



AAIDD Italy Delegation 2023

Primer on the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of
Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta



Order of Malta

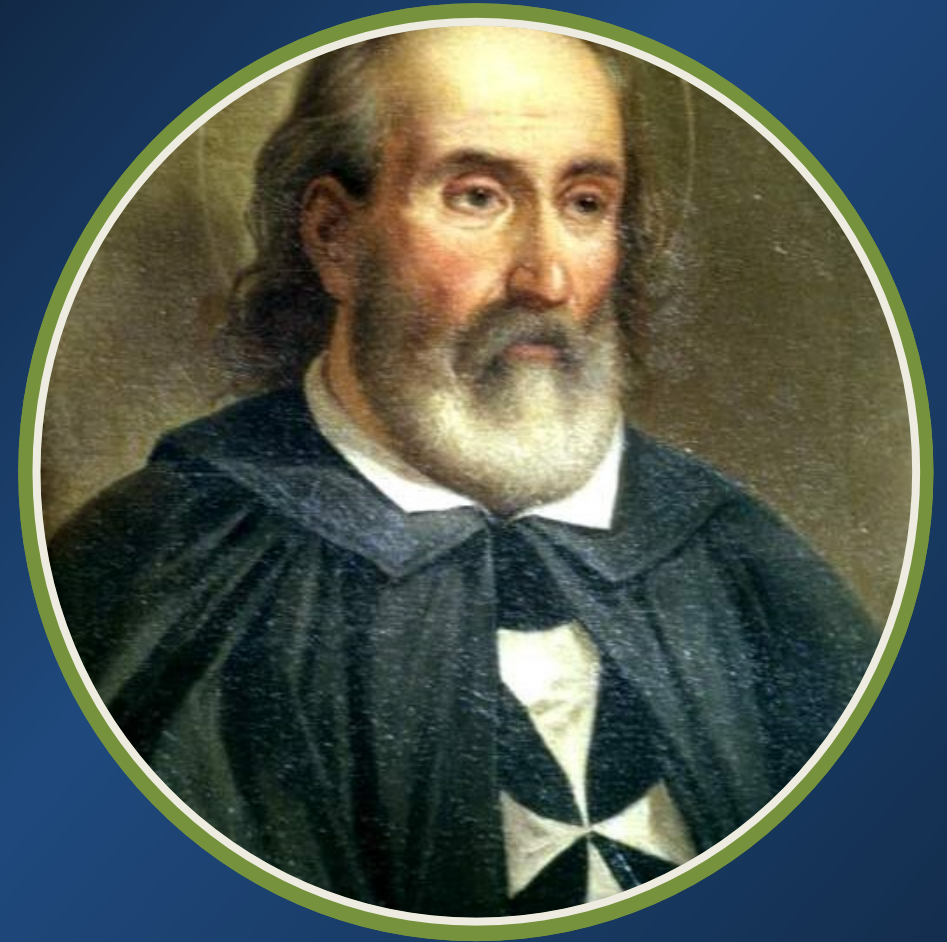
- The Order of Malta is a lay religious Order of the Catholic Church with 14,000 members and 80,000 volunteers across the world headed by a Prince and Grand Master who governs the Order from Rome, both as a sovereign and as a religious leader.
- The Order was founded over 900 years ago by Blessed Gérard, a monk and knight, who gathered a group of men and women together to commit themselves to the assistance of the poor and the sick, and to defend and to give witness to the Catholic faith.



History of the Order

Blessed Gérard

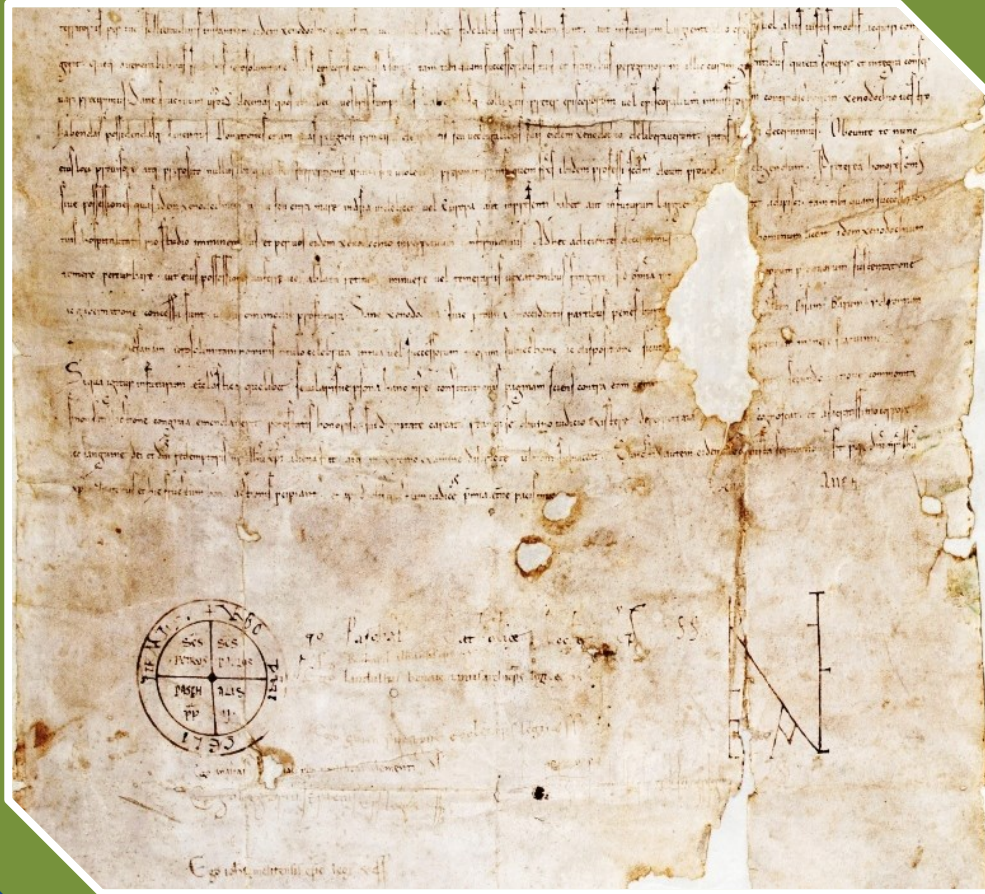
- Blessed Gérard established a hospital in Jerusalem in about 1048 A.D. to care for sick pilgrims in the Holy Lands.
- That care was extended to wounded soldiers on both sides during the Crusades.
- Since that time, members of the Order have committed themselves to grow spiritually by following the path set by its founder.
- While the Order's original members formed a community around Blessed Gérard, the current Knights and Dames live in a "virtual community" where each member lives out the Beatitudes by "serving our Lords, the sick and the poor" in his or her home environment.



Blessed Gérard Sasso

Worldwide Reach

- As a sovereign entity (since an 1113 Papal Bull), the Order of Malta today has diplomatic relations with over 100 countries, has a permanent observer mission to the United Nations, and delegations to numerous international humanitarian organizations.
- As a service organization, the Order operates multiple programs across the globe, including a world-class maternity hospital in Bethlehem, serving Christian and Muslim women who cannot afford proper care.
- Through its relief arm, Malteser International, it provides on-the-scene help in disaster and war-torn areas around the world.



1113: *Pie postulatio voluntatis*

English: *The Most Pious Request*



SMOM desk at UN, passport, and coins

Sovereign

- The Order's neutrality allows it to offer a 'back channel' for diplomatic situations so that humanitarian needs are met in conflict zone or politically tense locales.
- Enters into treaties with the countries that formally recognize its status and agreements with other nations and organizations.
- Issues passports, coins (scudo) and postage stamps.
- Maintains embassies with diplomatic corps in other countries.

...of Jerusalem, Rhodes and of Malta...

- The full formal name: The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta gives the key elements of the Order, from our founding status to our patron saint to key points in history:



1130
Granted new
Coat of Arms by
Pope Innocent II

1310
Acquired
Rhodes as new
headquarters



1522
Lost **Siege of Rhodes** and
moved to Sicily

1048
Founded in
Jerusalem
by **Gérard**

1113
Recognized as
Sovereign by
Pope Paschal II



1291
Fall of Jerusalem

1312
Knight Templar
Suppressed by
Pope Clement V





1565
Great Siege of Malta
by **Suleiman the Magnificent** repelled



1607
Grandmasters
granted title
Prince of Holy Roman Empire

1798
Lost **Malta** to
Napoleon; GM
resigns

1530
Granted **Malta, Gozo,**
and **Tripoli** by **Holy Roman Emperor Charles V** for annual fee
of one **Maltese Falcon**



1571
Battle of Lepanto



1806
Sweden offers
Island of **Gotland**
but claim to Malta
would be lost

1834
Acquired new
headquarters in
Rome

1961
Constitutional
Charter approved

2022
Constitution
revised

1799
Russian Emperor Paul I
elected GM



1810
Russian Emperor Alexander I
returns GM

1879
Office of
Prince & GM
fully restored



1997
Constitution
revised

Langues

- In the early 14th century, with the acquisition of Rhodes and other islands of the archipelago, the Order of St. John took on the features of a State.
- There were initially seven 'Langues': Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon (Navarre), England (with Scotland and Ireland) and Germany (with Poland and other Slavs) in which Priories (including Sub Priories and Grand Priories) were organized.
- The loss of the island of Malta (1798) brought about the end of the ancient division into Langues.



Associations

- There are 47 national associations within the Order of Malta. In the United States, there are three Associations, the American Association headquartered in New York City, the Federal Association in Washington, DC, and the Western Association in San Francisco.
- The American Association is the oldest of the three US Associations and received its charter from the Order of Malta in Rome in 1927
- The Germans were the first to found an association in 1859, followed by the British in 1875 and the Italians in 1877.
- After WWII the Order was asked to provide ambulance services for many European nations as the citizens feared state-run transports.





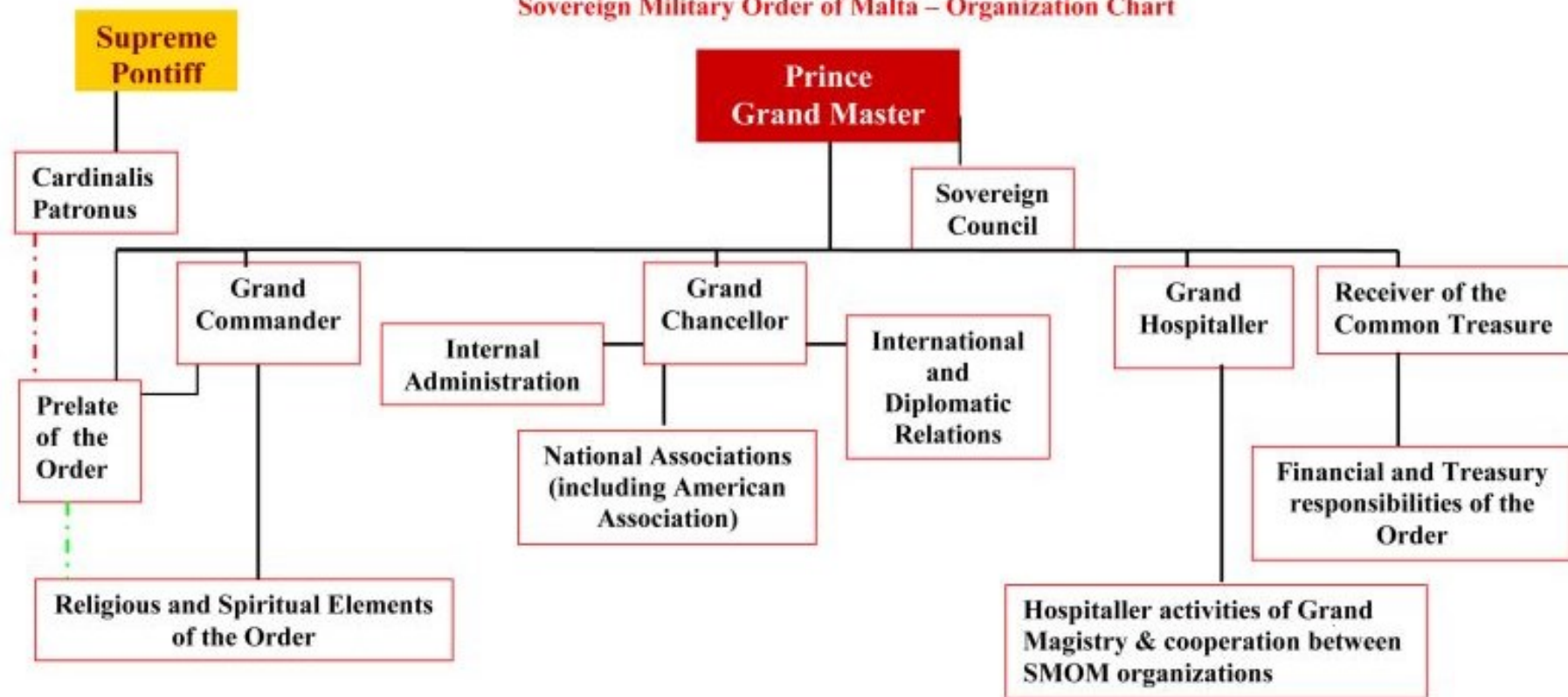
Knights and Dames in Second and Third Class

Membership

- Originally religious knights were assisted by religious sisters and volunteers.
- After the fall of Malta and the rise of constitutional nations (which raised their own military), all remaining Orders of the Crusades were suppressed.
- Having a Hospitaller element allowed the Order of Malta to continue.
- There are three Classes of membership:
 - First Class: Professed Knights of Justice
(canonically equivalent to monks)*
 - Second Class: Knights and Dames in Obedience
(promise but not formal vow to follow tenets)*
 - Third Class: Knights and Dames*
- As of 2023 there were 33 Professed; 541 Knights and 137 Dames in Obedience; 12,395 Knight and Dames in Third Class



Sovereign Military Order of Malta – Organization Chart



Alliance of the Order of Saint John

- After the Protestant Reformation the Catholic Church was suppressed in many European counties. This included any Priories of the Order. Eventually the Order was revived in these counties by the authority of their own sovereign as a house or national order.
- The following are the Protestant revivals that together form the officially recognized Alliance. They all work together on projects as well as to defend against those who attempt to imitate the Order.
 - *The Most Venerable Order of Saint John of Jerusalem*
(1888 by Queen Victoria; “Sovereign Head” – King of England)
 - *Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Chivalric Order of Saint John of the Hospital*
(1852 by King William VI; “Herrenmeister” – Prince of Prussia)
 - *Order of Saint John in the Netherlands*
(1909 by Prince Henry; “Honorary Commander” – King of the Netherlands)
 - *Order of Saint John in Sweden*
(1946 by King Gustav V; “High Patron” – King of Sweden)



Works of the Order

Examples of the Order's Hospitaller activities that impact the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Lourdes Pilgrimage

- Primary Work of the Order
- Each May, nearly 7,000 Knights, Dames and volunteers from all over the world travel to Lourdes with terminally ill “malades” and their caregivers for a week of fellowship and prayer.
- The year 2023 marks the 65th anniversary of the Order of Malta’s first pilgrimage to Lourdes and the 165th anniversary of the apparitions to Bernadette Soubirous.
- The Church has officially recognized 70 miracles — the last of which occurred in 1989. The International Medical Committee of Lourdes, a group of about 20 physicians, has certified another 7,000 unexplained cures.



Malades (French: *Sick*) are supported during the pilgrimage, many of whom have developmental disabilities.

Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem



Serving pregnant women of all faiths, the hospital directly impact lives of those at-risk

- Primary Work of the Order
- Maternity Hospital specializing in at-risk pregnancies, run by the Order since 1990 (it was a general hospital until 1985 when Palestinian Authority closed site).
- Bethlehem's largest employer with 191 employees — all Palestinians.
- Delivered over 100,000 babies of all faiths and regardless of family finances.
- Services include prenatal and pediatric care, a diabetic clinic, an 18-bed neonatal intensive care unit and a Mobile Clinic to support women in remote areas.

Rehabilitation Center in Kraków

- Work of the Polish Association
- Founded in 1920
- Early Intervention programs for infants and therapeutic services for toddlers. Supports 50 families.
- Daycare and Pre-school for children of any ability level with focus on at-risk families. Supports 35 families.
- Adult Daily Living Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Clinical services for families with specialized needs. Supports 25 families.





Center of Care, Columbus

Center of Care in Columbus, Ohio

- Work of the Federal Association, USA
- Founded in 2017
- Free medical and dental care
- Specialized services for people with I/DD

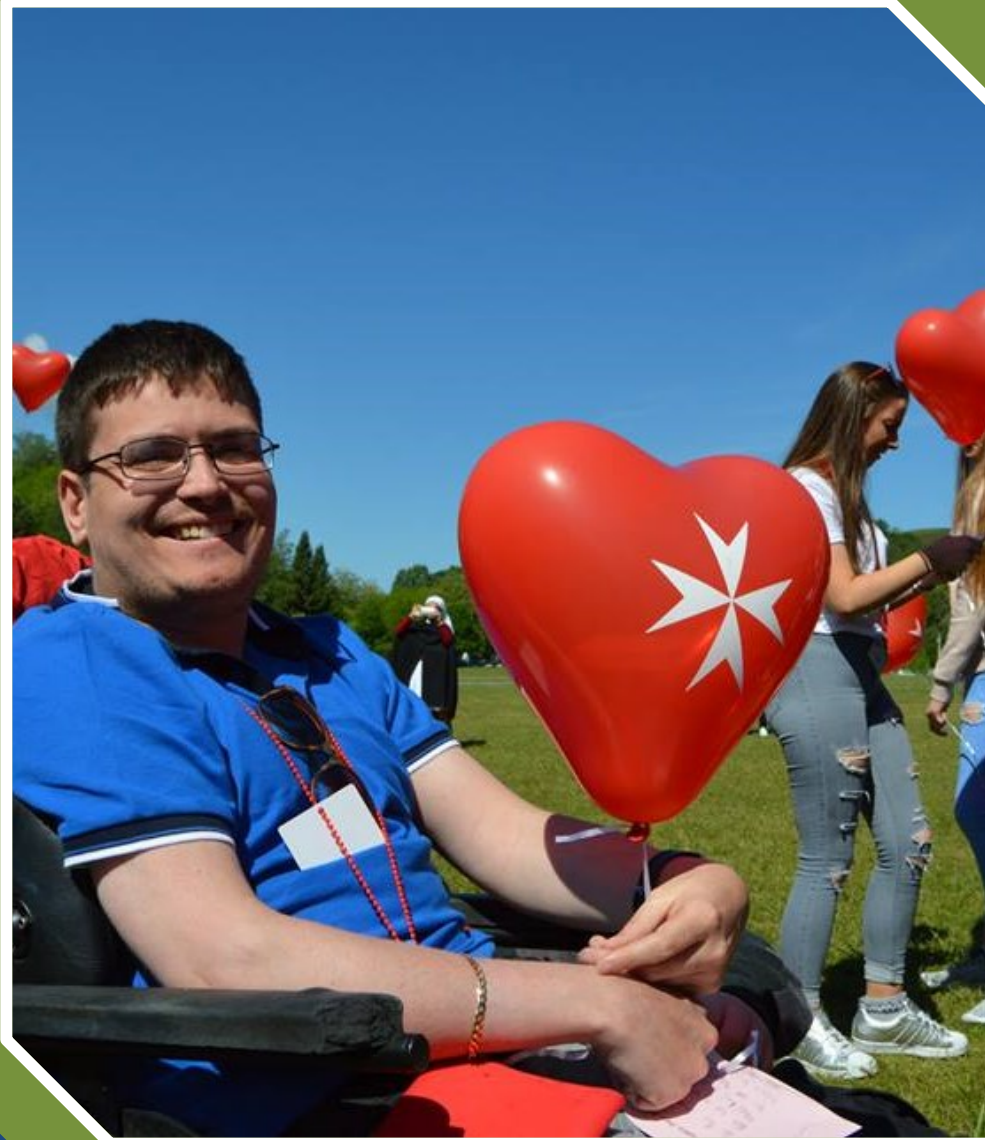
House of Care in Hartford, Conn.

- Work of the Federal Association, USA
- Founded in 2006
- Serves about 2,000 uninsured adults many of whom have disabilities.

Mobile Ministries Medical Units

- Major work of various national associations
- All three US Associations have mobile medical units in key cities.
- Free services for those in remote locations or otherwise unable to obtain medical or food needs.
- Malteser has medical registrations that allow the Organization to order and provide vaccines and other medications.
- Delivery of food and supplies to elderly, persons with disabilities and homebound.
- Presence at events to act as field hospital or simply promote Order by providing information on services.





Summer Camps, Clinics, and Schools

- Major work of various national associations
- L'Ordre de Malte in France runs nine specialized hospitals on complex disabilities as well as supports similar work of the Order in several African nations.
- The Order in Lebanon offers free clinics and schools regardless of a child's ability.
- Numerous national associations offer summer camps for people with I/DD.
- In addition to national events, there is an international summer camp. Last year the camp was held in Rome, this year it was held in Belgium.



Maltacamp 2024  
Switzerland Liechtenstein

Thank You

<https://www.orderofmalta.int/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_Military_Order_of_Malta