



News from the Grand Priory of Canada

March 2018



International News

Washington - OSMTH Strategic Planning Conference and Seminar. On the 17th to 20th of February 2018

Canada was well represented at the Strategic Planning Conference and Seminar with two members from each Priory.

These conferences are arranged at least annually, largely by our clergy, to keep us up to date on the issues and concerns that need to be addressed. And this was an exceptionally rich two days of talking.



First up was Afghanistan and our Grand Chancellor reports on the update provided by

Prince Ali Seraj, President of the National Coalition for Dialogue with the Tribes of Afghanistan. He gave a presentation detailing the history and current situation in Afghanistan. He emphasized the history of the Afghans as fighters for freedom, pointing out that they had never been subjected to over-lordship from outside the country.

He also noted that the four principal tribal groups, the Pashtouns, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks and the Hazara are and have always been fiercely independent, so that it is essential that the central authority in Afghanistan spend a great deal of its time and energy in ensuring that they all work together. He considers that the people of Afghanistan are entirely capable of freeing themselves from any attempt by terrorists to take the country over. Support from the Western nations in the form of materiel, however, particularly from the United States, would be essential. His Royal Highness finished his presentation with thanks to the Order for its support in the struggle with terrorism and requested that this support continue at the highest levels of government.

Moving from the military to the charitable, accompanying Prince Ali was his sister

Princess Salma Seraj who works with and is passionate about the TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) of America which, seeing the suffering of



Afghani women mirroring their own, decided to work together to alleviate suffering. TAPS website now offers bracelets made by Afghan women from their native Lapis Lazuli stones. All monies go to these women to provide the food, heat and electricity they lack. You can see them on www.taps.org. Unfortunately, at the moment these lovely bracelets are only available in the USA; but we are working on it!

Sunday morning the Grand Master led off the discussions providing a pot-pouri of updates on various projects and a detailed history of the origins of the Order and how the Religious and Royal leaders came to be. He discussed how we work together behind the scenes in harmony with a variety of nations at the highest levels, at the UN, the WCC, the Peace Bureau, and other like-minded NGO's which enables us able to work hand-in-hand at the most senior levels.

Throughout the meetings there was a clear undercurrent of members' awareness that we are at a leadership transition point with the elections that will be held in Greece. Their Excellencies Pat Rae and Jim Carey,

foundational voices of our Order, are stepping out of the prime leadership roles that they have held and new faces and new ideas will be taking the lead. It made for a touch of nostalgia and concern that we trust will be assuaged in the upcoming vote . . . but they are mighty shoes to fill.

Ultimately, there were so many ideas and proposals and concerns that this becomes a smorgasbord of brief items reported:



Nicolai Cebotariov, the adopted son of our Grand Master, brought greetings and the perspective of Russia's youth to complete the generations.

Skype has become an extremely effective means of holding meetings over many countries (and time lines) in a way that could not be imagined just a few years ago. The GP noted that more women, more couples and more same sex couples are joining our ranks and widening our perspectives.

Budgets and upcoming projects ranged from \$20,000 US in book sales to the proposals for a permanent office, archive and museum in a castle in Tomar. More on that to come in Athens.

There are currently 21 Grand Priorities worldwide with Romania expected to be returning soon as a Grand Priory and Switzerland to be proposed for admission. Denmark is being reconstituted and mentoring is going on with new units.

Sunday afternoon brought together 40 members and speakers addressing the variety of thorny issues that claimed this year's Seminar.



Patrick Carney, GPUSA has been chairing a Strategic Directives Committee which will produce their final report at Athens in April. However, an early "peek" suggests that the focus will return to the Original Mission of the Templars of 1118: aiding Christians at risk and keeping the road to Jerusalem open for everyone.

His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian the International Christian Consul to OSMTH, Religious Protector TPUSA; His Grace Bishop Jay Magness, Chaplain General GPUSA, the first GPCanada and Vicar General Emeritus and three other leading theologians raised concerns ranging from limited arms sales, medical sector rebuilding, the need for job creation and education as essential to funding relief.

It was noted that one of the great attractions of Al Queda is that it provides a job to young men who have no skills and no hopes for employment. Options have to be provided

One of the principal concerns raised is to focus on helping Christian refugees to return and live in their own countries. They are in dire situations and need us to guide our efforts to ensure that there are resources to sustain them.

They spoke of 35 million people living in the stone age and needing to be moved to the 20th century. In countries that can not afford to modernize this quickly. And the grand objective: having equal investment in reconstruction as are put into military devises.



Juliana Taimoorazy, President of the Iraq Refugees Foundation, US, spoke passionately about unmet needs for Christians driven from their homes and with no champions in their region, or elsewhere.

News from the Priories of Canada . . .



**St Simon-Peter Priory
- Prior LCdr (Ret'd) Dame Nicole Lassaline**

Ottawa has the first Postulate of the year and are already planning their investiture. How is recruitment going with you?

St James - Prior George Jackowski



We all talk about ideas on how to help the endangered Christians in the Holy Lands. This is Engy a Christian child from Egypt whose education and well-being will be supported by a Toronto Templar, through Plan International: thereby avoiding the issues of the tax people who have made contributions to the Jordan project most difficult.

Ascension - Sir Walt Pastorius

Our first dinner meeting of 2018 was held Feb 11 at the Church of the Ascension, with 32 in attendance.

As we often do, we had a presentation from the Salvation Army, one of the charities we support.



Majors Paul and Kelly Rideout, the Executive Director and Associate Executive Director of The Salvation Army Windsor Community and Rehabilitation Centre (a married couple) gave us a tag-team presentation of the many things the Army accomplishes, including all the support provided locally. While we all have a general idea of the work of the Army, we found out many more impressive details of the breadth of support they provide.

UPCOMING EVENTS

USA - We have been invited by the Priory of St John the Baptist in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to attend their Convent and Investiture on **Friday the 23rd of March and Saturday the 24th**. They make theirs a weekend event with a reception followed by a silent vigil on Friday evening, a morning retreat on Saturday followed by the C&I and Eucharist and the whole event culminates in a Gala Banquet and postprandial on the Saturday evening. Contact their Prior, Dame Margaret Enders Bacon at thebacons95@gmail.com

The GP Council meets via Skype the third Monday of every month.

18 March - The Martyrdom of Jacques de Molay and Geoffroi de Charney,

Recall your sins; seek forgiveness and know the blessings of Lent . . .
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**H.E. The Reverend Dame Nola Crewe,
GP - Canada**