

## *“We have seen the Lord, because He has risen! He has truly risen!”*

*By His Grace Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB  
Conventual Chaplain Ad Honorem*

# Epístula

Vol.13, No. 1 ❖ April 2015



### *In this issue:*

*Spiritual reflection ..... 1*

*North America Prison  
Ministry ..... 2*

*Global Communications  
Summit ..... 4*

*President's Message ..... 8*

“I have seen the Lord” (Jn 20:18), exclaimed Mary Magdalene, expressing the joy of the Resurrection. This repentant sinner, the one to whom the Lord had showed His tender mercy, became “the apostle to the Apostles,” proclaiming the thrilling message to them: Jesus’ rising from the dead has defeated the power of sin and death.

We, too, today raise the cry of victory: “We have seen the Lord, because He has risen! He has truly risen!” And we, too, must proclaim to others that message of life and limitless mercy, of hope and undying love. Our joy of knowing that Jesus is alive cannot be contained. With our families and friends, with our neighbours and our communities, let us share this joy full of wonder!

Each of us can relive the experience of Mary Magdalene when, in faith, we encounter Jesus as a living Person – alive and in our midst. This experience transforms us, filling us with a quiet joy, despite our suffering and difficulties. An encounter with Jesus, coming to know him, is always an event of mercy, for He frees us from the burden of sins and the fear of death.

When the women had first discovered the empty tomb, it left them confused, hesitant, and full of questions: “What happened? What is the meaning of all this?” (cf. Lk 24:4).

Doesn’t the same thing also happen to us when we encounter something completely new in our everyday life? We stop short. We don’t understand. We don’t know what to do. We want to hold on to our old security.

As Pope Francis has said, “Newness often makes us fearful, including the newness which God brings us, the newness which God asks of us. We are afraid of God’s surprises. But let us not be closed to the newness that God wants to bring into our lives! Let us not close our hearts, let us not lose confidence, let us never give up: there are no situations which God cannot change.”

Let the Risen Jesus enter your life. Welcome Him as a friend. Trust Him. If you have been keeping Him at a distance, Easter is the time to draw close to Him. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk. The Lord will never

*Continued on page 2*



"Ask yourself, what have I done for the unwanted and unloved? Look for the ones the world is passing by."

*Continued from page 1* disappoint you. If following Him seems difficult, be confident that He will give you the strength to live as His friend and disciple.

Bring this message to others: Jesus, the eternal Son of God, died on the Cross for our sins, but God the Father raised Him up bodily from death and made Him the Lord of life. In the Risen Jesus, love has triumphed over hatred, mercy over vengeance, goodness over evil, truth over falsehood, life over death.

I renew to each one of you my cordial Easter greetings and the assurance of my prayers: may the joy of Christ's Resurrection which filled the soul of Mary, his Mother, ring out in your hearts and in your homes so that hope may be born anew!

## *North American Prison Ministry*

*by Michael McGarry, KM*

The Federal Association, in conjunction with the American, Western and Canadian associations, hosted a Prison Ministry Symposium in mid-March in Washington DC. This joint effort is the outgrowth of the Grand Master's request that the North American associations work together on a signature program, prison ministry. More than 600 Members of the Order are engaged in prison ministry in 31 states and Canada.

The work includes distributing Bibles, prayer books, prayer cards, and a quarterly newsletter (called "The Serving Brother"), corresponding with inmates and those recently released, mentoring, helping with job placement, visiting the incarcerated, and reaching out to the children and families of those in prison.

More than 75 people attended the symposium, including Members of all four associations. The focus of the eight presentations of the day was "Recidivism".

At the outset, the attendees were informed that more people are in prison in the U.S. (2.5 million) than in any other country; Russia is second. The USA hosts 22.4% of the world's inmates and the recidivism rate is also the highest -- about 60%. State and federal corrections facilities spend on average more than \$20,000 per year to house an inmate and \$40 per year on rehabilitation of the inmate. When a commitment is made to rehabilitate, as it is in Norway and New Zealand, the recidivism rate drops to 15% to 20%.

One remarkable rehabilitation effort was discussed, known as "restorative justice". Candidates are involved in this faith-based approach to crime and harm, which is designed to engage the victim, the survivors, the offender and the community in a dialog to evaluate the impact of the crime. The emphasis is on achieving spiritual, psychological and emotional healing for all parties. Another speaker described the post-release program of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Kolbe House. Program volunteers write to those in prison and help them after release, working with them on their journey back into society. This effort has resulted in fewer participants returning to prison.

Two speakers addressed efforts to reduce the application of mandatory sentencing. These laws are an outgrowth of the "tough on crime" approach begun in the 1970s.

*Continued on page 3*

**Continued from page 2** As a result, the number of people incarcerated rose 700% from about 300,000 to 2.5 million persons in the period of 1980 to 2000. Most of this growth involves drug-related crimes, over 50% of which are non-violent. The combination of mass incarceration of non-violent drug offenders and diminishing public safety returns has led to a staggering increase in costs but without equivalent benefits to taxpayers.



Another set of speakers discussed Oxford House, which provides rented houses for former alcohol and drug addicts willing to stay clean. The residents -- 75% of whom have been incarcerated -- run the homes. There are 1,846 Oxford Houses in the country since the program started 35 years ago. A DePaul University study of Oxford House showed a very low recidivism rate and a very high abstinence rate.

Two videos were shown. The first dealt with the Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola Prison. Angola was the most violent prison in the South until Warden Burl Cain arrived in the late 1990s. The warden began a religious education program, training inmates to become prison missionaries. Those participants who have been released are not returning to jail.

The other video featured Bishop William Curlin, retired from the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C., and a dear friend of the Order. In urging Members of the Order to consider participating in prison ministry, he observed, "How can we say we are Christians and not reach out to those who are hurting the most, who are on the edge. Jesus reached out to those no one wanted to be bothered with, the lepers, demoniacs, the woman to be stoned. Ask yourself, what have I done for the unwanted and unloved? Look for the ones the world is passing by."



The North American Prison Committee will be engaged in strategic planning over the coming months. Anyone who would like to become involved and help the Canadian Association become more active in this is a very important ministry can contact Roman Cieciewicz, KMOB.





# Global Communications Summit - 2015

*by Bruce Adams, KM, Delegate of Communications*



The forum was well attended by more than 40 European, Middle East and North American Communication Directors, representing the Associations. The Summit was chaired by Eugenio Ajroldi di Robbiate, Director of Communications and was held at the Villa Magistral in Rome between March 20th and March 22nd, 2015. The purpose of the forum was to 1) inform and unite the communications practices of the Order of Malta world-wide; 2) brainstorm an international communications campaign ideas for a World Refugee Day in advance of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul 2016; and 3) update the associations on various communications projects being led by the Grand Magistry.

**The Need for Communications** - In a globalized world, an international organization with members, employees, volunteers and medical and social projects in 120 countries, must communicate. A Catholic order that relies heavily on the recruitment and the motivation of its volunteers must have a communications strategy. And with the need of donations and financing, it must develop the publicizing of its medical and humanitarian projects through a transparent communications policy implemented in the countries in which it operates. In this regard, the Order has developed a Global Communications Strategy with which, all Associations must align their communication plans and activities.

To successfully implement the Order of Malta's worldwide communications strategy it is essential that all Communications Officers play their part. Communications goals cannot be achieved without first connecting and establishing the global team of communicators working together for the same ends. This is why it is pivotal to continue to build closer relations between the Communications Officers and the Grand Magistry. Regular contact enhances the communications strategy, simplifies exchange of information and implementation of the communications guidelines issued by the centre. It also enables the Grand Magistry to have a better

In a globalized world, an international organization with members, employees, volunteers and medical and social projects in 120 countries, must communicate.

*Continued on page 5*

*Continued from page 4* understanding of the Officers' activities and needs. The same principle applies to interaction between Communications Officers, which is strongly encouraged by the Grand Magistry, in particular visits, best practice and information sharing.

The next steps for the Canadian Association include;

- Development of a National Communications Plan that includes the development of a risk assessment framework and a crisis management plan / procedures;
- Development of a Canadian Association Style Guide that will drive consistency of brand across the organization and across our various initiatives;
- Audit of the Canadian Website to determine areas for improvement and collect estimate(s) for making structural changes that will eventually come from Grand Magistry;
- Assign volunteer support to our Hospitaller for keeping CONTO up-to-date;
- Development of bilingual and e-mail based National Newsletter to inform members of the work of the order (in addition to the Epistula); and
- Development of a simple brochure that will assist members with engaging their stakeholders and communicating with potential aspirants.

## *President's message*

*By André A. Morin, KMOB*

Some weeks ago I was in Rome accompanied by our Principal Chaplain, Bishop Raymond Poisson, where we attended mass celebrated by Cardinal Burke, the Order's new Cardinal Patronus, in the Lateran Basilica, on the occasion of the opening of the beatification process for our late Grand Master, Fra' Andrew Bertie.

Grand Master Bertie governed the Order with thoroughness and vision. Thanks to his leadership, the Order played a larger significant role in the world, be it at the humanitarian level or at the diplomatic level, fostering the Order's mission: assistance to the poor and the sick. H.M.E.H. Fra' Andrew Bertie was a prayerful man of reflection who had a deep devotion to Our Lady of Philermo. I ask you to seek his intercession so that we can accomplish our mission within our Association.

Following this important event in the life of the Order, Grand Master Matthew Festing invited the Grand Priors, Priors and Presidents of national associations to a series of meetings with members of the Sovereign Council. At the outset, the Grand Master underlined the importance of our commitment to the Order's activities. This engagement can take many forms; service to the poor and the sick within our areas, prayer, financial support but, above all, it is important that our affiliation to the Order and to our Association be the source of a fecund commitment in the service to others, in full fraternity.

The Grand Master also asked to pray for vocations so that members of the Order should be committed to a life of humility, service and respect of others in the service of the poor and the sick. In order to arrive at that goal, it is necessary to deepen our knowledge of the spirituality proper to our Order and be ready to serve.

We discussed the situation in Syria with particular emphasis on the situation of refugees in Lebanon where our confrères in the Lebanese Association are doing

*Continued on page 6*



Our Holy Father, Pope Francis invites us "to brotherly love, to humble and generous service, to justice and mercy towards the poor."



The Grand Master also invited us to create a large space for young people within our associations and to invite them to join us.

Continued from page 5 remarkable work. The Grand Master also invited us to create a large space for young people within our associations and to invite them to join us.

The Grand Hospitaller developed a picture of the situation faced by Christians in the Middle East; a very difficult situation fraught with precarious conditions. The work undertaken at the Holy Family Hospital is remarkable and your Association is contributing financially to this hospital.

I also wish to inform you that Mr. Bruce Adams, a Member of the Board, is the new Director of Communications. Dr. Richard Lévesque, also a Member of the Board, will assist him. Mr. Adams has just returned from a training seminar given by the Order in Rome. I thank our Confrères for having accepted this task that is important to our Association. I also urge you to communicate all information relevant to activities in your regions to Mr. Adam. Finally, I emphasize that the Board of Directors has met in order to consider and put into place a new strategic plan for the next few years. The theme chosen is Commitment. The finalized plan will be distributed to all.

In conclusion on this Divine Mercy Sunday, I invite you to follow the counsel given by the Holy Father Francis in paragraph 194 of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* inviting us "to brotherly love, to humble and generous service, to justice and mercy towards the poor."



Published by the Canadian Association of the  
Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John  
of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta.

1247 Kilborn, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 6K9  
Tel: 613-731-8897 / Fax 613-731-1312  
Email: smomca@bellnet.ca

President: André A. Morin  
Chief Chaplain: H.E. Msgr Raymond Poisson

Design, layout and production contributed  
by Bravada Consumer Communications Inc.

[www.orderofmaltacanada.org](http://www.orderofmaltacanada.org)