

International Grand Priory

CONSTITUTIONS

Registered in Malta in the Acts of Notary Public Dr. P. Pullicino LL.D. of Valletta following approval by the Sovereign Council and substituting the Constitutions of the Order and/or the Langue of Malta and/or of the international O.S.J. Grand Priory, adopted 1912, 1964 and 1971, amended 1959-62 and 1973, respectively.



"Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum"

Jerusalem 1048-1291. Cyprus 1292-1310, Rhodes 1311-1523, Malta 1530-1798. Russia 1798-1907, U.S.A. 1908. Malta 1964.

CONSTITUTIONS.

THE DENOMINATION OF THE ORDER.

Art. 1.

The Order is styled "Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem", International Grand Priory. It is commonly called Order of Saint John or S.O.S.J. for short - the members of the Order are also known as Knights of Malta or Knights of St. John.

Art. 2.

In the following articles of these Constitutions the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem is identified as "the Order" or the "S.O.S.J."

THE TRADITION OF THE ORDER.

Art. 3.

The S.O.S.J.'s tradition is founded, after 1798:

3.1. On the two Grand Priorities of Russia (Catholic and Orthodox); On the Priory of Malta and its dependencies in Europe, Australia and Canada and of Hereditary Knights created under the traditional authority of the Grand Priory of America, descendant of the original Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Cyprus, Rhodos, Crete, Malta and Russia; On the Priorities of Aragon and Sicily crested under the

authority of "l-Ordre de Saint Jean de Jerusalem, Prieuries, Autonomes Reunis", which was recognized by the Court of Justice of Sant' Agatha di Puglia (25.06.1955) and whose rights became incorporated into the Order on November 28, 1971 and transferred to the Langue of Malta on December 25, 1972.

AIMS AND SEE OF THE ORDER.

Art. 4.

The S.O.S.J. is a chivalric body and an International Christian Order whose aims are both to propagate the principles of chivalry and to help the poor and the sick according to its ever practised tradition since 1048. The objects and aims of the Order continue to be those embraced in its historical motto: "Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum".

Art. 5.

The See of the Order is in Malta, at the address that is publicly declared by the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J.

CHARACTER AND ARMS OF THE ORDER.

Art. 6.

The Order is subject to international law as an international chivalric body.

Art. 7.

The arms of the Order as follows: "Gules, a cross argent". The shield is surmounting a Maltese Cross having the Rosary with appended Insignia as a Grand Collar. The Grand Seal of the Order as follows: "Gules, three circles argent one larger than the other and one within the other". Within the greater circle the words: "Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem"; within the second larger circle the words: "International order + International Malta H.Q."; within the third circle the Eight-Pointed Maltese Cross argent.

Art. 8.

The Flag of the S.O.S.J. is "Gules a white cross". Each priory has its banner which may bear the arms of the same priory on the heart of the cross.

Art. 9.

The motto of the Order is: "Pro Fide pro Utilitate Hominum". The ribbon is red.

FEAST OF THE ORDER.

Art. 10.

The feast day of the Order is celebrated on June 24, St. John the Baptist's day heavenly Patron of the S.O.S.J.

THE SOVEREIGN COUNCIL.

Art. 11.

The Sovereign Council of the S.O.S.J. is possessed of the sovereignty of the same. It is composed of the Grand Master who is the Symbolical Head of the Order; of the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J.; of the Grand Chancellor International; of the Grand Hospitaller International; of the Grand Samaritan of Malta; of the Grand Marshal International; of the Grand Prelate International; of the Grand Priors. The Executive of the Sovereign Council is composed of the first six, but of the Prince Grand Master as the Symbolical Head is always represented in the Executive by the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J., who

for this purpose holds ex officio the title of Vicar General. Three members make a quorum of the Executive. All office holders hold office "during the pleasure of Grand Prior International S.O.S.J.", who holds the right and has the duty to effect the necessary measures to reshuffle whenever he deems it fit and necessary for the Order.

Art. 12.

The Executive of the S.O.S.J. is presided over by the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. who governs the Order with the assistance of the Executive. He may ask the opinion of the Sovereign Council both on general and on particular matters when the opinion of the Sovereign Council becomes binding.

Art. 13.

The Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. names and appoints all dignitaries and members of the Order, and all ranks and offices therein are created and appointed by him either motu proprio or upon recommendation of the appropriate jurisdictional officers of the Order.

Art. 14.

The Grand Chancellor International is the head of the Chancery of the Order. He countersigns and en-registers all warrants, briefs and decrees issued by the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J.

Art. 15.

The Grand Marshal International is the chief ceremonial functionary of the Order and as such deals with all questions relative to the insignia and uniforms, presidencies, disciplinary matters.

Art. 16.

The Grand Samaritan of Malta depends on the Grand Prior international S.O.S.J. He is the chief of the charity works of the Order and carries the philanthropic projects and/or activities of the Order into effect. He holds as well the office of Treasurer. He is assisted by the Grand Hospitaller International.

Art. 17.

The Grand Prelate International of the Order carries out, according to the general directions of the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J., all which is needed to ensure the religious assistance to the members of the S.O.S.J.

Art. 18.

The Priors of the Order are jurisdictional representatives of the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. They are heads of the Order in their jurisdiction by delegation of the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J., on whom they depend. As far as the administration of each Priory, a P r i o r enjoys a relative autonomy according to the Constitutions of the Order.

MEETING OF THE SOVEREIGN COUNCIL.

Art. 19.

The Sovereign Council is convoked by the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. once a year, "Its meetings are valid when three members are present and the others have sent their proxies in number of three at least". Any opinion expressed by the Sovereign Council is binding; when it is supported by the majority of votes. In case of parity, Grand Prior International casts two votes. In cases when Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. is impeded to carry out his functions, the Sovereign Council is convoked by the Grand Prior of Malta, according to the rules of the above second paragraph.

PRIORIES AND COMMANDERIES.

Art. 20.

A Priory (or Tongue) is erected either on the recommendation of the Sovereign Council or by motu proprio of the Grand Prior International S. O. S. J. A Priory must have a minimum of ten members.

Art. 21.

A Priory can be divided into Commanderies. A Commandery must have a minimum of five members. A Commandery may be created also where there is not any Priory. Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. may create a Grand Priory where more than one Priory or where a Priory and a number of Commanderies exist or just for prestige purposes whenever and/or wherever he deems it fit and/or necessary for the Order. He may likewise reintroduce any of the traditional grades and/or offices of the Order, prepare and promulgate and into force any necessary by-laws.

Art. 22.

Members who are not within the jurisdiction of a Priory or Commandery are inscribed "in groemio Religienis".

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER.

Art. 23.

Members of the S.O.S.J. are divided into two categories:

- 23.1. Category of Justice, which is open to those who prove noble descent in established form.
- 23.2. Category of Grace.

Art. 24.

Gentlemen Members of the above categories are divided into six classes:

- 24.1. Grand Bailiffs;
- 24.2. Bailiffs;
- 24.3. Knights Grand Cross;
- 24.4. Knights Commander;
- 24.5. Knights;
- 24.6. Esquires.

The number of Grand Bailiffs cannot exceed three categories and these grades go only to T.R.H. the Hereditary Protectors; His Eminent Most Highness the Grand Master; His Lordship the Grand Prior International S. O. S. J. All Grand Priors are ex officio Bailiffs. Other Bailiffs may be nominated according to the stipulations of Article 13 of these Constitutions.

Art. 25.

Lady Members of either category are divided into four classes:

- 25.1. Dames Grand Cross;
- 25.2. Dames Commanders;
- 25.3. Dames;
- 25.4. Damsels.

Art. 26.

The minimum age for admission to the Order is 25 years. Persons between 18 and 25 may be admitted as Esquires or Damsels. Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. may make exceptions in special circumstances.

HEREDITARY MEMBERS.

Art. 27.

Hereditary grades may be conferred upon them who deserve it. The Order has a body called the "Noble Hereditary Council" composed of selected Noble Title holders, of Hereditary grades and of grades of justice who have vowed undivided allegiance of a purely chivalric value to the Order on the prescribed form. The Order enjoys as well a Chamber of Sovereign and Hereditary Protectors as well as of Prince Grand Masters of International Orders as Patrons.

The title of "Emeritus" may be graced upon a retiring Grand Master and/or Grand Prior International and/or Grand Priors.

INSIGNIA AND UNIFORMS.

Art. 28.

The insignia of the Order, according to the tradition is the eight-pointed Maltese Cross or emailed white. The insignia is royally crowned.

Art. 29.

The insignia of the Order are worn according to the Category and Class of members. Knights wear a neck-decoration. Commanders also a neck-decoration, but larger than the one of Knights; they wear as well a silver plaque, Grand Crosses, a sash with appended insignia and a golden plaque. Grand Bailiffs and Bailiffs in addition to their Grand Cross decorations, wear the Grand Collar and the Collar respectively which consist of the Rosary surrounding the Shield of the Order but instead of beads, Maltese Crosses in gold or in silver respectively are made. The order can grant awards for Merit and/or strike special Medallions. Dames wear the same insignias, but instead of neck-decorations, they wear their crosses hanging from a bow of ribbon. All insignia are ensigned by a royal coronet.

Art. 30.

The mantle of the S. O. S. J. is black lined red. It bears on the left shoulder the white Maltese Cross. The cassock is as well black, bearing the white Cross of Malta on its breast-centre.

The Prince Grand Master, the Grand Prior International S. O. S. J. and the August Protectors may wear the mantle in red lined white. The uniform of the Order is of optional use. It is described in a special regulation.

SUCCESSION.

Art. 31.

31.1. The Prince Grand Master is elected by the Sovereign Council and holds the office until he retires or until the Sovereign Council in conjunction with the Council of the Grand Priory of the Langue of Malta by a majority of two thirds plus one of all voting members asks him to retire for very special objections damaging the Order.

31.2. Grand Priors International S. O. S. J. are elected by the Sovereign Council in communion with the Council of the Grand Priory of the Langue of Malta by a majority of two thirds of the votes cast from a list of three Maltese or non-Maltese noble title holders and/or Bailiffs of the Order but all of, whom residing in the Maltese islands. If on a third ballot no candidate acquires the stipulated majority of votes cast, the Grand Prior of the Langue of Malta who shall have become, ex officio, Acting Grand Prior International S. O. S. J. at the moment the said office becoming vacant, declares elected the candidate who shall have obtained simple majority. The above-mentioned list and the personages contained in it, and the ballots themselves are prepared and conducted during joint meetings of the Executive of the supreme Council in communion with the Council of the Grand Priory of the Langue of Malta. Should an emergency arise in this connection, the Grand Prior of the Langue of Malta shall constitute a Triumvirate, presided over by himself, and rule the Order until such time when it

would be possible for him to follow the rules regarding the Succession.

Art. 32.

All the matters concerning the Order which are not in these Constitutions will be made object of regulations issued by the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. who bears the opinion of the Sovereign Council regulations concerning the status of His Most Eminent Highness the Prince Grand Master are based on the Constitutions of 1912 amended 1959 + 1962, already mentioned and are contained in a special separate chapter.

Art. 33.

The official language of the Order is English. Documents of the Order can be written into any other language when necessary.

Art. 34.

Other Pories and Commanderies from other branches of the Order may be received on demand as jurisdictional bodies of the S.O.S.J. under its Constitutions. Special covenants can be established with other Pories or Commanderies, when necessary.

DIPLOMAS

Art. 35.

Diplomas must bear the Arms of the Order in white and red colours; they must as well bear the Grand Seal of the Order; must be authenticated by the hand of His Lordship the Grand Prior International S.O.S.J. and be countersigned by one member of the Sovereign Council.

Malta May 01, 1983.