

The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem



Priory of St. James



St. James Priory, Templars International
December 2008



Dear Knights and Dames,

We are coming to the end of the year. At the Investiture your Prior reported on the progress we made in the past twelve months and Dame Nola Crewe will later review in this Report our Investiture. There will also be reports by Chevs. Peter Russell, KCTJ regarding upcoming events and William Upper, KTJ about his U.S. Grand Master Cruise.

Under the leadership of our Past Prior H.E. Capt. Chev. George McNeillie III, GOTJ, the first few years of the Priory were spent recruiting members to reach critical mass and to define and select charitable targets we could and would want to support.

Once your new Prior took over, we concentrated on structure, completing the organization and in trying to define and implement the “culture” of our Priory.

I reported on these matters at our last Investiture.

We now have critical mass, a defined sphere of activities and the beginnings of a shared culture that hopefully will grow and attract others to join us.

My wish for 2009 is for us to pull together as a community. Your executive committee and I want to see our organization run effectively and harmoniously. Going forward, I want to remind us all that as Knights and Dames, we all bring different skill-sets to the table. We all value our organization and the work we do. Collectively and individually, we are all good enough. We have what it takes. We must embrace the value of every Knight and of every Dame who stands in service. And if that means showing patience and listening and making room for one another’s inability to grasp your obvious, then so

be it. Our purpose is the well-being of others. Let us strive to bring the humility of the Silent Knight into our deliberations with one another. If we do this, we will look forward to the time we spend together.

One can feel joy from a standing start we are now a community of approximately 60 Knights and Dames. Friendships growing and the infectious happiness that comes from doing good work. There is one area we could improve upon and that is the arena of FUN! There is room for us to have more fun as we grow our community. As Chev. Tim Gray, one of our recently knighted members put it to me the other day, "The success of a volunteer organization can be measured by three yardsticks:

- (1) Does it do good work?
- (2) Does it raise real money? And
- (3) Are the members having fun doing it?"

My trip to Guatemala was most memorable. We flew via Houston to Guatemala City where we were taken by car to Antigua, Guatemala's first capital city which was destroyed in 1776 and then moved to its present location. The base camp of Living Water was there. After one and half days we went about five hours by car to La Machina where we stayed at the Hotel Seis. This was our forward camp. The town is very small and poor with Hotel Seis being the only hotel. The word "hotel" is a bit of a misnomer. It had the feel more that of a jail; steel gates and steel doors everywhere. My room was a good imitation of a prison cell, rough conditions with only a cold shower. Food was spartan. Cold cereals for breakfast, soup with potatoes and parts of ancient chickens well boiled for lunch and dinner much the same. But no one got sick, which is remarkable! Snacks were fresh coconuts and fried bananas prepared by the villagers.

Overall, leadership was provided by: (1) a young attractive female professional chemical engineer; (2) the local representative who is also a master driller; and (3) Barrie Hart from Living Water Canada.

The well itself was drilled in a small village "Chicales", consisting of perhaps 45 cabins with a population of around 250 people, located near the coast about an hour outside La Machina. Average adult income was probably less than one dollar a day.

Drilling was fast and efficient. There were two teams of four people each doing a series of jobs. Job #1 was to run the drill, Job #2 was to set the drill stem, Job #3 was to clear mud channels leading to mud pits, which circulated the mud fluid through the drill stem and back, as well as take grit samples to determine what kind of rock or soil formation we were going through, Job #4 was to record depth, soil samples and number of drill stems. After each drill stem each member of the team moved one up.

After two drill stems, second team took over, while the first team did odd jobs and rested. It was hot and humid and we were continually told to drink water and sit in the shade. Most of us however played with the children.

Day I - This was the dirtiest day. At the end of the day when changing, my pants would have stood up by themselves. There was gumbo mud everywhere. We drilled down to 120'.

Day II – Reaming to a 7” hole.

Day III – We set the casing to 120’ and water pipe to 100 feet, tested the water, poured the cement platform and installed bottom end of pump in the concrete.

Day IV – We set the sucker rods, valve at bottom, completed and tested the hand pump and the capacity of the well (50 gallons of water a minute) and had a dedication ceremony. Everyone turned out for that one. The local preachers, mayor, politicians, big wigs, general population and lots of children made it into quite a celebration.

Social aspects were wonderful. We were surrounded by young children who loved the frisbees, balls, stickers and fancy pencils we had brought. They were all amazingly well behaved with the older girls (maybe 10-12 years old) in charge and consoling the odd crying, over-excited, younger child.

The adults thought it was Carnival time. They had never seen gringos work so hard and get so dirty.

Went back to Antigua that afternoon. Spent a few days there resting, shopping, sightseeing and doing the museum and art galleries. (Extra days are always provided since one does not know what one can run into when drilling a well. Our well was drilled most efficiently).

While I was there, did not think I would want to go on another trip. It is fairly rough, spartan and hot. Yet the experience gets to you and continues to haunt you in a good way. Now I would probably go back within a year or so.

All in all, it was a wonderful experience, which I would not have missed for anything.

Our Treasurer, Dame Anne Matthewman, wanted me to remind those of you who so far have not yet paid their 2008 annual fee to please do so.

In closing, my wife, Dame Dai and I would like to most sincerely wish every Dame and Knight and their families a Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Blessings to you all

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Matthew Gaasenbeek III
Prior II, Priory of St. James



Report on the Rome Convent: 19 - 23 November
2008

Dame Nola Crewe, GOTJ, Chancellor
Representing the Priory of St James

One of the wonderful things about travel is that it provides new perspectives. The Convent in Fiuggi, Italy (an hour outside Rome) was a grand demonstration of that axiom. Working in Canada within such new Priories, where we are still working to increase our numbers, to become known and to take our first, rather tentative steps on the international stage, it is easy to lose the broader outlook. The reality is that we are all part of a strong and active body of men and women throughout the world who share our goals for chivalry, peace and honour and who work very hard, from year-to-year, to attain those ends.

International Convents are dominated by the necessary work of the fourteen Grand Priors, which is largely conducted behind closed doors, leaving the rest of us free to get to know each other and learn of the challenges and causes being embraced by our fellow dames and knights (and also to encourage them to come to Canada in 2010!).

The Romanians brought a complete Templar art show with them and hosted a series of speakers who described projects from several countries. A Dame from Romania is working with English support to provide a programme that assists handicapped children to overcome social barriers to become accepted. First, they brought gifted teenagers from Britain to work in summer camps with children who are blind, have lost one or more limbs, are developmentally delayed, or deaf. The English students then met with and encouraged gifted students in Romania to do the same and it has become one of the chief programmes to support acceptance of disabled children in that country. A professor from Italy described how his university has been persuaded to start an archaeological programme in Israel that will explore

their twenty Templar Castles over the next few decades. A young law student, who is a knight, described how he has organized a Model United Nations effort that is a three year programme to broaden understanding of the UN's role in the world. Working through students he is reaching their parents and the greater community as well. And those are just three of the hundreds of programmes people were proud to put forth as evidence of the work for the benefit of humanity all dames and knights may claim as our own.

The 54 delegates (based on the number of members of each countries' Priories and Commanderies) met on Saturday morning to welcome Denmark as a new Priory (under the mentorship of Norway); recognize Portugal as a Commandery (under the mentorship of France); approve the budget; a new crest for the Order; get an update on our investment in OIKOCREDIT and various other items. The meeting concluded with reports from the various Grand Priories updating us on their goals and successes. The complete record of the meetings will shortly be circulated by our Grand Master.

The Investiture in the Alatri Church was hi-lighted by our own Grand Master performing the wedding blessing upon the Grand Marshall and his new bride and the knighting of the Grand Commander by an Italian Prince. A splendid banquet followed with great fellowship and promises of joining us for the next Grand Chapter General OSMTH meeting which we will be hosting in Toronto from the 22nd to 25th of September 2010. The reception our proposals received was heartwarming: as was the promise of so many to attend. We were particularly supported by our American brothers and sisters who have offered us help on a number of levels and assurances of the desire of many of their members to be in attendance. It will be the first time such a meeting will be held in Canada and many Knights and Dames will be making their first visit to our country for this grand occasion. We want to make it such a success that it will become the standard against which other Convents are compared! And the only way for that to happen is for each and every member to get involved NOW! So note those dates: 22nd to 25th September 2010. Between now and then there will be lots of work to be done but the rewards for each of us will be even greater.

Please contact

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Nola Crewe nnDnn@inverie.com and get on board!