

**ORDO SUPREMUS MILITARIS TEMPLARIUM IEROSOLYMITANI (OSMTH)**  
Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem  
(Knights and Ladies International)



*Religious Protector*

His Beatitude the Most Blessed THEODOSIUS  
Metropolitan of the United States and Canada,  
Archbishop of Washington, D.C. Emeritus  
Orthodox Church of America

*Royal Patron*

HRH Princess Elisabeth Marie Alexandra  
zu Ysenburg und Büdingen  
Princess zu Schleswig-Holstein-  
Sonderburg-Glücksburg

*International Grand Master*

Brigadier General  
Patrick E. Rea, GCTJ, GMTJ,  
United States Army (Retired)

**THE INTERNATIONAL GRAND COMMANDER**

Major General Robert C. G. Disney, GCTJ, GMTJ, New York Army Guard (Retired)

**STATE OF THE ORDER**

December 30, 2010

Your Beatitude, Your Royal Highness, Your Grace, Your Excellencies, my Brother Knights and Sister Dames:

Since taking office in Toronto, Canada, three months ago, I have been busy with the business of our Order. Because our next Business Meeting is scheduled for April of 2011, I believe that a report on these activities is now appropriate. I also want to present some of my ideas and initiatives that, with your approval and support, our Order will be able to implement in the months ahead.

Before I present my report, I would like to recognize the past and present leaders of our Order who because of their leadership, administrative skills, vision and foresight permitted our Order to be in its present healthy state. I am convinced that all of our members will join me in extending sincere thanks to Major General Sir **Roy Redgrave**, our first Grand Commander, and later, our first Grand Master; to Rear Admiral **James J. Carey**, Grand Commander II, Grand Master II, and currently Grand Master-emeritus; and to Brigadier General **Patrick E. Rea**, Grand Commander III and currently our Grand Master. Had it not been for the determination exhibited by these three very worthy Knights, OSMTH, as we know it now, would not exist! Brother Knights, I salute each of you for your leadership and diplomatic skills. Thank you for passing on to me an Order that is intact, vibrant and alive!

I also want to introduce some of the members of my "Team" – the Magistral Officers of the Order. The Deputy Grand Commander, COL Dr Chev **Marcel de Picciotto**, who was formally installed in Toronto; the Grand Chancellor, Rev Dean Chev **Pertti Ruotsalo**; the Marshall-General, Chev **Ennio H. A. R. Senese**; and the Secretary General, Chev **Simon de St. Claire**. These four and some other Magistral Officers will be formally installed at our Business Meeting in Mechelen, Belgium in April 2011. I also want to recognize the expertise of Chev **Randy Tietz**, the Deputy Secretary General for UN Operations, who has provided me with a great deal of advice and assistance pertaining to our relations with the UN. I would be remiss if I did not recognize the cooperative spirit and the sage advice that I have received from our Grand Master, General Pat Rea. I have called on him on a number of occasions to share his experience and knowledge that he gained from being the Grand Commander for six years. Each time I have called on him he has graciously provided me with informed advice. All of these Brothers have assisted me greatly during my transition into my new position as your Grand Commander. I thank them for their fraternal, loyal and dedicated support.

I am most pleased to report that our beloved Order is in good health! As I write, the Order is now composed of 14 National Grand Priories and the Grand Priory of NATO. Currently, there is an affiliated Priory in Belgium, the Kingdom of Denmark and in Romania. There are also affiliated Commanderies in Brazil, Croatia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Scotland, and the Kingdom of Sweden. There are several other countries that have a very small Templar presence – one or two and up to five or six Knights and/or Dames – all of which are interested in growing the Templar presence and ultimately being formally recognized as an OSMTH entity. Some Grand Priories have sub-entities in other countries that

have not yet applied for formal affiliation. These sub entities are located in Armenia, Australia, the Holy Land, the Philippines, Singapore, the Kingdom of Spain, and Venezuela.

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of addressing about 50 of our Romanian Brothers and Sisters by SKYPE! I was invited by the Grand Prior of Italy, HE Prof Chev **Stelio Venceslai**, the Mentor Grand Prior to address a Templar meeting in Bucharest. Thanks to **Ovidiu Panea**, who organized the technology, the segment of the meeting that was carried via the Internet was fine. The quality of the audio and video was excellent. I was able to accept questions from the group and provide answers all in “real time.” I was impressed with the quality of the questions I received about the Order and, based on the comments that I heard from some of these members, I believe that the Romanian Priory has the ability to become a Grand Priory in the not too distant future! This may have been the first time that a Grand Commander sitting in his office in Florida was able to interact via the Internet with real time video and audio with a Templar group in Eastern Europe and the cost was ZERO! I have asked some of our “technology gurus” to explore this technology as a means by which I can communicate with the Grand Priors, to include the possibility of a Business Meeting being held via the Internet!

Last month, GP Germany and our Order were on television! One of the networks in Germany televised an interview with the Acting Grand Prior of Germany, HE Chevse **Elke Bruns** and our Grand Chaplain General, His Grace Bishop Chev **Munib Younan** who was visiting Germany at the time. The interview concentrated on questions about the Order – its history, its mission, its organization, etc. GP Bruns commented in an email to me that His Grace Bishop Younan was the “best PR person for the Order!” Based on GP Bruns comments to me, the network was very pleased with the finished program. It may be possible to acquire a copy of the program which we could use for tasteful publicity purposes.

When I was approached by the Nominating Committee to be a candidate for the Grand Commander’s position, I was asked to respond to a series of questions. I am using the edited responses that I gave to then to provide each of you with some idea of what I would like to try to accomplish during my term of office as the Grand Commander of the Order. I have added some additional comments to those that I originally provided the Nominating Committee for further clarification:

1. International Recognition

- a. Foster the international recognition and respect for the Order through a combination of publicity of our Order’s humanitarian activities and charitable works
- b. By increasing the interrelationship of ALL Grand Priorities through coordinated activities.

Permit me to expand. In my opinion, one of the key reasons why the financing of some of our activities and projects lack financial sponsorship and benefactors, is related to the fact that the general public, and often, our own Brothers and Sisters, are not aware of our undertakings. Plus, our activities don’t appear, to some people, to be exciting or challenging enough to trigger a desire for people, in general, to identify with what we do, and as a consequence, it is difficult to find sponsors and benefactors both within and outside the Order. It is for this purpose that I would like to commence an effort to identify a model humanitarian project. The project would need the whole hearted support of ALL the Grand Priorities, no matter how big or how small, as it would be accomplished with OSMTH assets executing the mission. This could mean working with another NGO that has experience in the type of project that we select. But, the project would have high visibility and would have to capture the humanitarian interests of a broad segment of the public. This in turn would, hopefully, trigger and generate international enthusiasm and financial support. We can then use this project to tastefully “market” OSMTH through the publicity that it will generate, which in turn will permit OSMTH to present itself to a wider global audience which might result in donations to our Order .

## 2. Expansion of OSMTH

The goal MUST be for the establishment of an OSMTH presence in every developed and developing nation that has a significant Christian population, e.g. China. (This has already been started). This can be accomplished by

a. Reaching out to and seeking the assistance of the Christian religious leaders in each of these target countries and introducing OSMTH and our activities to them

b. Using the combined network of our membership to identify potential candidates in these countries.

Why is it important for the Order to grow and expand? I have been asked this question by my Templar Brothers and Sisters ever since I assumed my first leadership position in the Order. All of our past leaders have stressed GROWTH and EXPANSION of our Order and the best way that I can answer this question is to quote a paragraph from a recent email I received from Grand Master-Emeritus, Admiral **Jim Carey**. In his email he wrote: *“Continued growth and expansion of OSMTH is incredibly important if the Order is to continue on its path of success. Believe me, when I say that the world watches OSMTH closely in this regard, including all those who wish us evil [and they are there in the form of Fontes and the other lesser Templar groups]. At the same time, we are also ALWAYS being watched by the United Nations and the national governments of our member nations and the senior clergy of ALL the Christian Churches and many of the non-Christian religions as well--- if they see us continuing to grow, their respect for us continues to grow, and if they see us level off or begin to slide back, the rumors start about “the Templars in decline.”* In my opinion, Admiral Carey’s words sum up very succinctly the REAL reasons for us to continue to GROW and EXPAND our beloved Order!

## 3. Enlarging or reducing the OSMTH officer positions in terms of management, finance, religious outreach etc.?

No major change in the number of current positions is contemplated because, at this time, I do not have a detailed understanding of or an appreciation for the duties and responsibilities of each of these positions. Once I have this information, then and only then, would any changes be initiated, but, only after receiving meaningful input from each of the Grand Priors and key Grand Magistral officers. My overall goal IF POSSIBLE, is to streamline ALL of the processes at the OSMTH level which could have a concomitant effect on the number of OSMTH officer positions necessary.

## 4. Working relationship between my office and the Grand Magistral Council?

Absent the informed input from the members of the Grand Magistral Council, especially the Grand Priors, the effectiveness of all of the activities of the Order and its growth would not be optimal. The input of each of the Grand Priors is CRUCIAL to the overall effectiveness of the Order. Without the wholehearted support of the Grand Priors of any approved initiatives submitted by me, progress will not be made.

5. As mentioned previously, the speed of the Order’s growth is closely correlated to our finances. Currently, the Order depends almost exclusively for financial support on the generosity of our Templar Brothers and Sisters, and, occasionally, for certain very specific projects, on donations from people outside the Order. To explore the possibility of establishing a Foundation or Trust, that would function as a funding vehicle for our affairs and projects, the GMC voted, during the Chapter General in Toronto, to appoint a committee to investigate our options. This work is still in progress and I hope to be able to report to the GMC at our business meeting in Mechelen, Belgium on the progress that has been made by this Ad Hoc Committee.

## 6. Mission of the Order

Using the Brussels Declaration as a guide, I will encourage the Grand Magistral Council to promote and foster the Vision Statement as it was expressed in this document, This is the basis upon which my Team and I are developing a clear, concise and simple **MISSION STATEMENT** for the Order – a mission that is **REALISTIC, ACHIEVABLE** and **IMPLEMENTABLE** within the current constraints of today's Order.

7. If we claim, as we do, that we are an International Ecumenical Christian Fraternal Order of Chivalry then it appears to me that we must do all that we can to STANDARDIZE all of our policies, procedures, devices, awards and the criteria for them TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, so that we present the same IMAGE to the world. I will ALWAYS be cognizant of and respect the national, cultural and linguistic diversity present in the Order today. The standardization that I refer to above MUST and WILL always take into consideration the diverse nature of the membership of our Order before any decision is made that affects the entire Order.

8. The Order's involvement in United Nations' activities continues. I have appointed highly qualified and experienced members of our Order as OSMTH Delegates to the UN in New York, Geneva and Vienna. We are currently awaiting the receipt of Ground Passes from the concerned UN Agency for all of our Delegates. The Order has entered into partnership with the UNODC (UN Office on Drugs and Crime) and UN.GIFT (a UN operational arm) concerning the issue of Human Trafficking (modern day slavery). Through the good offices of the OSMTH Secretary General, I have invited two UN Officers to address the GMC in 2011. The topic of their presentation on how OSMTH as an NGO and how our individual Members, who are also members of the international business community, can positively affect this partnership. In some ways this is even more significant in our UN activities because it can lead to the involvement of almost every member of the Order, as opposed to a select few who are appointed as Delegates. I have asked the Secretary General, Simon de St Claire, to explore the possibility of greater involvement with the UN through the establishment of a possible partnership with the UNODC (**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**) and specifically their GIFT Program - (Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking).

Among our planned activities in support of the UN, OSMTH has planned the following activities:

- a. During the February 2011 UN meeting in New York, OSMTH will be sponsoring a presentation entitled **"Female Slavery- A presentation by an award winning documentary film producer depicting the abuse of Women and Girls in both Advanced and Developing countries."**
- b. During the next scheduled Human Rights Council session scheduled for Geneva, OSMTH Delegates will present a statement authored by OSMTH on **"Managing Resources to give Peace and Humankind a Chance."** **This statement** has received the co-sponsorship of two other NGOs that hold General Consultative status in the UN. It is interesting to note that these two NGOs hold a higher status in the UN than does OSMTH!

9. The OSMTH Website has been redesigned and up-dated thanks to the hard work of the Webmaster General Chevse **Kathy Watson** assisted by the Secretary General. The Website is now hosted by a commercial company that specializes in this type of service. The cost of this service is less than what we paid before. I take this opportunity to thank Dr **Kevan Crawford**, PhD who provided yeoman service to the Order by hosting and maintaining the Website for many years. The

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Order will still have access to Kevan's talent and professional knowledge as he is still a part of the IT team! While there are several parts of the Website that are still being worked on, the bulk of the Website is posted on the Internet and is available for viewing. It is planned to offer in the future a "MEMBERS ONLY" section that will be password protected. Among other offerings, this section will feature a Calendar of Events for OSMTH, ALL our Grand Priories and their mentored entities. All relevant details pertaining to meetings, social and/or cultural and religious events, etc. will be posted in this section so that ALL of our members worldwide can be informed of the activities of our entities. Recently, the Editor General, Chev **Marston Watson**, published the Winter issue of the quarterly Newsletter "*Carpe Diem.*" While this issue was limited in content, it provided information on recent events. The publication was sent by email to all our Grand Priors and other senior OSMTH officers. I earnestly request that EACH GRAND PRIOR send this publication to each member of their Grand Priory so that these members can also be informed of OSMTH events.

10. An important event worth mentioning is the update of the "*History of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem – From 1118 to 2005*" authored by the Prior of Belgium, Chev **Leo Thys** GOTJ, who is also our **Archivist-General**. The deadline for the submission of the history of each Grand Priory is rapidly approaching - 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2011. I would like to underscore the importance of each Grand Priory submitting their history, no matter how recent or old, as soon as possible to Fr. Leo Thys.

11. The codification and insertion of Resolutions into the Statutes and Rules of the Order. Over the years, the GMC has voted on many legislative resolutions. Because of the sheer number of Resolutions that we now have on the record, we are now at the point where it is not clear as to which Statute or Rule many of these Resolutions pertain or where they should be inserted. A huge effort has been made by our current Chancellor General Rev. Dean **Pertti Ruotsulo** to rank and categorize the aforementioned resolutions. During my term of office, I have established a goal to have all of these Resolutions codified and inserted at the appropriate place in our Statutes and Rules. Once this is done, I plan on placing the entire OSMTH – CODEX in the "Members Only" section of our Website where it can be continually updated and be readily accessible by all our Brothers and Sisters.

12. Recently, I had the pleasure of appointing two very well qualified legal professionals to the top two legal positions in our Order. I have appointed **Lt. Colonel Chev. Terrence Benshoof**, US Army Reserve (Ret) to the position of Referendary General. While he was still on Active Duty, Terry served as the Judge Advocate of his General Officer Command in the USAR, he served as the Judge Advocate of the National Reserve Officers Association (the largest military officers association in the US), has served as the past Judge Advocate of GP-NATO, and is currently a successful attorney in the Chicago area. I have also had the pleasure of appointing **Captain Felix Biedermann**, a line Cavalry Officer in the German Army Reserve, to the newly created position of Avocat General for our Order. Felix a successful corporate lawyer in Germany and his intellect, English language skills as well as wide ranging legal knowledge is underscored by the fact that he may have been the only non-US educated or practicing attorney to Clerk for a US Federal Judge. Both of these members are talented legal professionals with very friendly styles of manner and deportment. Our Order is indeed fortunate to have persons of the caliber of these two Members in the positions to which they have been appointed. I congratulate each of these worthy Knights on their appointments.

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I closing, permit me to make an observation. By building on the incredible accomplishments of the past, I am convinced that the greatest days of OSMTH are ahead of us. Fortunately, our Order is rich with talent and members who are dedicated to the goals of the Order. We have a superb opportunity to EXPAND the size of our Order; to play a more SIGNIFICANT role in UN activities; to become more involved in HUMANITARIAN activities; and, through our worldwide contacts and behind-the-scenes activities, to have a more positive IMPACT on diplomatic activities around the world. To accomplish these challenging goals, EVERY Grand Prior and the members of ALL our Grand Priories must rededicate themselves to being part of ONE ORDER! As an ecumenical, Christian Fraternal Order of Chivalry, we must put aside petty differences and concentrate on the core goals of our Order. The New Year of 2011 is beckoning to us. It is filled with challenges and opportunities to do good works throughout the world.

I take this opportunity to wish each of you and the members of your families a wonderful New Year filled with good health, much happiness and prosperity. I ask God to bless every member of the Order and to guide us in all our endeavors.

With fraternal regards,

NNDNN

 *Bob Disney*