



FOR THE FAITH AND
IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY



St John

Eyes on the Future

THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

PRIORY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRIOR

Dear Fellow Confrères,

Over the past several weeks I have shared the distressing updates from St John Eye Hospital Group about the crisis in the Holy Land and the effects on our facilities and services. Like so many of you, I am grieving for our beloved hospital, our staff and their families, the patients they serve and

the broader international community. I am in very regular contact with the CEO of the St John Eye Hospital Group, Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali, and include his summary of the current situation below:

St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group

1. **Gaza:** hostilities in Gaza and Israel have continued with an increased number of casualties. Based on clear instructions from the Israeli Military Authorities, most of the Gazans residing in the northern districts have fled to the south. Humanitarian supplies have started to reach from the Rafah Crossing carrying food, water, and medical supplies. For detailed information on the current crisis, please refer to the latest update from the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
2. Our staff has also fled to the south district of the Gaza Strip, and all remain unharmed. However, it is worth mentioning that we have not been able to contact all of them due to electricity and telecommunication problems. The Board has unanimously agreed to pay our staff in Gaza their full salaries despite the fact that our work has stopped since the beginning of the crisis. This decision was well-received by the staff in Gaza as well as in the other facilities.
3. **Jerusalem:** The Israeli Authority has started allowing emergency surgical cases to reach East Jerusalem Hospitals. The surgical appointment team has been working hard to overcome logistical issues related to patients' transportation as well as movements within the West Bank. We will utilize this window of opportunity to bring in as many surgical patients as possible.

Meanwhile, all new recruitment has been frozen until end of the year, and staff has been advised to consume all their annual leaves.

Due to the continued restrictions on movement for both staff and patients the surgical workload in Jerusalem is at 30-35% of normal activities. As for outpatients there has been a slight recovery and as many as 100-120 patients are

seen daily at the OPD which makes up 50-60% of the usual/normal activities.

4. **Kufor Aqab Clinic:** due to the inability of patients to reach Jerusalem, we have commenced subspecialty medical retina, uveitis, oculoplastic and pediatric services at the clinic. As for clinical activities, we are at almost 90% capacity.

The outreach team manages to conduct clinics most days, but a number of clinics had to be cancelled due to staff safety issues.
5. **Hebron Hospital:** the Hospital is functioning at almost 100% capacity with a noticeable increase in surgical activities.
6. **Anabta Centre:** due to the increased movement restrictions in the northern districts, clinical activities in Anabta fluctuate on a daily basis. However, since the beginning of the current crisis activities remain at 60% of the expected workload. Until now, it has been unsafe for our doctors to travel from Jerusalem to conduct subspecialty clinics in Anabta. Subject to a favorable security situation, it is likely that we will resume these visits in the near future.

We cannot help but feel heavy-hearted as, in this land we call Holy, the violent loss of human life overshadows God's hope for all his people. Yet at the same time, I have been uplifted by the heartfelt show of concern and prayers from so many of you, immediately followed by, "how can I help?"

I am writing to let you know one crucial way, in addition to prayer, in which you can help.

As you know, the U.S. Priory works very closely with the leadership of St. John Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG), including the Chairman, CEO, and members of the Board of Trustees, to identify SJEHG's top priorities so that we are better able to align our support with those priorities. Before this current crisis in the Holy Land, the SJEHG Board had agreed to the purchase of a building in Nablus City to be fitted out to provide full hospital operations capability in the north of the West Bank.

Nablus, located in the West Bank, is the economic capital of the region, with over 1.2 million people who have access to the city. A hospital located here would enable SJEHG to treat patients locally, rather than attempt to send them to our Jerusalem Eye Hospital, as crossing from the West Bank into East Jerusalem is becoming more and more difficult.

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INVESTITURE WITH THE ANGELS

The sun moved up in the sky, casting a warm glow over Beverly Hills on the morning of our Investiture service, but a dark shadow fell across the world as the news of violence in the Holy Land was revealed. The reason for us gathering and rededicating ourselves to the work of the Order of St John was all the more poignant this year. Beautiful All Saints' Church was not just a place of worship, it was a sanctuary where Members could put thoughts of their busy lives aside and focus on their mission to serve.

As they do every year, Members from across the country gathered for this moving event. Their presence was a testament to the importance of the Order and the values it represents—service, honor, and chivalry. The picturesque church, with its Spanish colonial revival architecture and cool courtyard gardens, provided the perfect backdrop

for the grand occasion. As Members took their places and guests arrived to celebrate, they were greeted by a beautifully decorated church with stained glass and large displays of fresh flowers.

The service began with a beautiful aria sung by Dana Surena-Mattson, a Dame of the Order of Malta. This was followed by the usual solemn procession of Members in mantles, regalia, and banners.



Ben Faucett, OStJ, and Ned Donovan, OStJ, before the service.

The Investiture service unfolded with a combination of reverence and splendor. Existing Members took their places in the pews along with those being admitted and promoted within the Priory. The homily from the Reverend Dr. Russell Levenson, OStJ, our Sub-Prelate, was a moving testament to the work of the Order. [See this issue's **Pro Fide** column for excerpts.] Especially given the news from earlier in the day of unrest and attacks on Israel from Gaza, he provided an eloquent expression of the principles of chivalry, humility, and service. Thinking of the Order's thousand-year history in the Holy Land, the congregation was reminded of our individual and communal commitment and duty to service. He called on everyone to be Christ to the sick and the poor.



David Pyott, CBE, CStJ, reading a lesson from the Gospel.

Following the word from the Sub-Prelate, the Investiture of rising and newly admitted Members was, as always, a highlight of the weekend. Postulants were implored to serve the sick and the poor and to live as Members of our Most Venerable Order. Whether Dame, Commanders, Officers or new Members, the importance of our commitment to this work of the Order was impressed on Members who came forward in succession to receive their insignia. These symbolic gestures represented the entrustment of responsibility and an acknowledgement of their commitment to upholding the Order's principles and fulfilling its mission.

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Mark Pigott, KBE, KStJ, chats with Chancellor Ellen LeCompte, CStJ, Maxey Roberts, CStJ, and Cindy Jarboe, CStJ, before taking his place as a Reader during the Investiture Service.

***The Investiture
service
unfolded with a
combination of
reverence and
splendor.***

As ever at the annual Investiture, the music was a rousing call to remember the importance of the faith for which we all serve. Throughout the service, the church's acoustics came alive with the strains of exquisite choral and instrumental music. The choir's harmonious voices filled the sacred space, while the organ's majestic notes swelled and receded in perfect harmony with the ceremony's emotional cadence. The music added a layer of depth and poignancy to the event, stirring the hearts of all who were present. Finishing the service with the traditional singing of the national anthems of the United Kingdom and the United States helped everyone to remember what a global body the Order of St John is. As the service was continued, Members thought not just of the Eye Hospital and its facilities throughout the Holy Land, but about the worldwide reach of our Order that serves humanity for faith. ❄️



Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.



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Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.



Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.

WELCOME!

The Welcome Reception is always a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with Confrères we might not have seen since the last Weekend of Investiture and Rededication. It was made more meaningful this year through its sponsorship by the Women's Forum.

In an effort to foster more gender diversity within the Order of St John globally, Lord Prior Mark Compton formed the International Women's Network in 2021. The Lord Prior has been especially focused on creating a network specifically to increase the presence of women in leadership roles in the Order. The purpose of the Priory's Women's Forum is to inspire and create new conversations within the U.S. Priory to help provide a better understanding of the experiences of women across the organization.

Photo by Lisa Grotts, OSTJ.



Sponsorship in lights

Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.



The garden of the Ebell of Los Angeles

Sponsorship of the Welcome Reception at the Ebell of Los Angeles presented an excellent opportunity to highlight the goals and mission of the Women's Forum. The Ebell has been empowering women since 1894 through its philanthropic work in the Los Angeles community. Its original mission "to interest women in the study of all branches of literature, art and science and the advancement of women in every branch of culture" is as relevant today as it was 129 years ago, and dovetails perfectly with the objectives of the Women's Forum. Co-chair of the U.S. Priory Women's Forum Ellen LeCompte, CSTJ, said, "The Ebell was an ideal venue since it is all about advocating for women and spotlighting their accomplishments, leadership and contributions, just as the Women's Forum does."

Not only was the Ebell's history a perfect match for the Order's Welcome Reception, the elegant, renaissance-inspired structure and garden provided a fitting backdrop for conversation and delectable refreshments. Confrères from

other regions or even within widespread regions caught up with one another, pledged to connect more often and exchanged ideas about how to further the work of the Order. Over the decades, the venue has hosted such notable people as Amelia Earhart, Judy Garland and Michelle Obama. Though their names are not yet as well known, there were women in attendance Friday evening whose accomplishments are as noteworthy as the women who have graced the Ebell's campus in the past. ❄️



Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.

New Member Capt. Scott Rye, MStJ, connects with an old friend, Dr. Bitia Esmaeli, OSTJ

INVESTITURE HOSTED IN HISTORIC LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles is a city that wasn't meant to be, because, in reality, it's a desert. While oil is the currency in Texas and certainly has a place in the story of Los Angeles, it's water that lies at the basis of prosperity in Southern California. At the turn of the Twentieth Century, the city's visionaries carved a "hydropolis" out of a desert with water taken from a lake 250 miles to the north in the foothills of the Sierra Madres.

Prior to his death in 2017, Kevin Starr, Knight of Malta, was California's state librarian. Our Prior, Nigel Heath, KStJ, in his remarks at the Investiture Gala, referenced Starr and his multi-volume series on the history of California, *Americans and the California Dream*. Starr wrote that Los Angeles was "...nurtured on oil, water and Midwestern dreams...an Oz sustained by studied self-inventions and exotic possibilities."

Its unique exuberance was built on the commerce of imagination, aspiration and ideas.

All of this is important because the members of the Planning Committee who put the Investiture Weekend together felt they had a story to tell about their city that many might never consider and some might find interesting and vastly entertaining.

That's why they chose the iconic Beverly Wilshire as the host hotel, arranged for curated tours of the Getty Museum and Paramount Studios, selected the Ebell of Los Angeles as the venue for the Welcome Reception and booked the Investiture service at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills.

Beverly Wilshire Hotel

It's not the grandeur, charm or hospitality of Beverly Wilshire that greeted many Confrères upon their arrival Friday morning.

Their first impression was the chanting of hotel employees striking for higher wages, more benefits and better working conditions. It was a stark reminder that Beverly Wilshire's lap

of luxury—and by extension, Los Angeles itself—is built on the shoulders of people, who, themselves, aspire for their own share of the California dream.

Constructed in the Italian Renaissance style with French neo-classic influences, the hotel premiered as the "Wilshire Apartment Hotel" in 1928. *The Beverly Hills Citizen* heralded its opening with a front page editorial—"Yesterday a scattered community field. Today—a model city. Tomorrow the Heart of the Next Million."

Over the years, Beverly Wilshire became known as "less of a hotel, but an experience." Although Elvis Presley had a penthouse suite when he was in town for a shoot at Paramount Studios and Warren Beatty lived there, the hotel became iconic as the central filming location for the 1990 hit movie, *Pretty Woman*.

For those Confrères who arrived Thursday evening, they had the option on Friday morning of taking curated tours of the Getty Center or Paramount Studios.

The Getty Center

The Getty Center was built in 1997, at a cost of \$1.3 billion. To level the site, engineers had to chop off the top of a mountain and build a tram for visitors to get there. It stands above the city with breathtaking views arching from downtown Los Angeles all the way to the Pacific, and on clear days, Catalina Island.

Metaphorically, it can be considered as the "City on a Hill." Some say it was intentionally set apart from the sprawl of Los Angeles to symbolize the "Ideal," the aim of classicism. Rather than being unapproachable, it has become a favorite destination for parents from all over the city who bring their children to play in the vast gardens on Sundays.

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Beverly Wilshire Ballroom all dressed up



A spectacular view from The Getty

Photo by Dayna Roberts, OSJ

A team of Getty docents led Confrères throughout the museum, highlighting the vast collection that has made the Getty a renowned, world-class museum. Their tour included works of Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, Goya, Manet, Renoir, Monet, Gauguin, van Gogh and Cezanne, to name just a few.



Richmond Region Confrères are ready for their closeup

Paramount Studios

Where else but Los Angeles would fertile ground be found for a nascent industry built solely on imagination, creativity and dreams? When the name “Hollywoodland” was coined, it referred to a real estate venture. In a few short years,

“Hollywoodland” would become “Hollywood,” a name that would come to symbolize so much of what Los Angeles is.

Geographically speaking, “Hollywood” is not the name of any town or city in California. It’s actually a part of the city of Los Angeles, more like a district, neighborhood or suburb than anything else.

But that doesn’t matter, since Hollywood exists on its own in the sublime, greater than any city in the world. For generations Hollywood has defined and reflected who Americans are, both to the world and to themselves.

Paramount Studios sits in the heart of Hollywood on Melrose Avenue. It is the last studio to remain in the neighborhood. Those Members who visited Paramount Studios were assembled into groups of seven. Tour guides chauffeured each group in carts, visiting stages where *Samson and Delilah*, *Sunset Blvd.*, *White Christmas*, *Rear Window*, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* and many other classics were shot and are still in use even now.

Also on the tour of the studio’s back lot were facades that depict various New York City locales, including Washington Square, Brooklyn and the Financial District.

The Ebell of Los Angeles

The Welcome Reception on Friday evening was held at the Ebell, an elegant, Italian Renaissance-style campus located in the mid-Wilshire district.

The Ebell campus is a beautiful venue, serving as the headquarters for the Ebell of Los Angeles women’s

organization. It was established in 1894, “for the advancement of women in every branch of culture.”

While the Ebell was founded as a “social club,” its founders envisioned an organization to “interest women in the study of all branches of literature, art and science.” Consistent with the ethos of the time in Los Angeles, it nurtured the pursuit of ideas and aspirations, with the motto “I will find a way or make one—I serve.”

Over the years it has contributed mightily to the creative life of the city, hosting concerts, lectures, seminars, exhibitions and music recitals.

All Saints’ Episcopal Church

All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills hosted the Investiture Service and Rededication on Saturday morning.

As the story goes, when Will Rogers was asked if he would be interested in serving as the mayor of Beverly Hills, he supposedly said he couldn’t be mayor of a city that didn’t have any churches.

So, he donated the land along Santa Monica Boulevard where Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church, All Saints Episcopal Church and Good Shepherd Catholic Church are anchored today.

Whether that story is true or an urban myth probably can’t be determined. But what is true is The Beverly Hills Hotel hosted the first meeting of what would become All Saints’ Parish in 1922.

Four years later, a small chapel was built in the Spanish Gothic style. In 1951, a new church building was erected, adjoining the chapel.

Historically the church has had close ties to the Order. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., a parishioner of All Saints’, was instrumental in establishing what is now known as the U.S. Priory. Today, the Order has a large presence at All Saints’, with 15 Confrères among its ranks. ✨



A view from above at All Saints’ Beverly Hills

Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.



Photo by John Nyboer, Nyboer Photography.

Ahmad Ma'ali, St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group CEO, addresses the Membership Luncheon attendees.

A SOMEWHAT SOMBER MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

News of the outbreak of war in the Holy Land was still being processed by Confrères as the 2023 Annual Membership Luncheon began. The Blessing by our Sub-Prelate, the Rev'd Russ Levenson, OStJ, included a special prayer for peace, and prayers for grieving families.

The somber mood was lightened by the awarding of St John Volunteer Corps certificates to Confrères in attendance who had performed at least 60 volunteer hours at approved organizations or institutions. In total, around 80 Members this past year made this significant commitment of their time to non-profits providing support to *our Lords the sick and the poor*, including Veterans' Homes, food banks, and shelters for the unhoused. And many more Confrères while serving less than 60 hours have participated with no less important and meaningful commitment to SJVC activities serving the vulnerable in their communities. There is no better example of putting faith into action.

Luncheon attendees were introduced to the work of the Downtown Women's Center, the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless women. Following the luncheon, Members were invited to help package food and supplies for later distribution to the Center.

St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) CEO Ahmad Ma'ali, Ph.D., greeted attendees with the news that the hospitals and clinics had so far suffered no significant damage and the staff was unharmed. He went on to provide an update on the work of the Hospital, clinics and mobile units. A record 6,916 major surgeries were performed last year with more than 142,000 patients treated in an outpatient setting.

Dr. Ma'ali stressed the importance of the financial support provided to the Eye Hospital Group by the U.S. Priory. Our donations fund 12 nurses and one doctor, a cataract initiative, the child vision screening initiative (also funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation) and genetics research (supported by The Ben May Charitable Trust), among several other programs. Luncheon attendees also viewed video highlights of the António Champalimaud Vision Award presentation to the St John Eye Hospital Group last month.

Order of St John Hospitaller Dr. David Verity, KStJ, presented the current strategic programs of the Eye Hospital Group and provided some context into the high rate of vision loss among Palestinians, including high rates of poverty and access to health care. In an effort to combat these barriers, the Eye Hospital Group is expanding its current outreach of two mobile units with an additional unit deployed in the West Bank last year. Child screening initiatives have been expanded, as well as efforts to identify retinopathy in premature babies.

Dr. Verity also explained the Corneal Graft Surgery program, which will import corneas from the U.S. to restore sight to some of the 280 patients on the waiting list. Finally, he dove into the role academia and research play in the future of the St John Eye Hospital Group. The aspiration for SJEHG is to become a leading international institution of ophthalmic education, research, and innovation, and in the process strengthen partnerships, good governance, communications, and marketing locally and worldwide. Dr. Verity ended by saying, "You give countless people the gift of sight." A precious gift indeed.

To view the luncheon slide presentations, click [here](#) and go to the 2023 Investiture. ✨

INVESTITURE SERVICE PROJECT

HELPING WOMEN IN NEED

For this year's service project, the Investiture planning team collaborated with the Downtown Women's Center (DWC), an SJVC approved volunteer activity, to create a useful and convenient activity for Investiture Weekend participants. The goal was to host the service project at the hotel and eliminate the need for volunteers to travel.

As Los Angeles's only organization working exclusively on behalf of homeless and formerly homeless women, the Downtown Women's Center serves more than 5,700 women each year, providing more than 108,000 meals while operating 119 units of permanent housing.

Following the Investiture service and luncheon, more than 80 Confrères gathered in the hotel to assemble 1,000 hygiene kits for women served by DWC. Enthusiasm was high as Priory Members filled bags of toiletry supplies at long tables, carefully collecting soap, shampoo, lotion, body wipes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and socks. Each individual bag was then sealed and handed off to another volunteer for boxing.

"The service project was a wonderful way for us to support the local community," said Kristin Ceva, MSTJ, who participated. "Doing this work, together, after rededicating ourselves to the Order's mission was especially meaningful," she added.

"The Order of St John's commitment to humanitarian causes is truly inspiring."

**Catherine Collins
Board Member,
Downtown
Women's Center**

To deepen the collaboration with DWC, the Investiture planning team commissioned a custom candle, the purchase of which benefits DWC's work. Hand-poured by the women in DWC's social enterprise and job-training program, the resulting candle is a clean-burning blend of sandalwood, amber, and uniquely, *Hypericum*, better known as St John's wort. The candle's name, *Santal d' Acre*, was inspired by the Hospitaller commandery of Saint-Jean-d'Acre and may be [ordered](#) through the U.S. Priory's online gift shop.

As the project wrapped up, DWC board member Catherine Collins, said, "These hygiene kits are

in particularly high demand, and we are eager to receive them. We're grateful that while you were convening here in Los Angeles, you shared your humanitarian spirit with local women in need." ❄️



Our Members assembling hygiene kits for the Downtown Women's Center.



Ever with their eyes on the future, I am pleased to announce that Confrères Molly and David Pyott have stepped up with a \$250,000 matching gift challenge to help fund what is needed to make the new Nablus hospital a reality. So, in answer to your question "how can I help?" this is your opportunity to step up too. I understand that you may question why we are not directing our funding to the Gaza hospital. Certainly the U.S. Priory will be front and center in bringing that critically important facility back online, but it will first take some time to evaluate (once access is allowed) what repairs are needed.

The current circumstances and indeed the success of our future in the Holy Land, require us to strategically focus now on providing quality care in Nablus. This will allow SJEHG to better serve the sick and the poor in that region and beyond without having to deal with the mobility issues that are currently making it more and more challenging for both our staff and patients to access our existing facilities.

I hope you will help us meet this very generous matching gift challenge by considering a gift to support the Nablus hospital effort. Every dollar raised will be matched (up to \$250,000), thus doubling your ability to help our Lord's sick and the poor.

While the impact of the current hostilities in the Holy Land is almost unimaginable, I am buoyed by your kindness and willingness to help and, while we can't solve all of the problems in the Middle East, we can stay true to our mission and make a difference in the lives of those residents of the Holy Land suffering from eye disease and who are now facing almost insurmountable obstacles to receiving the care they need and deserve. Won't you please help?

Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum,
Nigel G. Heath, KStJ
Prior

ST JOHN OPHTHALMIC ASSOCIATION (SOA) HOLDS FIRST MEETING OPEN TO ALL CONFRÈRES

On Friday of Investiture and Rededication weekend in Los Angeles, the American chapter of the St John Ophthalmic Association (SOA-USA) held its eighth meeting. Established in 2015, the SOA is now formed of 11 chapters across five international hubs, and includes iYouth, the Young Professionals' group.

SOA-USA now hosts an annual meeting at the American Academy of Ophthalmology, online events, and a dedicated event during the U.S. Priory's Investiture weekend. The most recent Investiture, at Beverley Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles was the third such meeting, and the first open to all Confrères.

The event was led by David Pyott, the U.S. Priory Hospitaller and Chair of SOA-USA, with contributions from Dr. Charles Mosteller, SOA-USA Honorary Secretary, and scientific advisers Drs. Suzanne Freitag and Bitu Esmaeli. Following an introduction from Prior Nigel Heath, the program's speakers included the Order Hospitaller Dr. David Verity, the CEO of the

St John Eye Hospital Group Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali, and recordings from four of our Eye Hospital Group doctors.

Dedicated to promoting the profile and reputation of the St John Eye Hospital Group, the SOA has now run more than 35 events around the world. This meeting in Los Angeles successfully brought experts together from a wide range of specialties to discuss the service work of the Hospital Group, our clinical and research projects, and two case reports of patients currently being managed in Jerusalem and Gaza.

The St John Eye Hospital Group aspires to being an international leader in ophthalmic research and education. In the future, the group is looking to establish an academic research center in Jerusalem, with a wide international support base. SOA-Global is grateful to the U.S. Priory and the CEO and doctors in Jerusalem and Gaza, for staging yet another high-quality meeting, bringing these objectives one step closer. ✱





ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM EYE HOSPITAL GROUP WINS THE WORLD'S LARGEST AWARD IN THE FIELD OF VISION

A hot topic throughout Investiture weekend was St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group winning the 2023 António Champalimaud Vision Award. The award was announced recently in a ceremony in Lisbon chaired by President of Portugal, H.E Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, and President of the Champalimaud Foundation, Leonor Beleza, in the presence of public figures and international organizations' representatives.

The €1 million award recognizes the Hospital Group's longstanding charitable provision of eye care in the region for the last 140 years. First established in 1882 by Queen Victoria, St John Eye Hospital has served millions of people to restore their sight in war and peace time in the wider Middle East region and has been serving the poor and the sick in the Holy Land. The mission of the Hospital Group is built upon the ethos of the Venerable Order of St John in serving humanity.

The St John Eye Hospital Group is internationally recognized as operating at the highest standards of care. St John Eye Hospital Group is the first hospital in the Palestinian territories to be awarded the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation. The Hospital Group is the leading education and research institution working to build capacity and generating data on the prevalence of blindness, which eventually informs

our program operations in the prevention of avoidable blindness in the region.

Launched in 2006, the globally renowned António Champalimaud Vision Award is the largest award in all fields of vision, recognizing leadership in both scientific discovery and humanitarian impact. The Foundation, constituted at the bequest of the late Portuguese industrialist António Champalimaud, is based in Portugal, but its action in several fields spans the globe.

Under the Chairmanship of Prof. Alfred Sommer, the International Jury Panel comprises world leaders in ophthalmology, research and global public health, in addition to prominent individuals in the field of international development and outstanding scientists in fundamental research and biomedical sciences such as, Susumu Tonegawa, a Japanese scientist who was the sole recipient of the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1987; Amartya Kumar Sen, an Indian economist and philosopher, who was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences; and Gullapalli Nageswara Rao, an Indian Ophthalmologist, and founder of the L. V. Prasad Eye Institute. ✨



PRO FIDE

**Excerpt from “The Eyes Have It,”
from the October 7, 2023,
Investiture Service
All Saints’ Episcopal Church
Beverly Hills, California**

We call this a rededication service. And moments from now, as dedicated Members of our Order, we will say these words together; *“Look upon our lives, O Lord God, and make them thine ... that we may walk in thy way.... faithfully serving our neighbor....”*

Serving... we cannot love without serving; and service without love, is anemic in its power. We are called to do both to love AND to serve. Maybe you wonder—does the service you render make a difference? Do your prayers matter? Do your Oblations really impact the lives of others?

Some of you will know the tale of a man walking upon a beach covered with starfish that had washed ashore. Ahead of him, he sees an elderly woman, slowly bending down to pick up one starfish and tossing it back into the sea. He sees her do it again, and then again, until his pace catches up to her.

He says, *“What on earth are you doing?”* She smiles and says, *“I am saving starfishes.”* He rolls his eyes and says, *“Madame, there are hundreds of starfishes here on this beach, I really think no matter how many you throw back, it won’t make any difference!”* She just smiles, reaches down, picks up another and tosses it out into the surf. She turns to the young cynic and says, *“Made a difference to that one!”*

If you want to know if the work to which we are committed is making a difference... I can assure you—for each and every human that washes upon the shores of care provided by our Order—**it makes a difference.**

How much of a difference? Outside of all the other outreach and service initiatives of our Order—in 2022 alone—the hospital and its companion satellite locations treated—a total of 143,000 patients and of that number—7,000 received direct surgical procedures. That is a very large tent load of love!

My Confrères, we have come together to commit ourselves to the work to which we have been called to support—and the work we have been called to do. To be part of this—means—a sacrifice—of time, of talent... yes of treasure.

Sacrifice sometimes hurts you know—it gets in the way of our “business...” of our “day to day lives...” but that kind of hurt is worth enduring, and it is far lesser hurt than that endured by those we serve.

I love what Mother Teresa once wrote, *“I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts, then there is no hurt, only more love.”*

So, my fellow Confrères—indeed, the eyes have it... an opportunity to see and learn a different way to do life from than what we see in the evening news or spread across the troubling stories of our newspapers, podcasts or online posts—that love can be real, that love can make a difference, that love can heal... and that kind of love is holy.

The words of American poet Edwin Markham are worth taking home with us

*Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout
They drew a circle that shut me out...
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took them in...”*

As we go—may we—draw larger and larger circles of loving and sacrificial service—such that our actions speak louder and shine brighter than the medals we wear, stretch longer than the titles attached to our names, and embody—incarnate, our motto into a world that needs not to merely read the words—*Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum....*but see them come to life.

The eyes have it... they are watching... by God’s grace may what is revealed through our Order, for every eye to see—be the power of love.

Pro Fide,
The Reverend Russell J. Levenson, Jr., D.Min., D.D., OStJ
Sub-Prelate