



ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, KNIGHTS HOSPITALLER
Under the Constitution granted in 1964 by his late Majesty King Peter II of Yugoslavia

THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD

PRO FIDE, PRO UTILITATE HOMINUM

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**A MESSAGE FROM H.E.
THE LIEUTENANT-GRAND MASTER**

**Dear Brethren of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitaller – OSJ (Malta),**

Throughout the months that the coronavirus pandemic has been (and still is) progressing, we, as citizens, have continually been, and are still being, invited to follow every good indication of behaviour by the respective health authorities, to avoid the risk of contagion. As Christians, we are also called to read the Covid-19 epidemic in the "light of the Gospel" and to intensify our prayers. This being the case I urge you, Brethren, to remain steadfast in faith, firm in hope and active in charity.

The faith that is expressed in prayer has its own strength – a strength with which we can entrust ourselves to the Lord to free us from evil and help us fight disease by using all the contributions of scientists and doctors. Faced with the evil of disease, us humans must resist and fight. Our Christian faith tells us not to lose heart, to keep hope alive and high, to trust in the Almighty.

A mature Christian faith does not guarantee us a peaceful life without difficulties, but provides us with a new concept of life that gives us the strength to face the happy and sad events of existence in the certainty that nothing can separate us from the love that Jesus Christ has for us. The only scope for which our Order exists is to be made up of members who are to be good Samaritans. A good

Samaritan is every person who stops next to the suffering of another person, whatever that may be. A good Samaritan is every person sensitive to the suffering of others, the person who is moved by the misfortune of one's neighbour. A good Samaritan is, therefore, ultimately the one who brings help in suffering, of whatever nature it may be - a help which is to be, as far as possible, effective. A good Samaritan is someone who practices the profession of doctor and health worker and every member of our Hospitaller Order who can offer his/her contribution as a health worker and as a volunteer during this pandemic.

There is a long historical tradition of Christians who had prayed to eradicate plagues or other infectious diseases and who also took care of the sick and of the needy as our Order did along the centuries.

The crisis provoked by the spread of the coronavirus can offer an opportunity for us members of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, to show solidarity, attention and talent that arise from an experience of faith convincingly embraced and lived

I salute you with affection and assure you of my remembrance of my Oath of Office.

Yours in Christ & in Saint John,

**Paul M. BORG, OSJ,
Lt.-Grand Master**





Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD !

During this time when Covid19 has shut down the communities in many countries, and where it has been necessary for us to isolate ourselves from other people, whether it is to avoid getting infected or to infect others, I have reread a number of books, among others bishop John A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God*, which came in 1963, when I became a student and began to study theology at the University of Copenhagen. It aroused great confusion and contradiction among theologians at that time, especially because it questioned the accepted images of God and claimed that God should not be found in the transcendence somewhere outside the universe, but that God should be found in the depths of existence. It made me think of Ps. 130 from the Old Testament, which says: "Out of the depths I cry unto you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" I have often used these words when I was working as vicar at the arrest house and was called in to help isolated prisoners who, in their despair over the enforced loneliness – they were only allowed to speak with their defender or the vicar – were trying to commit suicide.

We human beings are social, we are not created to live alone but together with others, and therefore loneliness also means that we feel abandoned by others, whether it is because we are isolated in a prison, that we have lost a beloved life companion or we are isolated because of illness. Therefore, loneliness can leave deep marks in our soul and make life an endless suffering. In such a situation we make these words our own: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" These words are the anguished and despairing man's cry for help in a situation that he can neither overlook nor find help to get out of. (...)





(...) But all the doors are not closed. There is a way out: Faith in Jesus Christ. In Mark 10: 46-52 we can read about Jesus and his disciples: They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he



is calling you." So, throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well."

In his isolation, Bartimaeus shows us the way out. He sat in the impenetrable darkness and isolation of blindness at the edge of the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. No man was able to help him out of this darkness, and when he heard that Jesus was on his way, he screamed out of his deep despair: "David's son, Jesus, have mercy on me!" This is a prayer without conditions; it is the prayer of the powerless man, the despairing cry of the little, poor, and blind man for help in his harsh and inexorable fate, in which all human help has vanished. Yes, it is all the suffering humanity's prayer for love and mercy screamed out of the utter darkness of despair. In the faith of Jesus Christ, we can have the power to make this cry, this prayer to our own.

The prayer of the powerless man has its own strength. What else would have caused Jesus to stop his walk at the cry of the blind beggar, to go into his darkness, lead him out of it, and bring him to light and life? No one can describe how such a thing happens; how the light penetrates the darkness so that it becomes possible to see, or else how a man gains power and strength to bear his destiny. But one thing we do know, is that in His Word God speaks to us that (...)





(...) the cry from the darkness, the despairing cry of help from the man, who has lost everything always reaches our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the deepest depths sounds the cry for help. "Jesus, David's son, have mercy on us!" No place is closer to heaven than the deepest deep because God is always in the deepest deep where His children need his help.

Rev. Niels REFSKOU, KJSJ,
Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Council.





CORONA MAKES US GO QUIET



Since I have lived in Rome, I have never known it to be so quiet. No car horns, no singing from the nearby bar, and even nature seems quieter than usual. The air is purer than before, and on the street one only occasionally sees a lady walking her dog. When the sun shines, people sit on their balconies, the only place many of them have to escape the four walls of their flat, which is usually not that big. We have been in full lockdown for three weeks now, something that I could hardly imagine what it meant before. The first days were spent organizing the house: who would do

the shopping, how would we arrange things with the cook, could the house staff still come? The traditionally established agreements between the two communities living under the same roof had to be adjusted. Gradually, one experiences that this lockdown affects a lot of ingrained habits. No, going to the city to buy a book from Pauloni's is no longer an option. Our Sunday Eucharist celebration by the icon of 'Salus Populi Romani' in Santa Maria Maggiore, followed by a walk in one of the nearby parks in Rome is cut. And even though we usually only leave the house during the week for appointments or meetings, which have all been cancelled, the feeling that we cannot go beyond the gate affects us psychologically. The planned trips had to be cancelled,

as well, and suddenly it became clear to me that the conference I was preparing and writing out for India would definitely not take place. Our students spend hours sitting in front of their computer screens, because the universities are closed for an indefinite period of time and classes are continued remotely in an uncoordinated fashion. I say uncoordinated, because every professor apparently thinks he or she is the only one who has to give the students a lot of assignments to fight the impending boredom. No, they are not bored, but they do complain that they barely have enough time to complete the many reading assignments. Luckily, they can find some variety in the activities we organize for them at the house. Our house has never been this spotless, the windows have never been cleaned so often, the cellars have been tidied, and the library has been organized.

But the corona virus is raging out there, and we have to try to keep it out. By the outside door, there is a special mat soaked in disinfectant, and there are bottles of hand sanitizer throughout the house. Their frequent use is demonstrated by the fact that we have to refill them constantly. Arrangements are made how we can safely do the washing up. Keeping a distance is a new concept, which is not so difficult for celibates who are not used to touching and hugging each other all the time. But for Italians, this is more difficult, because they are (...)





(...) used to greeting each other with two kisses. 90 % of the conversations are about corona. How many deaths do we have in Italy today? How much longer will this lockdown last for? What about other countries? Is it true that medication for malaria could also help against corona? What about that quarantine that was first introduced in Venice to try and contain the plague? Both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities regularly send us very specific instructions asking us to adhere strictly to them in practice. No, we did not expect our Italian citizens to follow them so meticulously.

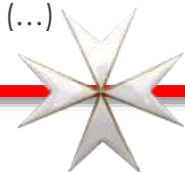


With their mentality of saying yes but at the same time adding "ma non troppo", which translates as "but not too much", we cannot help but admire them for the mental shift they made in these unusual times.

We think of those many victims, whose numbers are still rising every day, of those people who have to die alone in a miserable way. A moment ago, I saw images of Bergamo where a single parish priest was saying the final prayers over no less than twenty coffins, twenty people who saw nothing but medical staff at their bedside, who were connected to tubes and ventilators, departing this life and who will now be taken to a graveyard in an army truck without their family present after this brief moment of prayer. No one is left unmoved by this.



And then there is the hospital staff, who are faced with impossible situations and barely able to cope, and have a constant fear of being contaminated themselves. The white flags that the people are hanging out (...)





(...) their widows in many places are there to encourage them, but it does not lessen the burden of their task.



On Sunday 22 March, we saw Pope Francis walking as a lonely pilgrim from Santa Maria Maggiore to San Marcello, starting by the image so loved by the Romans, the already mentioned 'Salus Populi Romani', and ending by the plague crucifix at the church of San Marcello, which was carried through the streets during the plague in Rome. The same crucifix stood in Saint Peter's Square on Friday 27 March where the same lonely Pope venerated it in front of a deserted square and prayed in silence before the image of the Madonna and the crucifix before giving his 'Urbi et Orbi'

blessing, which is the blessing that is normally only heard at Christmas and Easter and the papal blessing



over the city and the whole world. This blessing has never sounded as intense as it did now.

Corona confronts us with our fragile nature. It is an invisible enemy that threatens us and shakes our supposed certainties. It is striking that the Italian Prime Minister deliberately uses the word 'war' when he announces yet another measure. We are at war against an invisible enemy, and it makes us so insecure, because the arbitrariness with which the enemy moves means that we constantly (...)



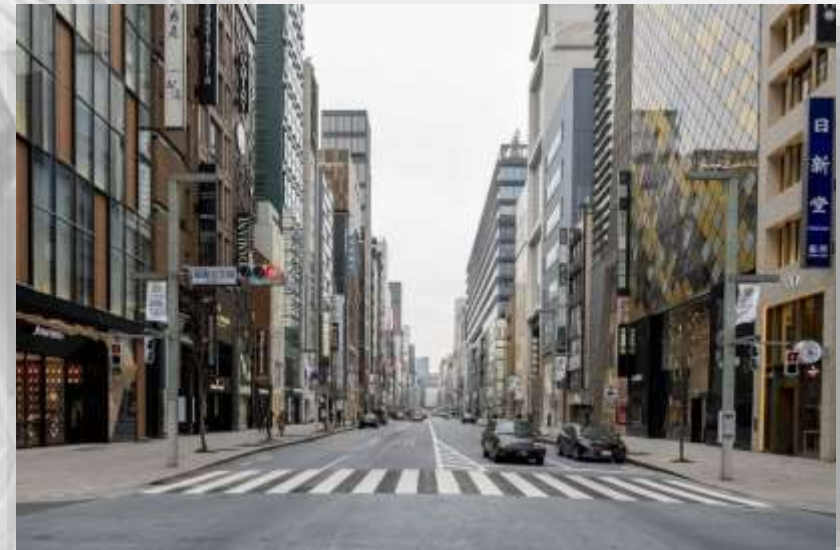


(...) have to adapt our strategies. Many so-called science-based theories have already been published that were totally undermined the next day. Man, who increasingly believed he was in control of everything, now has to admit that he is no match for this invisible enemy, which can only be seen under a microscope. Is that the lesson that this



enemy wants to teach us? That we must remain human, creature, and good steward of what has been handed to us, and not the conceited lord and master of creation, including man. Where are we now with all our plans, our calculations, our well-padded bank accounts, now that corona is at the door and wipes it all away in one second, creating an illusion. "Remember that you are dust, and to

dust you shall return", was what we used to hear during the placing of the ashes on Ash Wednesday. Theologically, it is not true that we return to dust, because we believe in full life in the resurrection, in the resurrection of body and soul, but the reference to the dust and the ashes that are placed on our forehead is



very fitting for this pandemic. It really confronts us with our transitory nature as human beings in this world, with the fact that we do not have a permanent home here, that everything we build here will perish one day. Fragility is a word that many of us had removed from our vocabulary and that will have to be added again. It will inadvertently guide us to look at reality differently, (...)





(...) to deal with it differently, and hopefully to set other priorities, as well. It can also help us to look at people who live with severe fragility differently and treat them differently: people with disabilities, people with chronic illnesses, people who are very quickly considered to be useless to society.



If we are not too quick to forget all this, of course, because that, too, is typically human, that the lessons of the past pass into oblivion so quickly that we fully surrender to our desires for more power, more money, more pleasure once more.

The pandemic, which has now truly taken on a global scale, is also a call for greater solidarity. That, too, is what corona

wants to teach us. This solidarity means that countries help each other, that billions can suddenly be made available both to support the current health care system and to repair the totally disrupted economy afterwards. It involves bringing in surgical masks and even making



them in prisons. And, of course, there is no greater solidarity than that shown by those many health professionals who continue to dedicate themselves to others while putting their own lives at risk, and also those who continue to provide many ancillary services very faithfully, because they do not want to abandon their neighbours in need. At 4 o'clock every morning, I hear a refuse truck coming (...)





(...) down our street to faithfully carry out its not so desirable cleaning work. Last summer, we saw and smelled what it meant when these people left everything lying around because of a strike here in Rome. These people are



sometimes forgotten in our list of those who now excel in solidarity. And from our brother who goes to the supermarket every day to do the shopping, I hear how the cashiers faithfully remain at their posts and continue to serve the many customers in a friendly way with great patience. Here, solidarity is expressed in doing good little things, as Levinas once so aptly put it. But also, the punctual observance of the measures imposed testifies to solidarity: we do not want to make each other ill, we really want to be there for each

other in these difficult times. Finally, we can share our own imposed loneliness in solidarity with those many who, in the homes for the elderly, in hospitals, or in their small apartments, experience the absence of their



loved ones as very painful. Rather, it is a spiritual solidarity that we can develop here, giving meaning to what we might spontaneously experience as a negative restriction of our freedom. There is no one who is not confronted with this crisis, and everyone is invited to respond in a very personal way. Many are called upon to face it head-on, such as the scientists who are now tirelessly searching for a vaccine and a suitable therapy. But also, those who are forced to just stay indoors (...)





(...) to make sure the further spread can be contained are invited to consider this as a specific responsibility. These can be moments during which we will start to live closer and more intensely with each other, that we will have to tolerate each other more, because we cannot run from each other and get away from each other. For some



people, the imposed distance will increase their closeness, a feeling that we really need each other, a rediscovery of how much we mean to each other. On a spiritual level, we are called upon to be close to others in a different way. What we cannot do as a physical work of mercy, caring for those who are ill and visiting them, we can now transform into a spiritual work of mercy, praying for all, for the living and the dead. When physical closeness is no longer possible, this spiritual closeness gets more chance to grow.

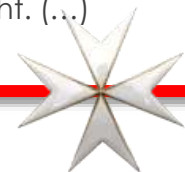
It is striking how even the former so-called plague saints are brought out again: Saint Sebastian, Saint Roch, and Saint Rosalia. There even seems to have been a Saint Corona, with relics in Aachen Cathedral, who was especially invoked against infectious diseases and who was literally forgotten in the dust of time and has now been



St. Rosalia in Palermo

pulled out from under that dust.

What will the world look like after corona? What will our lives be like? We cannot say today, because we are still in the middle of it, and we do not even know for how long. We should not be making holiday plans, because there might not be any this year. It teaches us that all this is not essential for our lives, and, as with the holidays, many so-called essential things lose their weight. (...)





(...) In the silence that is imposed on us and that reigns around us, the awareness grows that we can indeed do with a lot less. It involuntarily reminds me of a recent visit in Ethiopia, where I visited a few villages on New Year's Day with a priest from Gambela, on the border of South Sudan.



It was a New Year's Day that I will not soon forget. These people will never think about their holidays, only about how they will get enough food for the next day. I went with them to the stream where the men were fishing, the women were washing their shabby clothes, and the children were splashing around like they did everywhere else. Here, people thought completely different about what is essential in life. I ended this visit with an Italian priest from

Milan who had been there for one year now and had chosen to share his life with these people for a few years. He shared in their austerity, but also in the regained happiness in very small, simple things. "Aren't you lonely here, so far away from your loved ones?" I



asked him. Yes, sometimes it was hard to bear, he could not deny that, but here he had discovered something he had long since forgotten: the importance of good little things. And one of those good little things at that moment was a little boy who came crying at his door because he had injured his foot and who this priest comforted by taking care of the wound in what we thought was a very awkward way. (...)





(...) I But the good little thing had happened: the child stopped crying and in the eyes of the priest shone something of an intense feeling that he was giving shape to his priesthood and actually to his being a neighbour in a very concrete way. In his simple church, he was painting a Stations of the Cross in an equally awkward and in our eyes not very artistic way. There was room left, it was for the resurrection, close to the tabernacle. At Easter, he will certainly have finished this last scene, but I am guessing what it might have looked like. After all, this will probably always be one of the most difficult scenes to express in form and colour, and even in words.



But we are allowed to experience in our hearts what it means to be people on their way to that resurrection. Perhaps the day we hear that the world is corona-free and that we are once again free to leave our homes will bring about some of that joy of the resurrection.

Who would ever have thought that we would have to spend Lent as prisoners in our own homes this year, and perhaps we will also be celebrating Easter with restrained joy only. Yet it will tell us that there is life after corona, just as there is life after death. May it be a consolation and also an encouragement not to let fear take hold of us. Pope Francis also used this image in his homily in front of an empty Saint Peter's Square but addressed to the whole world, referring to the storm on the sea while Jesus is sleeping peacefully in the stern of the fishing boat. "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" (Mc 4:40). It was Jesus' response to the Apostles' cry of distress, which is now our cry of distress: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mc 4:38). And with one gesture, He rebuked the wind and there was great calm. Now, it is paradoxically the silence around us created by corona that makes us restless and anxious. But perhaps it helps us to grow in that inner stillness, inner peace and tranquillity that only the Lord can give us. That is why we repeat the title of this consideration: indeed, corona makes us go quiet.

Frater René STOCKMAN, KSJ,
Superior General Brothrs of Charity.



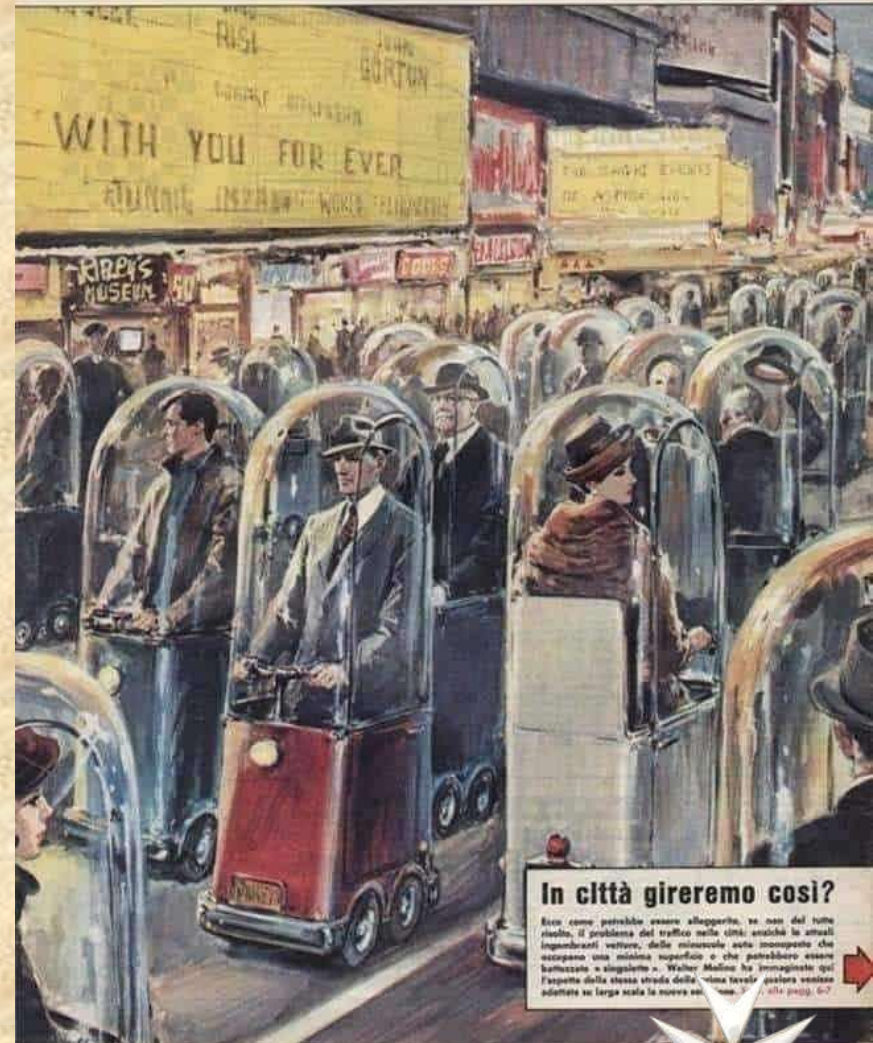


How a visionary
Italian paper saw
'life in 2020',
December 16th
1962 (!)...: seems
pretty covid-19
proof and unpretty
inhuman ?

La tragedia del
Nova Scotia
Terribile naufragio alla pagina 12-13

DOMENICA DEL CORRIERE

Una favola più
grande di lui
Articolo di Dino Buzzati a pagina 5





Norway's health-related measures during the Covid-19 pandemic, St-Sunniva Cdry (NOR)



ST. SUNNIVA OF NORWAY'S Norway's health-related measures during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Norwegian government introduced the strongest and most radical measures we have seen in Norway during peacetime in March 2020. This has naturally affected our work and the service we have been able to continue services towards vulnerable groups in society.

Norway has a population of 5,368,000 and has the following Covid-19 status per. 05/25/2020: 8,352 infected, 40 hospitalized and 235 deceased after the pandemic.

As a result, St. Sunniva's regular activities for cancer-prone children, adolescents and families have been moved to 2021.

From 15.6 there will be smaller activities open, and together with the Children's Cancer Society in Oslo and Akershus we will find smaller activities with groups under 20 participants.

In the meantime, we will visit all of our partners, the Red Cross, Save the Children, The Norwegian Armed Forces, cooperating helicopter companies, RIB speed boat service and other private companies, assistants for awarding thank-you certificates from past activities, and for maintaining good relationships for many years.



Frank JAKOBSEN, CJSJ,
Prior,
St. Sunniva Commandery,
Prior Nordic Priory.





Covid-19: Hope for the best, expect for the worst: Thailand is preparing for the second wave, **St-Sunniva Cdry (NOR)**



Link Jakob

From our **ST. SUNNIVA** of **NORWAY'S** correspondent in **Thailand**

Covid-19 took the international community by surprise, but after a slow start most countries took strong precautions and protective actions for the people. There is a grim contrast between the best and most effective governments and they who let greed and political misbehaviour rule.

Thailand is one of the good guys, and after staying here since August 21. 2019 - on a prolonged family holiday with wife and two small kids – we have got a good impression how the Thai authorities and people are dealing with Covid-19.

Our return tickets were cancelled due to the pandemic, we stay at the family country residence in Sisaket, close to the Cambodian border.



The Suvarnabhumi airport in Bangkok is 430 km away, the borders between provinces are controlled and partly closed, and even if there were airplanes back to Norway at this time, we would choose to stay.

The reason for that is simple. While Norway with only 5,2 million people has 238 deceased 29th May 2020, Thailand – with 58 million inhabitants, has only 57 deceased. There is simply safer to stay here, even though also Thailand gradually is opening up shops, cinemas and many activities that were shut down. Schools and kindergarten are still and will be closed completely until at least 1st of July.

At the same time as Thailand open up for some business, they make sure there are strict rules to follow. As an example: At movie theatres you have to keep face mask on, no eating or drinking is allowed and there are three seats between every person in the audience. The rules are strict, and people here are following the official instructions into an extent that we not would see in Norway. (...)



What to do and how to do it, and what to avoid. Educational posters are practically everywhere in Thailand. Stay safe!





Covid-19: Hope for the best, expect for the worst: Thailand is preparing for the second wave, **St-Sunniva Cdry (NOR)**



Frank Jakobsen delivers

(...) At the same time Thailand is preparing for the 2nd Covid-19 wave. There are already examples on countries that lifted the security measures far too early, something that backfire, and they are facing unnecessary suffering and deaths. This is something that many other countries may experience the next months.

Thailand is now preparing for a long period were Covid-19 will be the main focus. The prime minister, Prayut Chan-o-cha, has regular updates on television, and is assuring that the nation is planning for the next two years. This might be a long fight that will test the stayer abilities of many countries. As we see it from here, Thailand is well prepared and might fight off the Covid-19 better than most western countries.

So, how will this end ? They who claim to have an answer are most likely to be wrong.

We – as everyone else - simply has to make the best out of the situation. Compared to many others in the world, we might be privileged in this situation, but Covid-19 does not pick victims due to position or wallet. Until a vaccine is developed and ready to use, we hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

**Jan Helge KALVIK, KGSJ,
St. Sunniva Commandery,
Prior Nordic Priory.**

Jan Helge Kalvik and his wife Supaporn Muangsri Kalvik, stranded in Thailand with two small children, Lawrence and Kenneth. We just have to make the best out of a dreadful global situation.



A prolonged stay in Thailand due to Covid-19, with a baby girl and a 2 ½ year old boy, can be challenging. Thanks to their grandmother we manage to make fun activities out of almost nothing. Lawrence tells grandmother "...put on your facemask" while Kenneth(pg. 18) explores more or less important material on YouTube.





For as the
body without
the spirit is
dead, so
faith without
works is
dead also.

James 2:26





Dear Brothers- and Sisters-in-Arms,

You'll certainly recognise this feeling: you have been sitting or standing next to another of our members, and afterwards you are told by others: *"By the way: did you know that she/he accomplished ... ?"* And then you're astonished because you didn't know at all, even if these are members you are quite familiar with, and you want to share this knowledge with the OSJ-community. This article is meant to be **a beginning of a series** about remarkable members, or members who stand out in charity achievements, in religious matters, professionally, ... discretely but efficiently.

But this starting article is more: it is a **warm invitation** to send me an article about fellow members who do stand out, who astonish you, and are so discrete to never tell themselves about their local or worldwide realizations.

I'll give it a start with **Francis SERRUYS**, a Flemish civil engineer, who did a number of international reknown glass buildings and projects: you'll certainly know a number of them, most likely you already have been standing in and on glass projects of his, as the article will show out. Francis doesn't know about this, because he likes to keep things in all modesty and discretion, just like his charitable works (and his spouse's Lieve's). So this is as much a surprise to you as it is to him.

Enjoy, and **feel triggered** to give some exposure to your most discretely-remarkable fellow OSJ-Brother or Sister !

Your editor, Jan

In the beginning of 1989, Francis coincidentally started a career with Saint-Roch (Saint-Gobain Group, a world player and multinational in a.o. glass). After going through all kind of functions, f.i. in Research and Development in Compiègne (France, yes, the place where the WWI-peace treaty was signed in 1918), he got a number of industrial patents on his name as the (co-)inventor, and is in different international boards of standardization on European and international level, an that includes the ASTM: the American Society for Testing and Materials, a non-profit association to provide society and the international community with proper safety standards.

Francis started glass factories Chennai (India), which took him some twenty times over there, he has done Project Management in all corners of the world, with only one blank spot: Central Africa. But he'll get there, no doubt: if not for some iconic glass engineering project, it will be for charity initiatives.

I'll take you through a number of his reknown projects across the globe:

(...)





(...) His nicest projects no doubt are:

- the glass roof of the **Flemish parliament**,
- the 1.000 m high **Skywalk** in de **Grand Canyon**,
- the **IAC** (InterActiveCorp) **building** in New York (architect Frank O. Gehry),
- the **Eiffel tower** glass floors in Paris,
- the **Tower Bridge** glass floors in London,
- the **TKTS glass stairs** on Times Square, New York,
- the **General Assembly** building (**UNO**) – New York renovation.
- the **Lloyds of London** renovation, where all the exterior glass was brought to the factory en reused in double layered glass: according to Francis entering the majestic Lloyds building is like entering a Cathedral,
- the **Lakhta Tower** (new world headquarters Gazprom), Saint Petersburg, confronting Francis with numerous technical and logistic challenges.
- the **Saint-Gobain Tower** (Paris), the harshest project because these were to be the new world headquarters of the own company, leading to a lot of non-colliding opinions by *top bananas*.
- the **Louis Vuitton Foundation** – Paris (architect Frank O. Gehry)
- the **Vancouver Exhibition Center**; Francis always takes loads of Belgian chocolates over there, as far that he's rekknown in the New York office as "Mister Belgian Chocolate".
- the **Emirates Towers** in Dubai: a project in co-operation with the Belgian building company Besix, in times when Dubai was still a very modest town without an airport but with luggage control on the bus to the hotel on alcohol.
- the **Sports City Centre** in Doha (Qatar) in co-operation with the Belgian company Besix once more. Project 'design & build' (to be) finished in less than a year's time because the Olympic Flame had to crown that at the Asean Games. Finishing the building in time, including the appartment of the sheik and the whole hotel, lead to a tower personal visit and dinner with the sheik himself.

Francis is actually working on the **Oceanwide First Street tower** in San Francisco, for which the glass is produced in Austria and the matching outer panels in Thailand, the wharf being in San Francisco. Architect of this project is Sir Norman Foster (of Foster & Partners).

I challenge you to tell me that you haven't been (standing/walking) on any of his projects ☺ !
(...)





(...) Francis received different awards, among which the GPD award for contribution to the Glass Industry, and he was honored for his representation of Belgium in different standardisation committees. He published in many trade magazines and conference proceedings, and is a welcome guest speaker on conferences in Finland, New York, Los Angeles, Dubai, India, ...

When not abroad, and now both sons have left the house, both Francis and his spouse Lieve spend all their free time on **charity** work within and beyond the Order, Francis presides the local church committee Saint Walburga, is a board member of the Saint Salvator cathedral committee, and contributes great efforts in the City of Bruges' Disabled People's advice committee.

As an author, I am glad I could get this information without Francis knowing, because he's far too modest to tell about all this, But now you know anyway ☺ !

Got your own Francis in your own Priory ? Of course you do ! **Then let me know** in text and pictures, and I'll be most glad to post these in the next International Herald.

Allow me to finish by presenting you a few pages with some pearls of architecture and renovation, all realized by our Brother Francis.

Warmly,

Jan





Lakhta Tower, St. Petersburg



Grand Canyon



St. Gobain Tower,
Paris

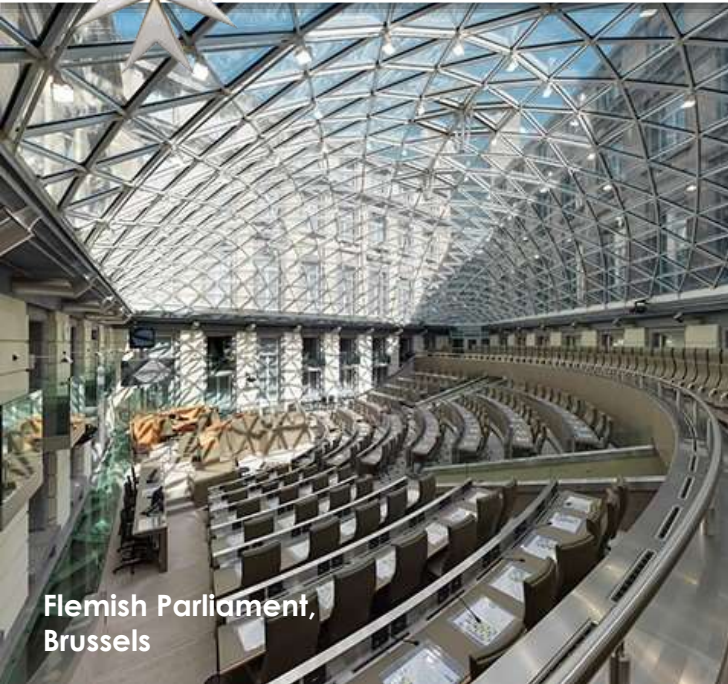


TKTS, New York



Tower Bridge,
London





Flemish Parliament,
Brussels



Sports City Center, Doha



Oceanwide
first street
tower



Lloyds of
London



IAC, New York



Lloyds of London



Glass bomb
blast testing
(100 kg TNT)



Louis Vuitton Foundation





PRIORY OF VICTORIA
Grand Priory of Australasia

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller,

Members of the Victorian Priory and all other Australians are standing with you in this time of crisis and trauma. In the Easter story we see the power of God's love to overcome death and devastation, and from these events, new life and hope emerges.

We trust that the attached video brings comfort and hope to you all.

*The candle of hope we light in this hour;
The candle of peace shines bright with God's plan;
The candle of joy reminds us to sing;
The candle of love tells what we are worth;
The Christ candle's light that shines for us here
Tells out the good news that God has come near!
God came, a poor baby, in one time and place,
To show all creation the wealth of God's grace.*

(paraphrasing the words of Carolyn Winfrey Gillette).

Prior Dame Barbara Abley, AM CJSJ FACN
Prior of Victoria
Grand Priory of Australasia





PRIORY OF VICTORIA

Grand Priory of Australasia

Whilst the COVID 19 virus in relation to Services, meetings and social gatherings has heavily impacted on many aspects of our lives our Priory, its Commanderies and committees has taken the opportunity to use ZOOM to conduct its virtual meetings, to ensure that the 'business' and carriage of the work of the Priory progresses. The Victorian Priory, has also used Zoom successfully to interview prospective Aspirants. This was exceptionally satisfying for both parties.

The May Priory Council Meeting noted the take-up of an invitation to access the Grand Priory Website over Easter [to read the Pastoral Posts written by the Order's Chaplains. This new and welcome innovation is currently being evaluated by the Grand Priory for use in the future. We express our appreciation to our Chaplain, Chevalier Rev Dr. Kevin for taking up the opportunity to write some wonderful posts.

Future VPAC Meetings will be conducted electronically, as we recognise that the impact of this virus is not going to be short lived to ensure that the work of the Order does not slow; and secondly that we minimise the event of cross infection.

We advised our Victorian members that the 2020 Diary is constantly under review. All being well, and within the guidelines of the Australian Government restrictions regarding gatherings, the Victorian Annual Chapter Meeting and the Investiture will be held on the 14th November 2020 at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton followed by a Celebratory Luncheon (Brighton Savoy on the beach front).

Our November Investiture will see seven new members invested - John Caruana, Cheryl Lacey, Rev Graham Reynolds, Edward (Ted) Stephens, Judy Stephens, Rev Chaplain Soma and Associate Professor Sajeev Koshy.

Of course, all events/functions and services are entirely dependent upon remaining restrictions and the status of the COVID 19 virus.

Following the announcement to all members by the Grand Prior Chevalier David Wilckens KJSJ the members and families of the Victorian Priory warmly congratulated H.E Bailiff Peter Wiltshire OSJ CMSJ on receiving the award of the Cross of Merit , a personal reward from the Lieutenant Grand Master Bailiff Paul Borg OSJ. It is a great personal achievement, and our Priory expects that the formal presentation may be made in November. (...)





(***) Regrettably those who are newly bereaved are dealing with a heightened level of grief because of the inability to share this personally and physically with close relatives, friends and the wider community. To each person we offer our love and support.

We thank our local health care workers, emergency service operators and all of those in our community who continue to work hard to provide essential services.

The Victorian Priory Administrative Council very warmly acknowledges the generosity of members who supported our invitation to contribute to the Victorian Bushfire Relief and to each person we offer our very grateful and sincere thanks. Total proceeds will be donated to the Salvation Army (Victoria) Social Work ABN 18 730 899 453 which the Victorian State Premier has announced is partnering with the government in connection with the Victorian Bushfire Appeal together with the Red Cross.

This fund provides, or will provide, the following:

- \$5 million was made available immediately to those most affected including families who have lost loved ones.
 - Immediate payments of \$50,000 to each of the families of the five people who have tragically died as the result of the bushfires.
 - \$1 million to BlazeAid to help farmers replace fencing and infrastructure burnt by the fires.
 - \$4 million to provide payments from \$1,000 to \$4,500 to those who have experienced loss of, or damage, to their primary residence which will go to providing temporary accommodation.
 - Support will be made through the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.
- Importantly, the disposal of Relief Funding will be recommended and managed by an Advisory Panel and it will ensure every single dollar donated goes to the people and communities affected by the bushfires.

The 50th Edition of the Victorian Priory HERALD honoured the four fallen Victorian Police members, who were senselessly and tragically killed in the line of duty. We continued our profile of a member of the Victorian Priory, and also proudly featured the exceptional work of one of our 'off shore' members who lives and works in Indonesia (Dame Marg Barry OAM DSJ & Bali Children Foundation in Indonesia).

Our Priory's Major Events Committee had planned to hold a major fundraiser this year in support of the Code 9 Foundation. The Code 9 Foundation was formed in 2015 to provide peer to peer support for first responders suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and other associated mental health injuries. (...)





(...) However, fund raising may need to take a different form-potentially assisted by donations. Priory members were encouraged to consider the best way forward to achieve our aim.

I know that we are all doing our best within our capacity to assist our families and local communities during this challenging time. I do appreciate that a greater challenge lies ahead when our Order will be called upon to provide support to those hard-pressed communities trying to rebuild once the Covid 19 has been 'controlled'.

Kindest regards to all members of our international family and friends. Stay well. Yours in the Service of the Order of Saint John

Prior Dame Barbara ABLEY, AM CJSJ FACN

Prior of Victoria
Grand Priory of Australasia



MUSTARD SEEDS OF ACTION AND HOPE



**To encourage us to be people who challenge violence, justice and oppression,
and work for peace and reconciliation.**

From the Homily delivered in Ballarat by our Assistant Priory Chaplain Chevalier Father Gerard Keith KSJ





BALI CHILDREN FOUNDATION in Indonesia

Featuring one of the Victorian Priory's off shore members: Dame Marg Barry OAM DSJ

Marg, brought up in country Victoria, has been based in Asia for forty five years, from 1975 in New Delhi, India and since 1990 in Bali, Indonesia.

Working in the rag trade from the early days of 'off shore' production, Marg experienced many of the thrills and challenges faced pioneering a 'western' garment industry in Asia.

Exposure to riots, bombs and burning factories were all part of that time, so the move to Bali in 1990 seemed a safer and more peaceful option. And so it was until 2002, when Bali's first bomb attack occurred. Like many of her fellow expats, Marg jumped in and volunteered during the emergency and the recovery period afterwards. It was then that she started the education work which became Bali Children Foundation and for which she and the charity have received so many awards.

Since then BCF (Bali Children Foundation) have acted at the forefront of many disasters faced in Bali and the nearby province of Lombok. There was a second bomb in 2005, and more recently the Yellow bridge collapse in Lembongan in 2016, landslides in Songan 2017, the eruption of Mt Agung in late 2017 and Lombok's devastating and deadly earth quake in 2018.

With the outbreak of Covid 19 and the dangers it poses, we thought it a good time to reach out to Marg and hear how things are in Bali.

This is what she had to say.

"The Covid 19 challenge is more profound than any previously faced by Bali or the World . After years living in Bali's tourism based economy, we know so many villages and families who are now out of work, with no social support net. So far Bali has largely escaped the impact of infection, instead is it suffering hunger. As a member of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, I see it as my duty to provide what relief I can to families in need. It is that aspect of the ministry which initially attracted me to OSJ.

Our immediate response has been to step in with food support until the government can take up their part, which we expect will be soon. For now with support from Australian and International friends we are able to deliver (...)





With support from Australian and International friends we are able to deliver packs of staple foods – enough for a family of four for a month and costing \$25

(...) packs of staple foods – enough for a family of four for a month and costing \$25. That done, as with our previous disaster responses, we will return to our core work which is education opportunities for Bali's remote communities".

The island's poverty-stricken villages are well-hidden from the tourist traps and many visitors are unaware of the hardships they face. Through education, Bali Children Foundation strives to improve their quality of life, one young person at a time.

The foundation works with students, families, schools and communities to identify the children that need financial help, support them through school, maintain strong grades, and help them secure good jobs. There are currently 1,100 students on BCF scholarships.



Bali Children Foundation Year 12 2020 Tertiary Preparation Group

"Students who finish year 12 and get well-paid jobs, earn incomes that are four to eight times greater than their family income combined," says founder Margaret Barry.

"As we get whole villages graduating through year 12 and picking up job opportunities, the children's families benefit from that and the whole community improves".

"It takes about 10 years," Marg says, "to develop sustainable change."

These goals and the funding they require has been deeply impacted by the COVID crisis. (...)





(...) Indonesia's school year is hoped to commence in July 2020. Many scholarships for school children, supported through personal benefactors are at risk.

Bali Children Foundation's skills enhancing education, English as a Second language and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) is delivered in remote schools in Bali and North Lombok. Presently these classes for around 8,000 children, will not be available until the funding expected from cancelled events in Australia and Bali can be replaced.

And a final quote from Marg. 'After eighteen years of strong, effective growth we are faced with a massive challenge. We recognize that we are no different to so many other valuable organizations or even to national economies. We like everyone else must find a way through this. Please pray that we do'



Dame Marg BARRY, OAM DSJ
Victorian Priory



If you would like to **support** Bali Children Foundation please visit their **website** <https://bcfl.org.au/>





**Don't be afraid,
for I am with you.
Don't be discouraged,
for I am your God.
I will strengthen you
and help you.
I will hold you up
with my victorious right hand.**

Isaiah 41:10





With immense sorrow, the Russian Grand Priory of Malta communicates that our beloved Rev. Fr. Concetto PENNISI has passed away to join our Heavenly Father.

A loving spiritual Reverend Father, who was always ready to welcome everyone with that smile and that word of comfort so awaited for by the individual. Proud of being a member within and a part of the Russian Grand Priory of Malta of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller. Humble as the shepherd who takes care of the flock entrusted to him. All of us who have known him are ever so grateful for his teachings centred on that Brotherly Love that the Gospel puts over to us Christians - just as the whole life of Fr. Concetto had been.

May our Holy Mary, the help of us sinners, who has accompanied you throughout your life, will now accompany you to be welcomed by Our Father in his glory.

**Paul M. BORG, OSJ,
Lt.-Grand Master**





CHARITY CONCERT: PRIORY OF DEUTSCHSCHWEIZ (CH)



Charity Concert in the Abbey church in Beuron (Germany), 11th August 2019

In the abbey church in Beuron, the priory Deutschschweiz of our order was able to organize a charity concert for the benefit of the aftercare clinic in Tannheim (Nachsorgeklinik Tannheim) as part of a special church service. The quartet "Cantus Firmus" from Ukraine inspired the numerous church visitors during and after the service with their fantastic voices and a wide repertoire. The large applause and generous donations showed that the performances of the four professional musicians from Ukraine also reached the audience.

Mr. Thomas Müller, the managing director of the aftercare clinic explained the activities of the clinic in short informative speech. The clinic is urgently dependent on donations to cover the annually increasing costs. Without these donations, it would not be possible to continue the clinic to this extent. Thanks to medical advances, the quality of life and lifespan of the little patients has been significantly increased. The aftercare clinic in Tannheim gives families with severely chronically ill children new strength and hope. It offers a highly qualified treatment within the framework of family-oriented aftercare for the cancer, heart or cystic fibrosis of a child to the entire family. The clinic also treats families who have lost a child due to illness. Further information about the aftercare clinic Tannheim is to be found at www.tannheim.de. (...)





CHARITY CONCERT: PRIORY OF DEUTSCHSCHWEIZ (CH)



(...) On the 30th August 2019 the official handover of the collected donations took place at the aftercare clinic. Our priory of Deutschschweiz has increased the funds collected at the charity concert considerably, so that our representation could hand over the beautiful amount of 3.500 euros.



Othmar ZÜGER, KGSJ,
Webmaster
Deutschschweiz Priory



Nachsorgeklinik Tannheim

www.osj-deutschschweiz.ch



CALL FOR CONTENT

WE WANT
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Herald !

Make yourself heard, from all OSI units.
We DO want to know how you are doing over
there on our motto *Pro Fide, the pro Utilitate
Hominum !*

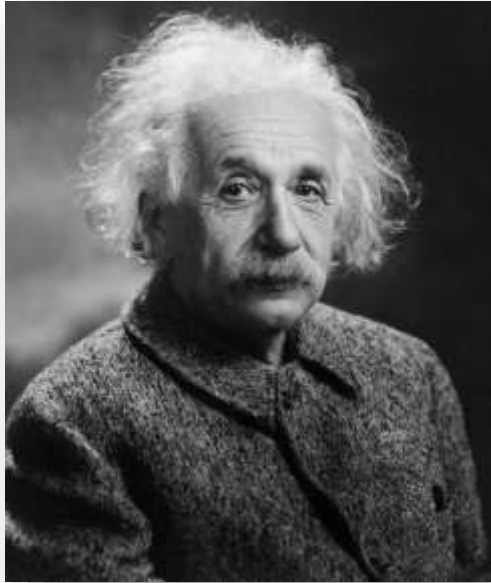
Send your contributions in Word format and in
pictures soon for the next **03/2020** edition to:
lambrechtnot@skynet.be, **by the end of
September** to come at the latest.

MANY THANKS !





REFLECTIONS on We wish you A HAPPY NEW YEAR



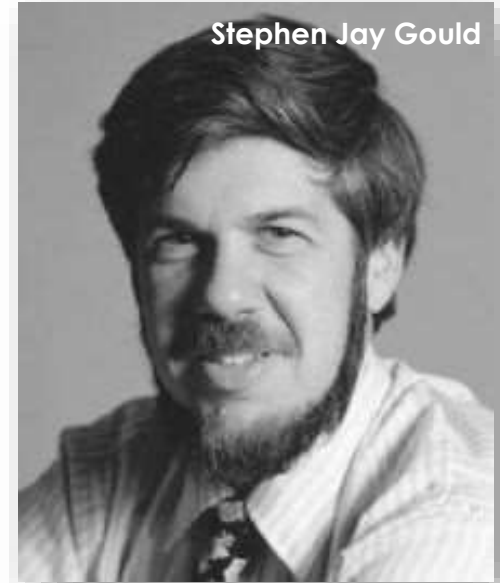
Everybody knows Albert Einstein as (one of) the greatest scientist(s) of all time. What is less well-known is that he also has truly interesting views on important philosophical problems related to our modern age. These views are expressed in several short essays to be found in his *Ideas and Opinions* (several editions; all quotes refer to this text).

In this reflection, I will discuss his view on the relation between science and religion. Einstein thinks, *first*, that science and religion are completely different from each other; they constitute two radically different domains (as another great scientist, Stephen Jay Gould, put it: they constitute two radically different 'magisteria'). This implies that the alternative opinion that science and religion are necessarily opposed, and that one of them has to be given up, must be rejected. Einstein thinks, *secondly*, that under certain conditions science can lead the scientist to a special kind of religious experience which he calls 'cosmic religious feeling'. In other words: not only is there strictly speaking no opposition between the two, but to

the contrary science can, at least for some individual scientists, somehow lead to a special kind of religiousness (as a by-product of their scientific activity). For this moment, I will discuss only the first thesis.

It may seem paradoxical that somebody so strongly devoted to science, also stresses the autonomy of religion (as well as ethics) from science. This thesis reveals of course a specific conception of the nature of science on the one hand, and of ethics and religion on the other. Einstein clearly differs from scientistically minded thinkers who see science as a genuine anti-religious force and as capable of providing guidelines for human life replacing ethics and religion.

According to Einstein "mere (scientific) thinking can not give us a sense of the ultimate and fundamental (...)





(...) ends". The "ultimate goal (in life) and the longing to reach it must come from another source" different from scientific reason, namely, 'the heart'. "(Scientific) knowledge of what is does not open the door directly of what should be". In other words, science can only tell us how things are, not what must be done, not what the real good is. Even the value of scientific knowledge itself does not follow from scientific insights themselves: "The knowledge of truth as such is wonderful, but it is so little capable of acting as a guide that it can not prove even the justification and the value of the aspiration toward that very knowledge of truth."



A scientific mentality cannot be a guide for life; to the contrary, an "overemphasis on the purely intellectual attitude, often directed solely to the practical and the factual, has led to the direct impairment of ethical values [...];

the shifting of mutual human considerations by a 'matter-of-fact' habit of thought has come to lie like a killing frost upon human relations." "Without 'ethical culture' there is no salvation for humanity." Einstein considers it impossible that for the great majority of people the scientific mentality could be the life-guiding force. On the contrary, it would mean disaster, especially if — as would be almost inevitable — science would be combined with a 'matter-of-fact' habit of thought, with a purely pragmatic attitude. The only way for the great mass of people to lead a meaningful and good life is through 'ethical culture'. By this Einstein means a



a way of life in which the striving for personal fulfilment is linked with respect for other human beings, and with a sensitivity for values which transcend petty human concerns. Introduction into a higher sort of life (...)





(...) requires a special kind of education, through tradition and example. Up to now it has been the great religions which have made this possible.



Of course, it cannot be denied that religion is also the origin of a lot of evils in the world throughout history. Yet it is futile to think that we could eradicate these evils by eliminating religion altogether, replacing it by a scientifically inspired lifestyle. If successful, this would turn science into a new, false kind of religion and into an almost certainly inhuman ethics; most probably it would lead to a 'Brave New World'. According to Einstein, what is to be hoped for is the development of purified forms of religiousness, as has already happened with the

Judeo-Christian religion. The 'higher' religions are fundamentally moral religions, strongly different from more 'primitive' forms of religion largely based on fear. But even the higher forms of religion have to wage a constant fight against dogmatism and superstition (both present today in fundamentalist forms of religion). They also have to



struggle against a magical attitude towards reality in which reality is conceived as if it were animated like a jealous lover or an unpredictable judge whom we have to appease or to please by our worship.

The sign of a bad religion is that it favors the (...)





(...) spontaneous anthropocentric views and attitudes of people, their tendency to wishful thinking and their constant desire to influence things in their favor. The sign of a good religion is that it gives people real peace of mind through the contentment of living in harmony with God, and that it leads to works of charity and justice vis-à-vis others. A truly religious person, says Einstein, "appears to



me to be one who has, to the best of his ability, liberated himself from the fetters of his selfish desires and is preoccupied with thoughts, feelings and aspirations to which he clings because of their super-personal value." Of course, religion is of necessity closely linked to traditions, stories, examples, rites and even dogmas. Obedience and goodness do not operate in a mental vacuum: the heart does not work without the imagination. But none of these elements should be separated from the practices of charity and justice and prayer to God.

Characteristic of the true believer is a quiet faith without

hesitation, which is exactly the opposite of an anxious desire for absolute certainty often linked with a proneness to excessive doubt and wavering of the mind. As Einstein puts it, the truly religious person "has no doubt of the significance and loftiness of those super-personal objects and goals which neither require nor are capable of rational foundation". His heart being at peace, if science tells anything which seems at odds with his religious beliefs, the believer will quietly wait and see whether science will continue to put forward the same idea, or he will suppose that, in some way he cannot yet foresee or penetrate, the contradiction will turn out to be only apparent. (...)





(...) Of course, science can be a real threat to religion, but only to the dogmatic, superstitious and magical kind. This last sort of religion sees itself as the jealous guardian of eternally fixed *literal* truths which, although really themselves lifeless, have the terrible power to suffocate life. This sort of religion also sees itself as the arsenal of magical tricks for influencing reality, and therefore it has everything to fear from the real efficacy of scientific technique. However, it is quite possible that science helps religion to purify itself from superstitious and magical elements: by forcing it to come to a better awareness about the difference between faith and scientific belief, and between religious attitudes and magical or prag-

"Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. The mediocre mind is incapable of understanding the man who refuses to bow blindly to conventional prejudices and chooses instead to express his opinions courageously and honestly." Albert Einstein

matic attitudes. As Einstein says: "true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge," not so much because scientific insights have been taken into account, but because science has forced religion to purify itself as religion.

The greatest threat for religion does probably not arise from scientific knowledge as such,

but from what Einstein calls the 'matter-of-fact' attitude. This is the pragmatistic attitude which came about in the wake of the scientific-technological developments and their impact on human attitudes and society at large. The expectation of a paradise on earth through science and technology, and without any need for altruism and self-restraint, just looks like a paradoxical version of bad religion, this time combined with magical trust in and wishful thinking related to science itself. Of course it should be clear that these considerations do not at all imply a condemnation of science and technology as such: they form a condemnation only of certain consequences science and technology tend to have in certain human and societal contexts. What it perhaps does show is that a sober and ethical stand with respect to science and technology could greatly depend on the existence of a purified religiousness.

Herman DE DIJN, CGSJ
Prof. Em., Philosophy dept.,
Catholic University of Leuven (B).





Prioratus Flandriae in corona times

Hendrik Vandaele

Doctor MD Hendrik Vandaele (84) and his wife Arielle Goosens (81) from Willebroek are both members of Prioratus Flandriae. He continues to work calmly during the corona crisis. When asked whether or not he is afraid, he replies: *"On the contrary, these are exceptionally exciting times"*. Hendrik is an avid collector of holy water vessels. His collection is enormous, and is displayed throughout the house, from the entrance hall to the bedroom. Hundreds of copies hang among other religious objects.

Frank Arnou

On May 21, "Brugges' mooiste" (Brugges most beautiful Procession) would go out. Unfortunately, corona prevented it. However at 2:10 PM all Bruges bells rang as a sign of solidarity, across all borders. In this way we did justice to an age-old tradition.

Frank, passionate member of the annual "Holy Blood Procession", was forced to complete the course alone, including a glass of triple beer afterwards.



Chev. Erwin VANDECAUTER, KSJ,
Prioratus Flandriae Priory





So also you have
sorrow now, but I
will see you
again, and your
hearts will rejoice,
and no one will
take your joy
from you.

John 16:22





OSJOSMA orphanage (Haiti) saved from corona virus

The OSJOSMA orphanage is situated in the rural village of Saint-Michel de l'Attalaye on the *Plateau Central* in Haiti. In January 1993, Frans and Rien Vandueren adopted two children from this village. During a 'roots journey' in 2001, and on request of the then mayor, Frans decided to do 'some-thing' for the village. That 'something' would turn out an orphanage.

Frans would remain closely associated with the building of the orphanage. The two living units (Sen Jozef and Sen Franswa), both on the same lot, can accommodate around 40 children and adolescents. A third unit (Sent An), located on the adjacent lot, was specifically built for a maximum of 15 adolescents who have the leave the orphanage at the age of 18, but are still studying to complete their upper secondary education. This third unit will be managed by one adult supervisor reporting to the orphanage's board.

The project is aimed at replacing missing families. The orphans attend school in the village, but have their 'home' in the orphanage where principal Olès Etienne and his team of currently 16 members make sure they are properly cared for.

Adventure and plight of a corona patient in Haiti

On March 9th, Frans Vandueren travelled for the 30th time to 'his' orphanage in Haiti. His initial travel company was comprised of five people, of whom only three would eventually (...)



Partial view of the
Osjosma orphanage





Frans conferring with orphanage principal Olès and chief pedagogue Yanskia

(...) accompany him. The two 'defectors' cancelled the trip shortly before the day of departure, for fear of the as yet 'announced' but still not 'rampant' pandemic.

The journey first brought them to Madrid and Miami, where the company spent the night before flying on to the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince where they landed on March, 10th. It was apparent that the county was already wary of corona infections, because all arriving passengers were scanned with a 'pistol' measuring their body temperature. No worries, though, no one was refused entry to the country.

Their plane had landed early morning, and the company headed the same day to Saint Michel de l'Atelaye. Chedline, daughter of principal Olès, drove the orphanage's little van that had just been repaired in the capital.

A few days later, Frans developed a fever. It did not stop him to partake in the traditional outing to the seaside with all children and adolescents. During the whole trip, he held one of the smallest children on his lap. When the fever did not recede despite the paracetamol he had taken, he decided to consult his doctor who advised him to switch to an antibiotic treatment. Three days passed without any improvement, upon which his Belgian doctor suggested to resort to the other antibiotics Frans had taken with him from Belgium. In the meantime, Chedline had called a befriended doctor in Port-au-Prince who promptly dispatched a team

from the Ministry of Health that tested Frans on corona. Frans and his fellow travellers were strictly forbidden to leave the orphanage's premises.

By nightfall the next day, the Belgian consul warned the Belgians to be on standby. A police escort would come and pick them up. A few hours earlier, the country's president had revealed before the assembled press that two individuals had contracted the virus. In doing so, he disclosed so many details that it took only a few hours for the first threats (...)





THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: personal experiences about Covid-19 by Brother Frans (B), struck on charity duty in Haiti



(...) to appear in social media. Early morning on Friday, March 20th, around three o'clock, an ambulance arrived at the orphanage to evict Frans. Only a few hours earlier, a number of hotheads had pelted the orphanage's entrance with stones. Principal Olès had called the police who had managed to chase them off. Frans boarded the ambulance, whereas his three non-infected fellow travellers boarded another one. A police car drove in front of both vehicles. None of them knew where they would be taken. By early dawn, Frans was admitted to the University Hospital in Mirebalais. As would turn out later, his three fellow travellers were given shelter in a house nearby which was guarded by armed safety personnel.

The University Hospital in Mirebalais, built in early 2010 with aid funds that had poured in after the heavy earthquake, is acknowledged to be the best in Haiti. It is supposedly also the only hospital in the world that gets its electricity from solar panels only. The hospital unit to which Frans was brought, however, was quite rudimentary. He spent the first three nights in a communal ward with seven beds. It turned out to be an improvised 'corona unit' which Frans shared with another Haitian citizen: either Frans or this man was believed to be 'patient zero' in Haiti. The continuous chirping and whistling of malfunctional medical equipment made sleeping virtually impossible. Frans asked for a blanket, for the nights were chilly. His request was not met. His mattress could barely be called as such, at best it was a wooden board with some sort of covering, a few centimetres thick and lacking any springiness. Frans lost his taste and smell, he was administered large doses of different antibiotics that deprived him of his appetite and on top of that, he suffered from serious watery diarrhea. Three to four times a day, he was served a meal in a polystyrene box. He hardly ate at all and soon lost a lot of weight. Luckily, he had his smartphone on him and there was a socket available. Hence, he could communicate with home and with a lot of friends. Frans also made daily calls to the orphanage and learned the comforting news that no one showed signs of illness. During the first days, he was put on a ventilator but the equipment was uncoupled as soon as his blood saturation had reached a stable level of 88, which was considered (...)





THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: personal experiences about Covid-19 by Brother Frans (B), struck on charity duty in Haiti



**Frans VANDUEREN, KGSJ,
Main Herald, Low Countries (B)**

(...) "a good to go".

At some given point, things threatened to escalate when one of the doctors wanted to seize the smartphones of all patients for fear that they would photograph staff members and post these pictures in social media. Eventually, all patients were allowed to keep their smartphones. The argument that won the day was that without smartphones, communication with the outside world would be impossible, which in turn would have an adverse effect on morale and healing processes.

After three days and nights of debilitating conditions, things looked to turn around. By now, the number of corona patients had increased to five. One evening, some time after dusk, they were ordered to prepare for a move-out. Through the dark, they were led to a pavilion nearby. For a better understanding, it should be noted that the hospital consists of a multi-story main building behind which a variety of pavilions is built. The new shelter turned out to be a gallery with rooms around a central patio. Everyone was allotted a private room, and this time Frans's mattress proved a lot better.

The new abode was not without inconveniences, though. As soon as dusk fell, rats could be seen swarming the patio covered with pebbles. The few shrubs and plants gave the vermin apparently enough cover to venture that close to human habitation. The rooms contained nothing but a bed. After conferring with his sister – a professional nurse – Frans asked to be ventilated again. No fuss was made about it: a ventilator was quickly brought in... but never activated. The room lacked sockets and an extension cord proved unavailable. About twenty meters away from Frans's room, there were five sockets in a row in an open sheltered space which served as office for the caring staff. The common sanitary facilities consisted of no more than two toilets, two wash basins and two showers – or better, two tubs with a water tap about half a meter above floor level. After a few days, Frans decided he needed a thorough wash. Privacy was not to be expected: fellow patients came in without knocking and did not close the door while using the toilet.

The caring staff and doctors were above criticism, as far as Frans is concerned. They all wore protective gear as prescribed, the room was disinfected on a daily basis and the bed linen was refreshed on a number of occasions. The nurse and doctors were all very friendly. As days went on, he slowly regained his appetite. (...)





THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: personal experiences about Covid-19 by Brother Frans (B), struck on charity duty in Haiti



(...) In the meantime, two chest X-rays had been taken within the span of a few days. Likewise, two blood samples had been drawn. The second X-ray and blood sample apparently indicated that Frans had overcome the disease. On Sunday March 29th, the chief physician announced his decision to release Frans from the hospital, on the condition that he found a suitable quarantine place. From his fellow travellers, with whom he called on a daily basis, he had learned that they too had undergone a corona test and that the outcome had been negative. They had planned on taking the very last flight to the United States on March 30th, shortly before the international airport would be closed. Obviously, Frans wanted to join them, but the physician of his tourist assistance insurance advised against this on the ground that his blood saturation – which had by then risen to a level of 94 – was still too low. At best, it should be 96. Frans complied begrudgingly and started looking for a hotel that was willing to accommodate him. The first two hotels he called with the message that his stay would be for quarantine purposes, told him that they were about to close for lack of guests. He contacted a third hotel through a booking site and communicated in English. At least this hotel was willing to offer him a room.

On Monday March 30th, an ambulance turned up at the hospital. Frans boarded the vehicle with his luggage. Not far from the hospital, the ambulance pulled over and – surprise – the other three fellow travellers boarded with their luggage as well. The four Belgians were crammed in the ambulance that took more than a half hour to cover the first kilometres in Mirebalais: its siren and horn did not prove effective enough to persuade the numerous market vendors to make way and secure the vehicle a smooth passage. The lockdown, as announced by the president ten days before, was clearly not being respected. The ambulance was taking Frans and his three fellow travellers to the airport, that much was sure, and his fellow travellers were well aware of that. Frans seized this unexpected opportunity to call the physician of his (...)



Towards a better future through studying





THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: personal experiences about Covid-19 by Brother Frans (B), struck on charity duty in Haiti



tourist assistance insurance. The latter eventually allowed Frans to board a plane, as long as he was administered oxygen during the flight.

At the airport, a first scary moment occurred. His three fellow travellers had already booked their tickets for the four flights that would take them to Brussels: first from Port-au-Prince to Miami, next to New York, then to Amsterdam and from the Dutch capital to Brussels. Weakened as he was, Frans nevertheless managed to book the first ticket on his own. He was only too happy when the girlfriend of one of his fellow travellers, who had previously booked the other flights, was willing to provide the same service for him.

(...) It was only the prelude to the scariest moment. No sooner had the four travellers passed the customs control and installed themselves in the overcrowded departures area, when Frans and the couple in his company were summoned to leave the secured area. No explanation was given. Frans immediately suspected that it had something to do with ESTA. ESTA is an automated system that determines the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States. It turned out that an order was given by president Trump to cancel all ESTA authorizations that were issued after their arrival in Haiti. Frans had been unaware of that piece of news. The fourth traveller had only recently applied for an ESTA which, consequently, was valid. He had arrived via Guadeloupe and had applied for an ESTA as soon as he realized that his return journey would inevitably imply a flight to the United States. In circumstances as these, getting good advice is extremely valuable. Frans called the Belgian consul who urged him to apply forthwith for a new ESTA for all three travellers. A taxi drive to the American embassy proved pointless, as the Belgians were not allowed inside. What followed, was a nerve-racking attempt to fill in the lengthy ESTA-questionnaires on a smartphone. It was a blessing that sockets were available in the airport entry hall. It literally took ages before all three applications were correctly completed and forwarded. Confirmation of their receipt followed soon by email. A representative of the air carrier pointed out to Frans and his friends that their applications were merely pending and that a definitive confirmation could take up to 24 hours to arrive. Meanwhile, the Belgian embassy [to the United States] had also come (...)





(...) into play: its representative had called the American embassy [to Haiti] which had promptly given the green light, and now he asked for the telephone number of the person in charge. Next came the emails with the caption 'authorized'. The representative of the air carrier eventually gave in, but only after his superior had reassured him that everything was fine. Precisely one hour before the last flight was to take off at eight o' clock p.m. on March 30th, all paperwork was done.

It took the four travellers a stressful afternoon, an overnight in Miami and four successive flights to arrive in Brussels on April 1st, around ten o'clock a.m., a week later than scheduled. On arrival, Frans weighed 10,5 kg less than the 78 kg the balance had shown just before he left for Haiti. Since then, he has made a full recovery and is back at work. Some breathing problems persist, though.



What matters most, however, is that no one was infected by Frans. None of his fellow travellers and no one in the orphanage. The residents of the orphanage, however, had to observe a quarantine of no less than 5 weeks.

On the date of May 8th, 129 corona patients were registered in Haiti, of whom 16 had recovered and 12 had died. It goes without saying that these numbers hardly matter in a developing country with no means whatsoever to cope with a pandemic of this magnitude. Latest update: on the date of June 8th, 2020 the number of infections had risen to 3,538 and the number of fatalities to 54. The pandemic is clearly on the rise.



For **more information** on the OSJOSMA orphanage:
visit www.osjosma.be; visit the **facebook page**: 'osjosma, good to help these kids'.





REFLECTIONS on FAITH - Living with courage and hope during uncertain times.

During Covid times, we all must try to possess courage, faith and hope. How we can navigate the corona virus pandemic with courage, hope and faith? The Bible teaches us: 'Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong' (1 Corinthians 16:13); For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. (Isaiah 41:13)

Secret or unconscious fear creates tension and anxiety. The moment we realize that the soldiers of wrong thoughts attack our inner peace, it is time to wake up the soldiers of light, honesty, self-control and desire for good things. It really rests with each one of us individually whether you want worries or inharmonies to rule your life or whether you will let the divine soldiers of courage, calmness, love, peace and harmony to govern your mental kingdom.

Eleonora Roosevelt said that 'You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'

Fear is simply because you are not living with life, you are living in your mind. Your fear is always about what's going to happen next. You suffer that which does not exist because you are rooted not in reality but in your mind which is constantly eating up on the past and excreting into the future. Right now people are living in tomorrow and being absorbed by overwhelming and negative media and that is why there is fear. Please look at it and see, what can happen after all? At the most you will die, nothing more. At least live before you die because anyway you will die. We are not (...)





(...) wishing it upon ourselves. We are planning to live for many years, but it can happen, isn't it? There is really no security with life. It is just a question of how gracefully and with how much freedom you lived this life. If you have lived, it will be worth dying. Otherwise life will be a regret, death will be a regret.



During these challenging times, we should try to be conscious with whom or with which media we want to associate as they may ruin our awakened spirituality, which is like a tender plant growing within you. Be silent and calm every night for at least half an hour, or longer, and again in the morning before starting the days' activity. This will produce an undaunted, unbreakable inner habit of happiness that will make you able to meet all trying situations of the battle of life.

Through concentration, contemplation, prayer and meditation we make ourselves powerful. Be king over yourself, letting the soldiers of goodness and good habits rule the kingdom of your mind. Then happiness will reign within you forever !



Inez Vermeulen, DSJ,
Intendant
Loon Commandery,
Low Countries (B)





PERSONALIA

International obituary:

Several members in different Priories unfortunately passed away from this life. Our deepest gratitude remains for their achievements and fraternity within and beyond the Order. May they all rest in the peace of our Lord !

Elections and Nominations:



With regret but with warm gratitude and all respect for her achievements, generosity and action willingness for the poor and the needy, we took notice of the end of her office as Prior of the Americas Priory for **Dame Ann Van Ness, GCSJ**, who was internationally active as well as a Lieutenant to the Petit Conseil. We welcome warmly as her successor: **Chev. James Gavrilos, KJSJ**, who was elected as **the new Prior of the Americas Priory**: It might be not easy at all to step in the footsteps of this *Grande Dame Ann*, but our dear Sister-in-Arms Ann Van Ness confirmed us all her confidence in the different qualities of her



successor, so we are looking forward to a nice and fruitful co-operation ! An investiture in New York on last May 1st would have been a perfect setting to have an internationally well attended "changing of the guards" in the America's Priory: I deplore that this occasion apparently *wasn't meant to be* in the given extreme circumstances. It does not at all diminish our appreciation for Sister Ann and our positive expectations for Brother James.

INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL/NATIONAL ORDER EVENTS POSTPONED

New York Investiture and Petit Conseil

Due to the travel restrictions and the yet unknown consequences of any further spreading of the corona Covid-19 virus, all New-York Investiture events planned for April 30th to May 2nd 2020 are wisely postponed until further notice. The Petit Conseil, planned in NewYork for April 29th-30th was evidently postponed for the same reason.

National & local events

Depending on national and local decrees and/or based on common sense in these hazardous times, many of the Order's national and regional activities and gatherings are postponed *sine die*. **However:** this edition will show out that while uncountable activities are postponed within the Order and, while religious gatherings (...)





(...) are deviated to celebrations online and temporarily more experienced in the personal sphere, **charity** works are **continuing**. And none of our members – except for *the one that got away* – was struck by or suffering from the pandemic, to my knowledge. These harsh times turn out to be a solid catalyst for personal **deepening** and for making this clear distinction between the essential and the trivialities. It allows to appreciate even better this extra dimension of **Brotherhood** and Sisterhood within the Order, vastly transcending more superfluous contacts like f.i. in some service clubs and other non-religious related groups. So every cloud has a silver lining, once more.

DISCLAIMER



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LITTLE WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Arms, I hope you'll enjoy this 2/2020 edition, despite of all what is happening on this globe. Many thanks to all members contributing to this edition, some for the first time, and for all the good works *pro Fide pro utilitate Hominum* their reports are reflecting. Keep up this splendid action, and **do NOT forget to send me** content in Word and useable pictures in Jpeg or comparable **by the end of September** to come, at the latest ☺ !

Gently take care of each other and of your fellow man within and beyond the Order, as you always did ! I wish you all sincerely: **good health, safety, and trust in the Lord.**

Yours most sincerely in X° and St-John.

Jan Lambrecht, OSJ,
Editor

