



GAZETTE

GRAND PRIOR'S MESSAGE



The Grand Prior, Jane Anema

Not long ago I handed out *Small Acts of Kindness* pins to two individuals who truly amaze me with their energy, drive and humility. They were truly honoured and just a little teary over being recognized. Neither **Helen** or **Lynn** think they do anything unusual. They in their words, are just being human. They care about the world around them and they strive to make it a better place. They serve and they do so with joy and compassion.

We spent some time that afternoon talking about the Order and the work it has done in the past. We also spent some time talking about what the

Order will do in the coming years and how our work related the Home Care Givers Support Programme, *A Care Giver's Guide*, Hospice Palliative and end of life care is so timely. They were intrigued with our history but more importantly with our future.

That's been the reaction of all the people to whom I've given or sent these pins.

COVID has focused us and reminded us of the fragility of life. We have a new appreciation for face to face, or more realistically mask to mask,



Helen and Lynn

connection. We recognize more readily those who stock our grocery and liquor store shelves, sort the mail, spend time working with the aged

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CHAPTER GENERAL

Niagara Falls, Ontario



Sadly the 2021 Chapter General in Niagara Falls has had to be postponed again due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It looks like we will be able to finally hold it in 2022.

Stay tuned for updates, including information for those who have already paid, how to apply your payment to 2022 or receive a refund.

It has been deeply frustrating for the organisers, but we all thank them for their sterling service and patience.

More to come in the new year.

2022

*Grand Prior's Message cont'd*

and infirm and so on. We've recognized that without these service providers (and electricity) we don't function. We call them frontline heroes. They cause us to consider the values of society and they deserve our thanks now and going forward.

We live in a time of change and those changes have become opportunities to think about how to connect with one another and maintain the best of what the Order is and can be in this country. We must strive to be kind and exemplify the ideals of chivalry in all situations. The basic ideals identified in the Beatitudes must remain our watchword and frame our behavior.

With thanks for your service,

Jane

ANDY'S HOUSE OPENS

Members of OSL Muskoka House present Hospice Muskoka and Andy's House Volunteers with "Small Acts of Kindness" Pins in recognition of their dedication and commitment to **Andy's House**, a residential program operated by Hospice Muskoka, which recently opened to its first residents in October. At Andy's House, residents and their families are supported with 100% free, compassionate, holistic care, serving both their physical and spiritual needs, ensuring their final stage of life is fulfilling and dignified.



From left to right: John Panikkar, Order of St. Lazarus, Captain of Muskoka House; Mary Clough, Janie Graham, Rosamond Abbott, Sandra Winspear, Executive Director Hospice Muskoka and Member of OSL Muskoka House; Lucy McLean, Member of OSL Muskoka House, Mary Ann Beaudin, Enid Wray, Ross McLean, Member of OSL Muskoka House.

THE GO FORWARD TEAM (GFT) UPDATE | ROBBIE SPRULES

The **GoForwardTeam** has been in a bit of a hiatus over the past six months or so. The Vice Chancellor Strategic Development and the Grand Prior meet on a continuous basis to discuss various events and new initiatives. The regular meetings will be reintroduced in the new year. Of particular note is the postponement of the Chapter General in Niagara Falls. Stay tuned for updates over the next several months.



GO FORWARD TEAM MEMBERS (GFT)

Jane Anema, Grand Prior
Chevalier Robbie Sprules VCSD
Chevalier David Cvet CITO

IPADS AT TIDEVIEW

Acadia Initiative

Earlier this year, just before the COVID-19 pandemic became a pandemic, an idea was floated that would ease the work pressure on care/nursing staff with respect to virtual conferencing with patients' loved ones, family and friends. To date, although there are numerous installations that have iPads/tablets on hand for such virtual gatherings, many patients are unable to hold/support the tablets, and therefore, staff would often hold the device on behalf of the patients.

This idea involves using a floor stand of some kind, attached with a gooseneck section to which the tablet (in this case, iPads) were attached.

Two units were assembled and tested at the residence of Acadia Commandery's Commander. The units are depicted in the image on the left. This would allow the staff to initiate the virtual connection with the patient's counterpart, position the unit to allow for hands-free interface between patient and their loved one(s). The immediate benefit to the staff is that it frees them from manually supporting the devices allowing them to continue with their other duties and care for other patients. After creating a number of accounts on each device, including skype, facetime and zoom, this information was included in a card suspended from the unit, including the userIDs and passwords. This eases the connection and overhead by staff setting up virtual meetings. Each unit was fitted with its



The pair of units fully assembled and ready for trial



The handoff of the units at the Tideview Terrace with Kathie Boots and David Cvet

own power chord and extension chord so that staff need not worry about locating power supplies nor extensions chords.

After testing these units, it was time to implement these in a real-life situation. The destination for the devices was Tideview Terrace in Digby, a special care facility that includes patients suffering from alzheimer and dementia. It has a capacity of 89 beds plus one bed for respite. Given the delays with shipping and such, the units were ready in July. A rendezvous was scheduled for July 20, at which time the units were transferred to **Kathie Boots**, Manager of Therapeutic Recreation / Recreation Therapist depicted in the above image (no visitors are allowed in the Tideview Terrace facility). The handover was conducted in distance due the pandemic restrictions with **Chev. David M. Cvet** KLJ(J) and **Lois Stevenson**, CLJ.

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Contributor



ROBBIE SPRULES

This marks the fifth *Gazette* under Robbie's direction. As Covid lockdowns hit, everyone scrambled to find their way through a more challenging reality. Kudos to all who have found time to send in an article or two, the Order has kept alive and well through these past eight months..

Our communication plan is working, as we are hearing from more members than ever. Your submissions are wonderful, and we have tried to publish as many as we can.

A special edition is planned for 2021 to celebrate the success of the Small Acts of Kindness, and initiative suggested by your VCSD and executed by our team. Thank you all who have handed out these awards, we know they have been cherished by the recipients.

A great Order success.

gazette@stlazarus.ca.

The details on accessing the newly created accounts were made available on the card suspended from the unit. This eased access to login details and passwords. The card is depicted in the image below.

We were thrilled to receive the first photo of the unit in use at Tideview Terrace. The photo demonstrates the unit being used by a patient in a hands-free setup. Clearly, the patient appears to be very happy conversing with whomever is on the other end of the virtual connection!

We at Acadia Commandery are very pleased with the results of the units in use at the facility, and will continue to interface with the



A patient enjoying a virtual connection with family.

facility periodically in order to monitor their usability and ease of use. These units were prompted as proof-of-concepts for the future hospice being organized by the Atalanta Hospice Society. Having the opportunity to prove the concept in the Tideview Terrace trial will provide valuable data and input from the staff to refine the units in future versions to ensure their viability for hospice environments. In addition, the patients at Tideview Terrace are enjoying the results of the trial. We wish to extend a thank you and appreciation to the **Order of Saint Lazarus** for supporting this project with their matching funds program allowing us to assemble two units for the trial.

Chev. David M. Cvet KLJ(J)



One of the tags suspended from the unit containing IDs, passwords, and support details.



TORONTO COMMANDERY UPDATE

The Toronto Commandery completed a virtual fundraiser in the spring and summer supporting **Emily's House** and **Hospice Muskoka Andy's House**. While we were physically separated, we were certainly united in spirit to battle the pandemic. Our campaign raised **\$2,701** for **Emily's House** and **\$4,750** for **Andy's House**. The Toronto Commandery and the Grand Priory had matching programs for these donations, bringing the total support for the two Hospices to **\$22,353**. Emily's House is a children's hospice located in downtown Toronto, which provides respite and palliative care for children and support for their families as an alternative to hospital care. Toronto Commandery member **Rev. Rauni Salminen, AChLJ** is Emily's House's CEO and Founder. In response to the need for adult hospice care beds in Toronto and to ease the bed demands at the Michael Garron Hospital, Emily's House has temporarily converted eight of their ten beds to adult hospice care for non-COVID-19 palliative patients. They were able

to do this because many parents are caring for their children at home during the COVID-19 crisis. The hospice needs support to purchase patients' supplies, increased food service costs, and other costs associated with the temporary conversion.

Hospice Muskoka Andy's House was scheduled to open in May, but due to COVID-19 the grand opening has been postponed to late fall. Being so close to opening and now carrying the operating costs of the empty facility has been difficult. The Andy's House Hospice has been a key focus for the Muskoka House of the Toronto Commandery for many years now, and we are so proud of what they have accomplished. We look forward to Andy's House being able to open their doors for the first time, so that they may begin performing this much needed hospice work.

Rick Firth

Toronto Commander



CHIVALRIC COMPASS

A new program conceived of by the Vice Chancellor Strategic Development is the **Chivalric Compass Initiative**.

The purpose is to help us live by the Chivalric guidance of Saint Lazarus Canada, and to remember our commitments to the Order upon investiture.

Over the past two decades, events have taken place that have broken even the most basic rules of Chivalry, deportment, honour, kindness and compassion.

During the next year, we shall be writing small tutorials on chivalric behaviour, what it means to be a knight or dame in the twenty first century, and what we may learn from the ideals of the original founders of the Order.

We invite all members to write in and submit their ideas of chivalry in a modern world, share your stories, list your ideals and celebrate successes within your Commandery. Simply send via email to gazette@stlazarus.ca and we shall start to fit them into this column in each Gazette.

Chevalier Robbie Sprules KLJ

Vice Chancellor, Strategic Development



LETTER FROM VST



August 31, 2020

Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem
Attn: Executive Director PO. Box 187
Schomberg, ON, L0G 1T0

2019/2020 Report on Military & Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus Ecumenical Bursary

Dear Friends:

VST continues to be blessed with increases in students seeking to pursue their call to leadership service. The need for financial support has never been greater.

Your support of theological students at VST is deeply appreciated. We are pleased to provide the enclosed report for the Military & Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus Ecumenical Bursary describing how funds have been stewarded, including students benefitting from your support.

The report covers the 2019/20 academic year, including a biography and photograph of the student(s) where possible. The report also summarizes all receipts and disbursements, as well as itemizing the amount of support provided. We trust that this information affirms your intentions and the investment you have made with VST.

Students accepting the call to pursue theological education are making significant sacrifices. Through your support VST makes this important choice is possible.

Full-time VST students pay approximately \$8,500 in tuition fees per year, and part-time students paying \$4,000 on average. They also invest about \$2,000 annually in books, student fees and other learning resources. Those moving to Vancouver to attend VST also face living expenses (housing, meals, and local transportation) can exceed \$20,000 annually.

With the growth in VST's student body, and the onset of COVID-19, VST has responded by increasing bursary support to up to 70% of their costs. This is having a significant impact on VST's resources, and to that end, additional student support from generous donors is foremost in our efforts.

The Military & Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus Ecumenical Bursary serves a very important role, helping to meet the financial needs of VST's students.

Thank you so much for your commitment to support students at the Vancouver School of Theology. VST is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders. We are glad to partner with you in supporting our students.

I invite you to contact me at 604-822-9808, or richardt@vst.edu with your thoughts and to hear more about VST's future directions.

Sincerely

The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping
Principal

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COMMANDERIES' ROUNDUP – SUMMER 2020

COVID-19 has definitely affected the way we all operate but despite the unusual time that we are living in the Commanderies of Saint Lazarus Canada have continued to support the mission of the Order.

We have found new ways to carry on – Zoom meetings and virtual Investitures are now part of the lexicon.

Here are some of the highlights for 2020.

ACADIA COMMANDERY

Commander – Chevalier David Cvet



Acadia has increased their numbers, with five postulants awaiting Investiture. Since the inception of “Friends of the Order” they have brought nineteen (19) Friends into the fold.

The newest initiative is the development of a “goose-neck” stand that will allow patients to use a generic tablet to keep in touch with friends and family without needing the aid of an attendant.

BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMANDERY

Commander - Chevalier John Neill



This past year saw two (2) new members Invested and now have another postulant awaiting investiture.

The Commandery continues to support the *Vancouver School of Theology*, *Victoria Hospice*, and the *Langley Care Foundation*. Special mention should go to *Chev Paul Loofs*, who has attended every Chapter General since he joined the Order in 1999.

ARCTIC COMMANDERY

Commander – Chevalier Michael Kalnay



Working with the *Yellowknife Health and Social Services* the Arctic Commandery has fulfilled their plan to have copies of the *Caregiver's Guide* available to thirty (30) nursing stations

“North of 60” and they actively promote the on-line Caregiver's program. In an area of the country where hospital and hospice care are not readily available the Caregiver's Guide is a valuable tool for those who must care for their loved ones at home.

CALGARY COMMANDERY

Commander - Chevalier Richard Goebel



Three members were invested during the first Virtual Investiture, held on May 24th.

The Calgary Commandery has been a strong supporter of training and support of professional and volunteer palliative care workers and this past year they have provided funds that will allow the Father Lacombe Centre to provide in-house palliative care training sessions. Smaller communities near Calgary will soon benefit from the creation of a “Living With Cancer” program that the Calgary Commandery has helped fund.

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**EDMONTON COMMANDERY****Commander- Chevalier Tony Ratcliffe**

A new hand at the helm. **Chevalier Aurelio Fernandes** has handed over the position of Commander to **Chevalier Tony Ratcliffe**.

The Edmonton Commandery continues to provide funds for palliative care rooms within their area. This past year has seen major donations to the **Norwood Continuing and Palliative Care facility** and the **Sturgeon Community Hospital** for the creation of palliative care specific rooms.

The Edmonton and Calgary Commanderies continue to support an *Alberta wide program aimed at the support and training of volunteer and professional palliative care workers*. The two Commanderies also coordinated a **\$30,000 donation** to the **Red Deer Hospice** expansion program.

The annual Robbie Burns Dinner provides a venue to showcase the work of the Order. One highlight of the past dinner was our Chancellor, in full Highland rig, presenting the Address to the Haggis.

MANITOBA COMMANDERY**Commander - Chevalier Dennis Schultz**

Growing in number. The May 24th virtual Investiture saw two (2) new members welcomed into the Order.

Manitoba continues to support **Palliative Care Manitoba** as well as an **Ecumenical Scholarship** at St. Paul's College.

MONTREAL COMMANDERY**Commander - Rev. Marc-Philippe Vincent**

le Phare, enfants et familles, a palliative care provider for children under the age of eighteen(18) and **La Maison Saint Raphael**, a new palliative care home in Montreal, have been recipients of funds from Montreal.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR COMMANDERY**Commander - Chevalier Lewis Stoyles**

Three (3) postulants awaiting Investiture.

Queen's College has joined forces with the **Newfoundland/Labrador Commandery** to provide a training program for rural areas, done on-line due to Covid-19, that has proven to be remarkably successful. **Chevalier Stoyles** provided a very comprehensive report in the last edition of the Gazette which I would encourage everyone to read if they have not already done so.

OTTAWA COMMANDERY**Commander -Craig McQuitty.**

Craig McQuitty OIJ, has stepped into the position that had been so ably filled by **Chevalier Ron Davidson**.

Ottawa has supported the **Kingston Hospice** and the **May Court Hospice**.

In September of 2019, members of the Ottawa Commandery manned a booth at the Canadian Hospice and Palliative Care Association Conference, providing information to participants

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about our involvement in hospice and palliative care; distributing copies of the *Caregiver's Guide* and brochures about the Home Caregiver Support System.

QUÉBEC COMMANDERY

Commander - Chevalier Alec Cooper



Chevalier Alec Cooper has stepped into the role of Commander for the Quebec Commandery.

THUNDER BAY COMMANDERY

Commander - Dame Diana Pallen



Dame Diana Pallen took over the role of Commander from *Chevalier Edward Meijer* as of August 14th. *Leprosy Canada* received a **\$1000** donation from the Thunder Bay Commandery.

\$500 of which was for *Women in Need*, whose mobile primary health care spreads leprosy awareness to deprived communities, holds weekly free clinics for cured leprosy cases with ongoing medical conditions and supports women with nerve damage and deformity caused by leprosy. The remaining **\$500** went to support a *mobile leprosy* control unit in Madagascar.

TORONTO COMMANDERY

Commander - Chevalier Rick Firth



Toronto Commandery has supported *Maison McCulloch* in Sudbury and *Hospice Muskoka for Andy's House*.

The Toronto Commandery special COVID-19 fundraising campaign to support hospices raised **\$2701** for *Emily's House* and **\$4750** for *Andy's House*.

WESTERN ONTARIO COMMANDERY

Commander - Chevalier Scott Saunders



Their newest member was among those invested at the May 24th virtual Investiture and joins the five (5) Friends now part of the Western Ontario Commandery.

Members of the Commandery are working on an enhanced program for the *Caregiver's Support Program*.

The *Martin Luther University Ecumenical Bursary* is now fully funded – the first recipient will be announced soon.

Despite the new reality of life due to Covid-19 we can

“

Create a positive effect on the quality of end of life care in Canada while honouring our international mandate of ecumenical service and the treatment of leprosy.”

COMMANDERS' CORNER



When I became VC Commanderies I had planned on attending an event in each of the thirteen Commanderies. “Plan A” ,which I had partially completed, is now on hold due to Covid-19 and “Plan B”, to interview each of the Commanders, has become my goal.

Where to start? I had been East and West, so I looked North - North of 60, the *Arctic Commandery*, seemed like the place to begin.

Michael Kalnay KLJ, OMLJ (known as Mike to one and all), agreed to be my first “victim”.

Mike and *Hilary* moved to Yellowknife, for a two year contract, in 1990. Thirty years later they are happily retired there after raising a son (Zolton), a daughter (Sarah), and welcoming a son-in-law and a granddaughter (Prudence) into their lives.

Mike has been a member of the Order since 2011 and we can thank *Chevalier David Connelly* for persuading him to join and use his fundraising abilities to help the Arctic Commandery support their palliative care initiatives. Mike became an active member at both the Commandery level and on Council (now the Board of Governors) where he serves as a Director and chairs the recently established Governance Committee. He has filled the post of Scrivener and also sat on the committee revamping our by-laws.

Anyone who meets Mike soon realizes that he is a “Foodie”, in fact he has trained at the Culinary Institute of America and at Cordon Bleu. He describes himself as a Modern Chef who loves to use wild harvested product, much of which he sources himself. It can be safely surmised that fellow Saint Lazarites and many others in Yellowknife have all enjoyed his culinary expertise.

Volunteering has been a big part of Mike’s life. He is a member of Rotary and has had a long association with Scouts Canada. Starting from being a leader when his son joined the Scout movement as a Beaver, he moved on to sit on the National Board of Governors and is still involved at the local level leading hikes and other outdoor activities, no matter what the weather.

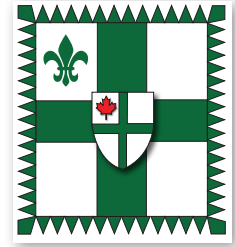
A self-proclaimed history buff, with both medieval architecture and art being special interests, Mike has travelled widely pursuing this passion.

My telephone chat with Mike about some of his myriad interests was an experience that I wish could have been face- to- face and with a fine whisky in hand.

Glynis Grigg, DCLJ, OMLJ
Vice-Chancellor of Commanderies

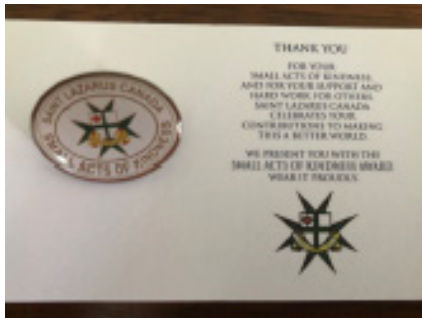


*Ordre militaire et hospitalier de Saint -Lazare de Jérusalem,
Commanderie de Montréal Military and Hospitaller Order of St.Lazarus
of Jerusalem, Montréal Commandery*



LA COMMANDERIE

SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS



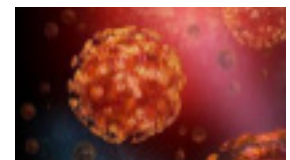
The Grand Priory has opted to acknowledge the acts of kindness that people, not being members of the Order of St. Lazarus (or of their families), may perform around us, in fields that are in tune with our mission (palliative and respite care,

care of the lepers, ecumenism, etc.) and that may help us to carry it through. Instances of these small acts may be keeping contact with people who are shut in ([see projects proposed on page 5 of this issue](#)), visiting or feeding someone in a long term care facility, shopping, walking the dog of someone who is shut in or limited by shut down rules, taking part as a volunteer in the putting together of an ecumenical activity, etc. By the acknowledgement of these small acts of kindness, the Order of St. Lazarus wants,

beside expressing its gratitude, build awareness that we exist and awareness about what we do, to eventually, attract new members.

If you do know such people that stand out by small acts of kindness that they have performed, please let me know their names and the reasons for which you think it would be appropriate to thank them. We will then present them with a card and a pin and transfer the info to the Grand Priory.

COVID-19 AND THE ORDER OF ST LAZARUS



Since 16th March, 2020, the whole of Quebec has been shut down. This has brought a variety of problems. We recall that, initially, it was strongly recommended that seniors from 70 years old and above should refrain from going out of their houses and mingle with the rest of the population. Rules were given that the general population should refrain from any kind of meeting; healthy people were forced to take all sorts of precautions to make sure that they could continue taking care of their family, household members or shut in relatives; we witnessed the closing of our churches,

of our schools, of our universities and of our businesses and stores; we saw the cancellation of our various festivals and cultural events, which are a trademark of our life here in Quebec.

The situation in our long term care facilities (CHSLD) brought to the fore the necessity to better organise palliative and end of life care, but above all, to have better trained personnel and to better subsidize these facilities. Recommendations to the Health Ministry and discussions with some colleges (cegep) as early as 2013-2014 to enrich

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the nurses' training programs with notions of palliative care has finally found an echo with our government. It is sad that it took a tragedy of the size of the one we are currently moving out of to force the Province to acknowledge the situation and to take measures to ensure better palliative and end of life care.

Given the above-mentioned context, and because of the responsibilities of some of our Commandery members towards members of their respective families dealing with other health issues not related to COVID-19, it has not been possible to hold the scheduled meetings of our Executive or to set in motion our plan of holding workshops that would have led to the adoption of a Strategic Plan 2020-2024 at the Annual General Meeting normally held at the end of June.

On the Grand Priory's level, Chapter General 2020 was postponed. It will be held, God willing, in May 2021 in Niagara which is the venue originally chosen for this year's cancelled event. However, on Saturday, 27th June, we did hold the Grand Priory's Annual General Meeting on-line, using the ZOOM platform. During this important meeting, our bylaws were modified to comply with the Federal Government Act on non profit organisation. A new Governing Board was created, to ensure a better and swifter decision-making process .

On the Commandery level, as I wrote above, we have not yet held our Annual General Meeting, usually called between the end of June and the end of July. As holding such a meeting is a legal obligation, we will have to set a date to meet, either in person or through one of the online platforms, before the end of the current civil year. Not knowing if we will be hit by a second wave of the virus, the Executive is moving toward holding the meeting online. In order to do so, we must ensure that all will have access to a computer and be able to download the ZOOM application which we are most likely to use. I will request

that all confirm their access to a computer and their ability to download the app so that we can hold the meeting by 11th September. The online meeting will be centred essentially around the reception of the financial statement, the adoption of the budget and the election of members to the Executive.

I would like to end this short report on a positive note. I am happy to announce that we are in the process of welcoming two new postulants. We are currently completing the formalities for their admission into the Order. As soon as the Chancery approves their candidacy, I will announce who they are.

UPCOMING EVENTS in the lingering COVID context

1. Between now and 11th September,
- mail response to the Commander (marc.philippe.vincent@gmail.com) as to your capacity to take part in the Commandery's AGM using the Zoom platform.
2. Call for the Commandery's Annual General Meeting for Saturday, 3rd October, at noon, by ZOOM.
3. Immediate financial support to Le Phare, enfants et familles, Palliative Care Facility for children 18 years old and under and respite care for their families.
4. Between November 2020 and April 2021, online workshops for the creation of our Commandery's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.
5. Provision for a local investiture ceremony or our new postulants.

The Commander

Marc-Philippe Vincent,
SChLJ, OMLJ, MA, DESS



MONTREAL COMMANDERY'S COMPANIONSHIP INITIATIVE

Dear OSL Companionship Initiative:

One of the main difficulties facing the elderly and at-risk groups, both within and outside the palliative care system is the loneliness that invariably comes with prolonged mandatory isolation. Fortunately, with the resources we have available to us today, we are in a unique position to be able to alleviate somewhat this problem through active engagement with these individuals through technology.

I am proposing two distinct avenues to approach this project.

OSL Reach Out

Members of the order, friends and volunteers, tested and vetted, will have scheduled times and will be assigned people they will contact for regular chats, where they can discuss life, the weather, or anything, really. We want to make sure they feel cared about, remembered and let them know they aren't alone.

- This will require any standard communication device such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer that has a webcam and microphone, one for each party, as well as an internet connection.
- This will also require the homes/caregivers to register the individuals and assist in the scheduling of times for the calls to be made, ensuring devices are sanitized before and after use, and devices are connected to the internet. Some individuals may be suffering from illnesses of the mind as well and may require members who have experience/expertise with certain conditions to facilitate successful interactions.

Once we connect people through this technology, it may facilitate friends and relatives reaching out since they will be connected.

Our History

A project that is currently being developed for the Archdiocese of Montreal (the Living History Project) is centered around members of the community sitting in front of webcams and recording their personal history, by telling their stories, speaking of relatives, anything that they feel like sharing with the camera.

These stories would be transcribed and recorded as a collective history of the people. This has so far been tested on a small scale as a proof of concept only, but the results have been very promising. This would be less labour intensive than the previous avenue, and studies have shown that discussing these memories have similar effects as having conversations in many cases.

- This avenue requires basic technology same as above, with some extra care put into setting up the recording.
- A simple prompt system to help encourage stories such as "Family", "Friends", "Work" to ensure that the system would be engaged with, would be put in place.
- This would require homes, facilities, caregivers to assist in the setting up of the individuals, and making sure the equipment is functioning correctly.

This activity is extremely low-cost, simple, and will allow us to put together a great library of content for social media posts pushing our charity initiatives. I feel we can make a big difference in people's lives through an initiative such as this. We can also offer to send copies to relatives or friends.

The Almoner

Marc St-Martin, OLC

THE DEATH OF MY BROTHER

Last July he died after a long illness, **Mr Christopher Dowd**, brother of **Bishop Thomas Dowd**, our *Vice-Commander* and *Ecumenical representative*. In the context of our Order's and our Commandery's mission with regard to palliative, end of life and respite care, I decided to share with you the reflections that Bishop Thomas shared in the *Cor et Anima Una* website. **Marc-Philippe**

I've always done my best thinking through writing, and the death of my younger brother Chris has given me a lot to think about. The thing is, his life had meaning, and so did his death. I write this to share just a few reflections on that meaning.

For those who don't know the background, Chris was diagnosed three years ago with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as ALS. This disease involves the death of the motor neurons of the nervous system, leading to gradual paralysis. It is 100% fatal. We did not know how many years Chris would have when the diagnosis came in. Turns out, it was almost three.

Chris decided early on that he wanted some good to come from his illness, so he signed up for every medical study he was eligible for. He also decided that while he might die from ALS, it was not going to define his life. Even as his legs began to give out, he made a trip to Germany to see our family there. As his fingers and voice gave out, he communicated with us via his tablet, and a tracking device that let him type via his eyes. Even as his breath started to give out, he could still nod, and smile,



and speak volumes just with his eyebrows.

I remember speaking with my sister Miriam just a few months ago, and telling her how amazed I was of our brother who just kept on going, courageously. She summed it up in one sentence: "Chris has a lot to live for." Keep in mind that, at this point, our brother was stuck in a wheelchair, being fed through a tube. And yet, he had a lot to live for. His greatest joy was being with people, especially his family and friends. They were what he lived for.

Still, Chris knew death was a certainty. We all know it, of course, but it is quite another thing to be able to name the cause of our death and to have a time frame for the outcome. Early on, Chris made sure everyone knew that he had no intention of asking for euthanasia, an option which is

allowed in society but which our Catholic faith rejects. People generally choose euthanasia as a way to avoid the suffering associated with serious illness, and ALS was one of the diseases most commonly invoked when Canada was considering allowing this possibility. In the case of my brother this suffering was more theoretical at first, but as time went on it became more and more real. I'm proud of my brother's courage in sticking to his guns, but I can also now see what that courage costs. There is no room for triumphalism here, just great compassion for those who make a choice consistent with Catholic ethics – and for those who, in the face of suffering they may find meaningless, choose otherwise.

The progression of the illness was slowly affecting Chris' breathing. The weakness of his diaphragm meant that he eventually needed a BiPAP machine to help him sleep, and later pretty much all the time. His inability to cough properly also meant that crap would eventually start to accumulate in his lungs. Poor Chris would have coughing fits that would last for hours

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and hours. These could be calmed with morphine, but the underlying problem would not go away.

Eventually Chris had to go on a morphine pump, which administered a fairly regular dose. The morphine allowed him to rest, but of course also made him drowsy. I also knew from my time as a palliative care chaplain years ago that morphine also has side effects that can shorten life. Some might wonder if that was in itself a kind of euthanasia, but it isn't. In Catholic ethics we call this the principle of double effect, which basically means that you can do an action that is in itself morally good (or at least morally neutral) that might have a negative side effect as long as your intention is the good part of the action, not the negative part, and that the good outweighs the negative. In the case of Chris, the action was giving him medicine (morphine).

The benefit was the relief of suffering, and the negative was the shortening of life – but probably only by days or even hours. So the good outweighed the negative, and of course we definitely were not trying to shorten life, just to palliate the suffering.

Chris' decline over the next few days was marked. His breathing was shallower, and his heart rate began to increase. He was with us less and less, and we could



see the struggle on his face as he tried to breathe, even with the BiPAP mask on. On the day he died, his heart was beating so fast he was in danger of cardiac arrest. It was time to say goodbye.

I remember an episode when I was a hospital chaplain, where I entered a room just as a doctor was trying to explain to a woman about the critical condition of her husband. I heard him say, "I'm sorry, there is nothing more we can do." He then looked at me, and turned back to her saying, "Now it's his turn." That was what we were facing now: a shift from the immediacy of medical care to the spiritual care of my brother and his family.

Chris had always wanted to remain at home, and so he had. The family now gathered there: his wife and three daughters along with our mother, our sister and myself. A couple of boyfriends of the girls were also present for moral support. We began by giving everyone a chance to have some one-on-

one time with Chris. There was no set formula: we each had permission to say that we wanted to say, or to say nothing at all. We could go individually, or accompanied. There was also no special order: we went when we felt ready.

This very human process took about an hour. In that time the doctors arrived, and the nurse prepared extra sedatives so that Chris would be comfortable. We then gathered for a time of prayer, medical personnel included. I gave Chris the anointing of the sick, and prayed the Apostolic Pardon. For those unfamiliar with these rituals, they are meant to strengthen the soul of the sick person and to remove any lingering effects of sin, so that they can pass from death to eternal life completely unhindered, bypassing purgatory and heading straight to heaven. I found the words of the Apostolic Pardon especially poignant:

Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May He open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.

By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me, I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

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We started the process of calling people to let them know, and we kept vigil with Chris' body until the funeral home arrived. I made the sign of the cross on his forehead at one point. It was my way of honouring his body, which had been a temple of the Holy Spirit for 48 years.

There will be more to come of course. We will receive people in a time of visitation at the funeral home, and at the church for the funeral mass. We will also gather at the cemetery, where Chris will

be buried in the family plot next to our father. We know as well that many people are praying for us, and having masses offered for the repose of Chris' soul. To be honest, though, I find myself marvelling at what we have already received. "Chris had a lot to live for," as my sister once said, and not just that: his death, too, was full of meaning. I see my family now, a few days later, and I see that we are still sad, but also consoled.

I share this story because I know

that not everyone is so blessed as to live and die in this way. We had a chance to say goodbye, and to accompany Chris on his final journey. Yes, we are blessed. Thank you, Lord, for this blessing, hard as it is. Look after Chris, please, and all of us. May we greet him again in your kingdom.

The Vice-Commander and
Ecumenical Representative

***The Most Rev. Thomas Dowd,
ECLJ, OMLJ***

DEATH OF CHEV. MAJOR RICHARD CHOQUETTE, KLJ, OMLJ



Chev. Major Richard Choquette, KLJ, OMLJ, receiving from the hands of His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex the prize for 25 years of volunteer work and commitment.

On 25th July, at the age of 74, our friend died, ***Chev. Major Richard Choquette, KLJ, OMLJ***. Richard had been a member of the Order of St Lazarus since 1995. He was also a member of the Order of Malta and of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. He was a Canadian Army retired Major.

As an active member of the Montreal Commandery, Richard has been involved in the Executive for over 20 years (1997-2018), in turn as Standard-Bearer, Treasurer, Secretary, Photographer, Registrar and Director of Communications. He also contributed to the organisation of the Chapter General held in Montreal in 2014. He has been actively involved in recruiting new members and in fundraising activities. He also took part in many Chapters General such as those in Ottawa, Toronto, and Québec City.

His funeral was held at the church of Saint-Philippe d'Argenteuil at 1:30 pm on 22nd August. The Commander and Marshall represented the Commandery.

Richard is left to mourn by his wife Monique Renaud and their daughter Carolyne, as well as numerous friends, former work colleagues (at the Marguerite-Bourgeoys School Board) and Consoeurs and Confreres of the Order of St Lazarus

May he rest in peace and rise in glory through the mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May Saint Lazarus and flights of Angels carry him to Abraham's bosom.



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David Cvet,
Chief Information &
Technology Officer

ACCESS



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