



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

Long live the king! His Majesty King Charles III, our new Sovereign Head, was crowned in a church-centered spectacle broadcast worldwide. The Order, represented by our Lord Prior, was privileged, and honored to be part of the King's procession. Please see the article included in this month's issue.

Thank you to all Confrères who participated in our first National Day of Service. While many of us volunteer throughout the year, May 20th was the first time we came together in fellowship and action simultaneously across the country to help the vulnerable in our communities.

From the shelter for homeless veterans in New England, to Fisher House in Charleston, to Habitat for Humanity in Chicago, Richmond, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Corpus Christi and Connecticut, food banks and pantries in Mobile, San Francisco, North Carolina, Los Angeles, Houston, Silicon Valley and Greenwich, and multiple card writing groups in Washington, DC and San Francisco for vets and children awaiting surgery at St. John Eye Hospital Group, our National Day of Service reached every corner of the country. I look forward to sharing more stories of this nationwide outreach in future newsletters.

*Serving our Lords, the sick and the poor indeed. Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum.*



*John Macaskill, CSTJ, Treasurer of the U.S. Priory and member of the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group Board of Trustees, at the St. John Eye Hospital, Jerusalem, with the new outreach van donated by our U.S. Priory*



*David Pyott CBE, OSTJ, U.S. Hospitaller, center, with Molly Pyott and trustees at the new Nablus Hospital*

Our Southwest Region is featured in this month's issue, and our gratitude and thanks go out to Confrère James McCulley, MD, KStJ, and his colleagues, including a pediatric specialist who, with the support of the Dallas Surgeons Fund, recently carried twenty-four A class corneas to the Hospital in Jerusalem and oversaw the transplants. Saving eyesight, changing lives. *Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum.*

I had the pleasure to be in our Washington, DC, office recently and met Carey Hollensteiner, Member Services and Events Director, and Mi Ae Taylor, Program Associate, who are great additions to our Priory team. We gathered with Washington Confrères for a pleasant evening and update of the latest progress of our Priory and St John International.

Thank you to the New York Regional team for organizing a similar event the following evening where we discussed the great progress with their New York & Greenwich Nurse and Doctor Endowment. Mark your calendars for **Investiture 2024, October 18-20, New York City**. The service will take place at St. Thomas Fifth Avenue.

Our Treasurer and Hospitaller are both members of the Board of Trustees of St. John Eye Hospital Group and have just returned from a board meeting in Jerusalem. While there, they visited the new proposed building for our fourth full operating hospital in the Holy Land. The plan is to relocate the existing Anabta clinic to Nablus and provide full operating theaters, thus reducing the need to transport patients south to Jerusalem.

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

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*The Royal Family stands for photos after the King's Coronation. Third from the left is the Grand Prior of our Order, HRH Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester.*

## CELEBRATION AND COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

After months of planning and preparation, the Coronation of HM King Charles III was a momentous and emotional occasion for the people of the United Kingdom, Commonwealth citizens, and Members of the Order of

St John around the world. The ceremony at Westminster Abbey was steeped in tradition and symbolism, with centuries-old rituals and customs that spoke to the deep history and cultural significance of the monarchy. Thousands of gatherings were held in celebration across the UK and the world while millions of souvenirs and theme decorations were sold. It is likely that a few hundred million people watched all or part of the ceremony, but only a few thousand were able to attend in person.

The two most senior members of The Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem were among those at Westminster Abbey to see the Sovereign Head crowned. The Grand Prior of the Order, HRH Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO, GCStJ, was there with other senior members of the Royal Family—processing and waving to those lining the route back to Buckingham Palace. Joining the witnesses of the Coronation was Professor Mark R. Compton, AM, GCStJ—our Lord Prior. He came from Australia to witness



*Lord Prior Mark Compton with St John Ambulance Volunteers*

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*Members of the Houston Region SJVC helped beautify their city in commemoration of the Coronation.*

the Coronation but also to support those St John Ambulance volunteers providing invaluable logistical support for such a massive operation. Members of St John Ambulance provided first aid and medical support throughout the weekend's events. Just as the King reminded everyone how important it is not to be served but to serve, St John Ambulance volunteers were there to serve—to assist with any emergencies that arose anywhere during the festivities.

Throughout the U.S. Priory, there was also much celebration of the Coronation. In spite of the time difference between the United States and London, Members found creative ways to connect with the festive occasion. The Los Angeles Region commemorated the event with a reception and celebratory concert Friday evening. Across the country, the dedicated Members of the New York Region got together at 5:30 a.m. for a live watch party. Members in Chicago and Mobile, AL, waited until a more reasonable hour to watch a recorded version of the ceremony later in the day. Regional gatherings in Raleigh and St. Louis took place the day after the Coronation along with a celebratory choral evensong in New York. However Members watched and celebrated, they were inspired by the message of service and faith presented by the Sovereign Head at this historic event. 🌟



*Members of the Chicago Region gathered for a Coronation celebration.*



## DOUBLE THE SERVICE

To many Members of the Order of St John and the U.S. Priory, the Meek and Porter families have shown that the Order of St John can be a symbolic family, but can also help give actual relatives a focus for their commitment to service. Dorothy Porter's grandfather and grandmother, Samuel Meek, Sr. and Priscilla Meek, were Confrères; her parents Samuel Meek, Jr. and Marjorie Meek were Confrères; her husband, Nicholas Porter, KStJ, is a Confrère who leads the Priory's pilgrimages, and now two of their daughters have joined the Order family as volunteers.

Thea Porter will be a college junior focusing on Middle Eastern studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University in Washington, DC. She reached out to the Priory's national office late last summer to see if there were any opportunities to intern for the U.S. Priory. Her inquiry was met with a resounding "YES," and she has been a valuable member of the national office team ever since.

Rebecca Porter will be a college senior majoring in Classics at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Wishing to master her Arabic, she reached out to Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali, CEO of St John Eye Hospital Group, in Jerusalem to see if there was an opportunity for her to intern at the Hospital for a semester. Ahmad and the team in Jerusalem welcomed Rebecca with open arms.

What was interesting to learn is that Thea and Rebecca are identical twins. But their stories and their paths to volunteering with the Order could not be more different. Here are their stories, in their own words.

### Thea

Growing up playing with my sister, playing dragon slayers and battling knights, it is hard to explain the excitement I felt when I learned my dad was one of the heroes I dreamed about.

Of course at the time I was not aware that the impact of the Order of St John far supersedes any jousting tournament my young mind could have imagined. As time passed, I learned how the Order of St John became entwined in my family's lives and identities. From traveling to Malta to watching the historic jousting tournament to visiting the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem, the Order always brought me feelings of excitement and joy as I met its kind Members and embarked on international adventures. But these thoughts were all far from my mind when I arrived in Washington, DC, to begin my life as a George Washington University student. It was not until my sophomore year when I stumbled upon the opportunity to intern at the U.S. Priory.

Being a twin, specifically an identical twin, has constantly reminded me of the duality of the world. While I trudged through the crowded streets and fallen leaves to the office this past fall, my twin sister was navigating the Jerusalem route to appear for her shifts at the St John Eye Hospital. Regardless



*The Porter Women: l-r: Thea Porter, Dorothy Porter, Rebecca Porter*

of the time difference, we would speak daily of our shared experiences, thoughts and hopes for the future in regard to the Order. While we were worlds away from one another, the Order gave both of us a shared piece of home.

### Rebecca

Some of my first memories of my father are of him in a cape with a St John Cross. The Order of St John brought Jerusalem into my real life. It rooted me in the city and simultaneously at home. The mornings I spent in the office were my favorites, practicing my Arabic and meeting the wonderful people who allowed the organization to thrive. It is one of the true hearts of the city, with receptionists to doctors sharing a passion for outreach and constant joy no matter how full the waiting room might be. St John offers an opportunity to experience Palestine outside of a western lens. Through the mobile and stationary clinics, there is a clear sense of community and agency that I was happy to be even a tiny part of.

One of my favorite experiences was with the mobile clinic. On Christmas day, I traveled to a village with the team, and after the clinic, to a building with hundreds of people awaiting care. It was amazing to watch the sense of community and trust between the villagers and St John Eye Hospital staff. After a long day, everyone sat together and ate maqluba (a chicken and rice dish).

On the other side of the world, my twin sister would also spend her mornings in the DC office and, despite the miles between us, it closed the gap to both share that experience in different ways. Despite the massive differences between Washington DC, and Jerusalem it brought me a little bit of home.

Once again, the Order of St John works in mysterious ways to bring disparate interests together—even within the same family—while continuing the legacy of service. ✨

## OUR DALLAS REGION



### City of Dallas

It all began with a logo that turned into a nickname. You'll see it everywhere in Dallas.

The symbol, three concentric Ds with a tree in the middle, is iconic. It's meant to reflect the city's quality of life.

That's why, if you're a local, you may call your city, "Triple D," in casual conversation.

And there's a lot to back that up.

Dallas has the nation's largest arts district with 19 blocks of museums and galleries. Its sports teams, the Cowboys, Mavericks, Stars, Rangers, and FC Dallas, are legendary. The economy is growing like a weed, jobs are plentiful, a car is unnecessary and there's so much to do, people say it's hard to be bored.

It's brash, bold and the soul of the Lone Star State, with a skyline emerging from the prairie like the Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz.

### And talk about Texas hospitality!

If you attended the Dallas Investiture in 2015, you got a flavor of how our Dallas Confrères can roll out the red carpet and how committed they are to our Order's mission and service.

Dallas is the home of the Southwest Region. It was founded in the 1970s and represented Arkansas, Texas and New Mexico, until Austin-San Antonio and Houston became stand-alone regions a few years ago.

As the second oldest in the U.S. Priory, the Region lays claim to a storied history. Only the San Francisco Region is older.

"It really took off in the 1980s and 90s with three visionaries—Charlie Hickox (KStJ), Bob McKenzie (KStJ), and Buz Meyer (CStJ)," says Mark LaRoe, KStJ, who serves, along with Drew Bradford, CStJ, as Regional co-chair.

"These men were faithful Confrères who carried our mission westward and laid claim to what we've become today.

"But it was Charlie whose tireless energy turned a fledgling membership into the Order's second largest Region. Along with raising money to acquire state-of-the-art medical equipment, he created the Dallas Surgeons Fund, an endowment that sends ophthalmologists and other specialists from the University of Texas-Southwestern Medical School to St John Eye Hospital.

"And, he also convinced the trustees of the Episcopal Foundation of Dallas to fund one of the first vans for the Hospital's mobile outreach program."

It's this legacy that continues to drive the Region's commitment and generosity.

"Our goal is two-fold," says Mark. "We want to grow the Fund into a million dollar endowment, along with conducting an annual campaign to fund a full-time nursing position."

Today, the Region's membership consists of 70 Confrères, many of whom have joined the Order in the past three years.

"We've been quite successful finding people who have an affinity for what we do in Episcopal churches throughout the Region," Mark says.

"We reach out to people in the medical community, especially ophthalmologists. And, we've also done a good job of increasing the number of women in our membership."

### What about plans for the future?

"We're really focused on building the role and scope of the St. John Volunteer Corps," Mark says.

He outlined seven local organizations where members can accrue service hours.

1. The Clyde W. Coper Texas Veteran's Home, which provides long-term care for veterans, their spouses and Gold Star parents;
2. Dick Granger Neighborhood Ministry, a Dallas non-profit which provides financial support and services to the working poor in neighborhoods served by the Church of the Incarnation;
3. the Fisher House, which provides a "home away from home" for families of patients receiving medical care at military and VA medical centers;
4. Genesis Women's Shelter, which provides safety, shelter and support for victims of domestic violence;
5. Irving Cares, a food pantry and service organization;
6. North Texas Food Bank, a non-profit hunger relief organization,
7. St. Joseph's Residence, which provides assisted living to the elderly.

"Whether it's the charities we support in our outreach efforts in Dallas, or our commitment to our Hospital in Jerusalem, we remain true to our Priory's aims preserved in our motto, *Pro Fide*, meaning 'for the Faith,' and *Pro Utilitate Hominum*, meaning 'in the service of humanity,'" Mark says. "In the final analysis, that's just who we are." ✱



## SJVC AND SMOM SERVE SOUP IN CHICAGO

The Uptown neighborhood of Chicago has a rich history dating back to the late 19th century. Though it was a hub for jazz and Chicago blues music in the 1920s, it has faced a number of struggles more recently. Even as residents have dealt with poverty, crime and lack of affordable housing, the area has seen much development effort lately. This has led to worries of gentrification and displacement of long-time residents.

In the late 1970s, members of St. Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic Church established a soup kitchen that has been a lifeline for many individuals and families in need in the neighborhood. Every Tuesday and Friday, St. Thomas opens its doors to provide a hot meal to anyone who walks in, no questions asked. It is run entirely by volunteers who work tirelessly to prepare nutritious and delicious meals and distribute non-perishable bags of food for the guests.



*Fra' Tom Mulligan and Ryan Ruskin, MStJ, work together at The St. Thomas of Canterbury Soup Kitchen.*



*SJVC and SMOM join forces to serve those in need. From left to right, Ryan Ruskin, MStJ, Priscilla Barlow, MStJ, Tom Leverso, KM, and Fra' Tom Mulligan.*

One of the soup kitchen's partners is the local branch of the Order of Malta. For years, the Knights and Dames of the Federal Association have volunteered once a month to do the preparation, serving and cleanup for the Soup Kitchen. Since November 2013, Chicago area Members of the U.S. Priory of the Order of St John have been helping with this effort to serve the community. It has been an amazing experience for

those Confrères who have been able to attend regularly as part of this St John Volunteer Corps project. The St. Thomas of Canterbury soup kitchen has been a very welcoming place for those needing a meal, but also for the community that comes to help. Whether volunteers want to chop vegetables, serve soup, pour coffee, wash dishes or wipe down tables, there is something for them to do. And through all of this service, everyone feels valued and respected.

Many of the guests are regulars who volunteers see month after month. With these regular connections, our volunteers have been able to build relationships with these guests. Staffed entirely by volunteers, the soup kitchen is a testament to the power of community and compassion. For more than 40 years, it has been a shining example of the ways small acts of kindness can have a profound impact on the lives of others. It has been an amazing chance for Members of the U.S. Priory to live out the mission of service to *our Lords, the sick and poor*, working for the faith and in the service of humanity. ✱



# HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

by Betsy Strong Coover, OSTJ, and Claudia Worthington Hess, MStJ

Claudia and I arrived in Tel Aviv on Saturday, April 22, and we easily connected with our driver, Fadi, for a safe ride to our new home base—the impressive and beautiful American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem. We scheduled Fadi for a one-hour drive to tour the Dead Sea area. (The other side of this much diminished sea is already the border to the country of Jordan, giving you an idea of the smallness of Israel.) On the way down, down, down to below sea level, we stopped at the national park, Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. It was a vivid drive from a much lush Jerusalem to the bone-dry desert where not a blade of grass grows on the rocky terrain. We marveled that people have survived there for millennia and received our first taste of a land in constant upheaval when the scrolls had to be hastily hidden from fast advancing Roman soldiers thousands of years ago. We could not visit Jericho, as they closed off this city on our route due to Ramadan holiday celebrations.

***Our eyes were opened (pun intended) to the vast need of eye care for poorer, mostly Palestinian populations because of the ever-present barriers to entry into Jerusalem.***

the stage for our amazing week together. The 24 pilgrims who formed our group were from all parts of the U.S.—New York, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, California, Oklahoma and Texas. We started most mornings at 8:00 a.m. after we savored the huge variety of food at the breakfast buffet extraordinaire at the hotel. This kept us in good form to start the busy day! Most days we got on the bus by the hotel and ventured to sights near and far. The transportation and logistics were impeccable all week—starting with our first drive to Mt. Scopus where we were treated to an aerial view of Jerusalem and land to the east toward Jordan. We fumbled

Following a relaxing day of rest by the lovely hotel pool and an exploration of the incredible two stores on the enchanting hotel property, we met our fellow travelers for our first evening briefing. Note: If you can arrive two days before the start of the official Pilgrimage, it sure helps with jet lag and allows you to better participate on the energetic tour.

Our fantastic leaders, the witty and gifted historian Reverend Canon Nicholas Porter, KStJ, and his ever energetic and knowledgeable local guide, Bishara, welcomed us and set

cameras, hats, prayer books, water bottles on this first stop, but became pros by the end of the week!!! Our week included wonderful hospitality as we visited the impressive St. John medical facilities, from the flagship Hospital to the outlying clinics serving those who cannot safely travel to Jerusalem. Betsy's most vivid memory was one of a young blind girl who was waiting for surgery to relieve pain behind her eyes. Many of the children were accompanied only by a grandparent to the flagship Hospital in Jerusalem, as their Palestinian parents are often not allowed passage through check points. Even Hospital employees have to wait a long time just for permission to drive their car to work, rather than enduring a 1.5 hour bus ride.

Our eyes were opened (pun intended) to the vast need of eye care for poorer, mostly Palestinian populations because of the ever-present barriers to entry into Jerusalem. This population suffers disproportionately from eye disease and vision problems. They live in an area that just does not have help for those who cannot see—or see well—and this creates economic burdens for the families of the afflicted. We saw first-hand the need for mobile outreach in addition to the main hospitals in Jerusalem and Hebron. It was impressive to witness the important work completed so far and feel energized to continue our support. The staff is top-notch in practice, administration and so committed to serving. In fact, we often heard that working for the Order of St. John Eye Hospital Group is like working in a family.



*The Priory Pilgrims outside St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.*

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*The Priory Pilgrims visited numerous holy sites, including the “Well of Souls” just beneath the Dome of the Rock.*

We visited all the major holy sites, including the Dome of the Rock, where the ladies had a chance to add skirts and head coverings to our daily attire out of respect for Muslim traditions. Another highlight for Betsy was the procession of the Way of the Holy Cross where we each had a chance to read a passage from the Bible followed by a prayer from Reverend Porter as we moved from station to station on the Via Dolorosa. We all found this experience profound and moving, and it bonded us even more. We celebrated a communion service together at a nearby church and completed our tour at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Because of safety issues, we were not able to see Bethlehem, but we did visit Hebron, the social and economic center for Palestinians in the southern West Bank. We also have a St. John Hospital here, and we had a chance to tour this facility and learn about hopes for an expanded operating room in the future. Again, we met and talked with staff who were so professional and passionate about their work.

A notable observation for Claudia was the layers and layers of history we would walk on, often hundreds of yards below our feet. This fascinating mixture of profound history and everyday living was found at places like the charming diminutive Church of the Ascension, where we could see stonework from the time of the Crusades, while at the same time noticing laundry

hanging just above the courtyard. “After the Ascension: The laundry!” quipped Claudia as a reminder that this city is very much alive and thriving today amid historical and religious sites catering to pilgrims worldwide.

Not only is the wonderful limestone city of Jerusalem a feast for the eyes, but our tastebuds enjoyed the freshest vegetables, variety of salads, tabouli, hummus and breads, followed by some type of grilled or stewed meat. There were always delectable vegetarian options as well. At one restaurant we dined alfresco in dappled shade and experienced a giant pot taken directly from the stove after cooking for hours, then ceremoniously overturned on a platter showing the fabulous saffron rice, vegetables and tender chicken.

On our last day, we went by bus to the Northern coast to experience: Acre (pronounced Ahkrah). This ancient seaport also once housed the Order of St John. The history and stories ranging back 5,000 years make this a jewel of a city. As a lush countryside rolled by on our way back to the American Colony, we looked forward to another fun drink together in the cave bar, and another great Mediterranean meal. Our newly formed friendships combined with memorable historical and spiritual experiences gave us so much to savor on this well-run and organized pilgrimage. We highly recommend this journey. ✨





## PRO FIDE

*"There is no substitute for experience..."*

John "Jock" Stein CBE, (d. 1985) was a Scottish football player and manager. He was known for his remarkable successes—as the first manager of

the British team The Celts to win the European Cup in 1967, and for guiding the same team to nine successive Scottish League Championships between 1966 and 1974. But beyond his accolades he is pegged with coining a phrase most of us have probably used many times—"There is no substitute for experience."

His team found its way to the top, by getting deep into the game—full on, and gaining knowledge and insight as time marched on. And in time, that experience paid off. Is that not true for so many things in life?

It was certainly true of a day in early March of this year that I spent alongside members of Mobile Unit Outreach Team from our St John Eye Hospital (SJEH). I was traveling with 65 "Pilgrims" from the parish I serve in Houston, but set aside several hours on March 2, to fully experience the important work of the Hospital and its fine team of medical professionals and support staff.

I was picked up from my hotel early in the morning, boarding a mobile unit made possible through the generosity of the U.S. Priory. Our driver, who had been serving the Hospital for decades in a number of capacities, including security, whisked two nurses and me out of central Jerusalem, to the West Bank Palestinian town known as Al-Eizariya, perhaps better known to Westerners and others as "Bethany."



*Khaled and I stop for a photo before parting ways..."I am not exhausted," he says, "I am joyful because I am investing in the future of these patients....!"*



*Dr. Abraham Sawalhi, an ophthalmic surgeon who has served the eye hospital for 23 years took generous and tender care of each and every patient.*

Work begins early, and quickly, at the Arab Health Center (AHC), one of the many outposts served by SJEH. After we unloaded the mobile equipment, my "host" for the morning was Outreach Manager for SJEH—Khaled Zuaiter, who—also, has been with the hospital for years. He introduced me to the medical director—Dr. Ibrahim Elsurkly, who managed this important center for healing which offers a wide variety of services to those in need—ENT, Cardiac, Pediatric, OB/GYN, Dental Services—along with the care offered by those gifted folk we, here in the U.S., support.

On this particular morning in March, the earliest patients arriving at the AHC, were those seeking ophthalmic and optometric care. Khaled served as the intake staff member, while others scurried about meeting the needs of patients of all ages. Ophthalmic surgeon, Dr. Abraham Sawalhi, who has been serving the hospital for 23 years, took generous and thoughtful time with each and every patient.

First in line was an elderly woman who came in weeping that her husband's eye condition was only getting worse by the day. Next in line—was not one, but nearly a dozen young girls from a local school who came for eye screening. Many of these young girls resist getting eye exams, because for a long time, wearing glasses was seen as an impediment to potential suitors, but as times have changed, this attitude has slowly begun to shift. The tender way in which Dr. Sawalhi spoke with

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*I did not leave Jerusalem without visiting with my friend, and our Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali and presenting him with a support check from my home Parish.*

the young patients, made it clear to each one that the gift of eyesight brings so many other blessings to day-to-day life, and thus he began to liberally begin writing eyeglass prescriptions. Diabetic screening is crucial to the care offered, as 18% of all Palestinians suffer with this chronic illness which is often the breeding ground for eye troubles of all kinds.

Before I left, I was touched by a mom and dad, who brought their son in for an exam. In tow was a toddler not more than four years old, who despite my age and the imposing clerical collar, took time to make sure I saw her t-shirt bearing the word "Love."

I confess, I was taken aback at how busy—how "non-stop" the patients made their way through the process—intake from Khaled, checking in with one of the nurses, into the hands of Dr. Sawalhi who would in turn write up whatever care was needed. If it could be carried out locally, all the better; but special patients needing care that only the Hospital can provide have to move through a more tedious and intricate process to receive a medical pass from the West Bank into Jerusalem.

As I finished up my time, the conversation with Khaled grew more transparent. He expressed his frustration at the inability to travel freely through the Holy Land. The wall that rests less than half a block from this particular clinic from Jerusalem, is a mere three miles from the Eye Hospital; but this barrier makes the trip much longer as one moves through checkpoints and security stations. And of course, our conversation inevitably turned to matters around the conflict that seems to be a constant companion in the Land of our Lord, and our shared hopes for peace—something I will write more about in my next column.

This is the work that is going on six days a week, at the Hospital, but also in dozens of outposts of outreach orchestrated by the Hospital, and supported by the prayers and generosity of Members of our Order around the world.

With this feverish pace in mind, before leaving the clinic, I said to Khaled, "You must be exhausted by the end of the day." He said, smiling I might add, "*Not at all. I am not exhausted at the end of the day—I am joyful because I am investing in the future of these patients.*"

We parted ways with a warm embrace, and I returned to Jerusalem to share some time with Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali at the Hospital—as he shared not only his gratitude for the support of the U.S. Priory and its Members, but his organic vision for continuing to grow its presence and work of—literally—bringing health to the eyes—and perhaps more importantly, sight to the blind.

This, my fellow Members, is the work—the ministry—in which we Members of our Order—are engaged. If you are visiting Jerusalem, I bid you to set aside this kind of time—to experience—to visit the Hospital, and if possible, visit one or more of the satellite locations.

It is one thing to read about the work being done here, or to even hear about it at one of our regional, national or international gatherings—it is quite another to "see it" with one's own eyes. And if you cannot make such a journey—then listen to the experience of those who have been. This is what I hope, with some measure of humility, I am sharing with you—for indeed there is no substitute for experience.

For me—seeing was believing—believing in the work, believing in the wise use of the resources we make possible with our prayers and financial gifts and Oblations—and believing even more that our motto—*pro fide, pro utilitate hominum*—is being incarnated—is literally being brought to life.

You will probably know that Bethany is perhaps better known from the remarkable miracle Jesus performed there—the raising of Lazarus. If you are attentive, you will actually see a road sign not too far from the AHC pointing the way to the traditional site of Lazarus' tomb. You may remember the words Jesus used to raise his friend from the dead... "*Lazarus... come out!*" (John 11:43). At that, Lazarus stepped from a world of darkness into the light of day.

That miraculous work still continues in this same city—as those who serve the Hospital and our Lord's children—bring them also from darkness into light. In a very real way—Dr. Elsurkly, Dr. Sawalhi, the nurses and staff—my new friend Khaled—because of your generosity—and your prayers—and your support... these committed and faithful servants are able to say to the blind "*Come out! Come out! Come out! And see.*" For that, and for so many other things—thanks be to God—and thanks to you, the Members of our beloved Order.

The Reverend Dr. Russ Levenson, Jr., OStJ  
Sub-Prelate