symbolic key to the gates of Rhodes was also taken -- a final act of defiance in the face of the victorious Suleiman. This icon was taken to Russia after the fall of Malta, and then to Yugoslavia after the 1917 revolution. It is now lost and the subject of several search teams.

Reverence is also placed in the formal armour of Grand Master La Valette who led the vastly outnumbered knights in a victorious defence of their newly established base on Malta. This armour has been worn by succeeding Grand Masters in times of great need in an attempt to become associated with his military genius.

## Hospitaller Gifts & Prayers

*Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

-- Ephesians 6: 13-17

## Gifts

These are abilities that Knights are able to call upon at any time, instantaneously. They are generally boons which allow the Knight to be aware of and deal with the supernatural forces of Darkness. Gifts apply to all members of the Militant Orders at all times. Any member, be he novice or knight, is given these abilities as a sign of Gods favour. The strength of many abilities do vary with Faith, and others may only be granted with particular Faith ratings. But they are still Gifts. Expenditure of Grace Points is often required -- though not always. Sometimes the warrior's Faith is all that he needs to empower his Will or Word with an ability. These are the only supernatural powers that a Novice has access to. Only Investiture as a Knight gives a character the status to learn the Prayers and Rituals. All of the powers outlined under White Wolf's Faith Table system are regarded as Gifts. Gifts are used at will, and only one Gifts can be used per turn.

The \* rating before a Gift, Prayer or Ritual designates the number of Faith Levels required before that Holy Power becomes available. The numerical rating (say, 7) specifies what number of Grace Points must be expended to initiate the Power.

**Panacea:** The knight with this training can heal and help others with their powers. Many knights believe the healing properties of Panacea are in a sense "forgiveness" to the body for its wrongs, allowing it to heal, but all know how useful it is. Each level of Faith increases the strength of Panacea, thus gives the knight a new healing ability:

\*\*\* Sense Health: The knight can, by rolling Perception + Empathy, sense the condition of anyone they wish. This gives the character a sense of their current health level, any diseases, poisons or taint at work, etc. Additionally, the knights can sense supernaturals with this ability -- they can sense the thundering vitality of a garou, the near-death of a Life-Stealer, the void of a Ghost, etc.

\*\*\*\* Give Strength: By laying on hands, the knight is able to impart his strength to others, allowing a weakened warrior to fight on. The knight can give any of their Grace or Willpower points to another, no more than his Faith each turn. Note that the other still rolls against the same permanent Grace and Willpower scores he always had, they simply have more points to spend. \*\*\*\*\* Absorb Wounds: The knight is able to absorb the wounds of another into himself. He rolls Panacea + Empathy, and each success draws one damage level into his own body. The knight can say ahead of time that he will limit how much he will absorb, but he will always absorb aggravated levels first.

\* **Scriptus:** (1 Grace) This conveys the ability to read at an increased rate due to specifically heightened abilities. The rate at which printed matter can be read is 25 pages per turn. This rate cannot be increased.

\*\* **Memorise:** (4 Grace) The ability to memorise text to the point of recitation can be extremely valuable for covert operations and special missions. It costs one point of Willpower to invoke this power and is limited to the supernatural memorisation of only one piece of work at a time. Success is based on a Will+Int roll:

- 1 success: 15 pages of text
- 2 successes: 50 pages of text
- 3 successes: 100 pages of text
- 4 successes: 500 pages of text

5 successes: 1000 pages of text

\*\*\* **Intervene:** (3 Grace) The character has the ability to intervene in an aspect of a subject's life. A wayward son who is drinking too much can be spoken to -- and he will listen! The final act of will remains the subject's.

System: Roll Manipulation + Empathy against the target's Willpower.

\*\* **Glow of the Kindred:** (3 Grace) All Kindred within the character's line of sight glow with a pale light.

System: Upon concentration, Roll Perception + Empathy against a difficulty of 7. Compare the number of successes to any level of Obfuscate present to determine if it is penetrated -- ie 3 successes on the roll allows the character to see through Obfuscate 3.

\*\*\*\* **Fear of God:** (5 Grace) This power allows the Knight to paralyse a single target with overwhelming fear. The force of the Knight's Faith projects a pervading and crippling sense of nameless dread upon the target.

System: By spending 6 Grace Points, the user can paralyse another by rolling Charisma + Intimidation against a Difficulty of the target's current Willpower. The number of successes attained on this roll determines the number of turns that the target is immobilised. The target is allowed to spend a temporary Willpower point to gain a Courage roll to throw off the fear (Difficulty 6), with each success shortening the duration of the paralysis by one turn. Of course, breaking free of this effect in this way, even if attempted immediately will cause the target to expend his action. By raising the Difficulty to the Willpower of the strongest-willed victim +1 per additional target, the Knight can attempt to affect multiple targets with this power, although the successes must be divided amongst those affected (in any way the Kindred sees fit). With the increased difficulty reducing the number of successes overall and the dividing of successes, this option is not particularly common.

\*\*\*\*\* **Voice of Command:** (6 Grace) By making a Willpower roll, difficulty of the opponent's Willpower, the knight can command a target to perform one non-violent action. This command must be simple, clear, and direct, and it must be an action that the target is capable of performing (you can't command a Garou to fly if he has no wings, for instance). The victim must also be able to hear and understand the command. Once the action is performed, the victim is free. Commands which would require more than one action, like, "Pull out your klaive and attack your friend," would fail -- the victim would pull his klaive, but then be free to use it on whomever he pleased (the knight, for instance). The number of successes determines exactly what the knight can command. This Gift can only be used once on each opponent per scene, and its exact effects are up to the Storyteller.

## Prayers

Sacred formalised beseechments of God's intervention on this earth. Each of these Holy Prayers call for a specific power. If the supplicant has a great enough Faith, sufficient Grace Points and their need is just and true, then the Prayer will be answered and the Blessing granted. Only one Prayer can be used per turn, with no Gifts (even with God's Speed). Prayers are only available to Invested knights of the Orders. Novices are restricted to the Gifts.

**Healing Hands:** (see details). This is an extremely important blessing, considering knights and novices are mortals. While the blessings of God's Gifts and Prayers assist in humanity's combat against the Kindred, it does not remove their mortality. With the expenditure of One Willpower a knight may heal health levels of suitable mortals. Those with low humanities, who have been excommunicated or are otherwise condemned by god will receive no benefit from the act -- though the knight will still lose the appointed number of Grace Points. Healing Hands cannot be used more than once per day, per wound.

\*\*\*\*\*: Raise the health level of a mortal by one level per 2 Grace Points expended. One Willpower point must be expended per use.

\*\*\*\*\*: Raise the health level of a mortal by one level per 1 Grace Point expended, restore one level of aggravated wounds per 2 Grace Points. One Willpower point must be expended per use.

\*\*\*\*\* **Contemplation:** (1 Grace) The knight's training has progressed so far as to be able to harness the hidden depths of his soul, as well as speed up its recovery after exertion. The knight must succeed in making a Wits + Self Control roll in order to enter the contemplative state. Once there, the knight can recover spent Willpower. The knight must make a Wits + Theology roll, against a difficulty of 7 (+/- for the location: ie +2 for alongside a highway, while -2 if alone in a cathedral), with each success indicating a recovered Willpower. The Willpower is recovered at the rate of one point per fifteen minutes. If not enough time is spent in contemplation, or the knight is interrupted, the remaining successes are lost. The knight can never exceed his Willpower rating by use of this Prayer.

\*\*\*\*\* **Sense The Sin:** (3 Grace) By means of this power, the knight can learn about the targets personal failings and weaknesses, if any. Such things as derangements, low Willpower, Virtues or Humanity, addictions or compulsions are revealed by this power. Note that this power cannot reveal any knowledge the target may have, such as a crime committed, unless it is connected to a consistent flaw, such as kleptomania.

System: The knight makes a Perception + Empathy roll, difficulty of the target's Humanity/Path. The number of successes determines how much information is gained, and how accurate it is.

\*\*\*\*\* **Forge Bonds:** (7 Grace) Strengthens existing positive bonds (love, friendship) and causes those who are neutral to be better disposed to those around them.

System: The roll is made using Charisma + Empathy. The number of successes indicate how long the effect lasts. It will make enemies neutral and open to diplomacy.

\*\*\*\*\* **Touch of God:** (4 Grace) Touching a target and spending a Willpower point duplicates the effects of staking. The target has one chance to resist by rolling Fortitude at a difficulty of the Knight's Willpower; failure or botch indicates that the target is immobilised as if staked. In order to maintain this state the Knight must remain in contact and spend one Willpower point per minute.

\*\*\*\*\* **Harrowing Conscience:** (5 Grace) By the use of this prayer a Knight may raise a subject's Humanity by forcing them to confront their sins. The Target of the prayer is put into a stupor, his mind wandering in a dreamscape. The Target's sins personify themselves as demons in this dream world, attacking and tormenting him -- exposing the horror of his past actions. If the Target is able to emerge victorious from this dream conflict, one point of Humanity can be restored. If the Target fails, a further point is lost.

System: The Knight must touch the Target, using his Humanity + Faith versus their Target's Willpower. The number of successes equals the number of "humanity checks" the Target must make. Upon the action, the Target enters a dream state and must endure a heightened conscience. To determine the effects of his dream conscience, the Target must make a Perception + Conscience roll against a difficulty of his Humanity subtracted from 10. The number of Perception + Conscience rolls made is determined by the number of successes the Knight made. Each "successful" role on behalf of the Target increases his Humanity by 1.

\*\*\*\*\* **Know Thine Enemy:** (7 Grace) This allows the Knight to know merits and flaws, clan, generation, approximate skills talents, disciplines, approximate bloodpool, etc of an opponent. Roll Perception+Occult, target 7. The number of successes indicated amount and specificity of information. Opponents' Obfuscate ratings adds to the difficulty.

\*\*\*\*\* **Curse of Michael:** (Piety Point) By touching a single target and spending a Piety and a Willpower point, the Knight may dampen the use of a specified Discipline. For the remainder of the night, the target may not use one Discipline of the Knight's choosing. Note that this power does not grant knowledge beforehand of which, if any, Disciplines the target possesses.