



# *Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller*

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## **CLEVELAND COMMANDERY - MARCH, 2021 NEWSLETTER**

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### **COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**

Dear Knights and Dames,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well.

It has been a challenging year to stay connected. We are fortunate, however, not only to have done so, but also to have done some good in our community. Over the holidays we supported the Hitchcock Center for Women and the children at Marion Sterling Elementary School. Last year, we also supported the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, the East End Neighborhood House, the Greater Cleveland Hunger Network, St. Herman's House, and Project Hope Lake County – all wonderful organizations helping people survive the pandemic.



Hopefully, in the fall we will all be vaccinated and able to meet again in person. When we do, we will appreciate that fact even more. I am grateful to work with each and every one of you. My mentor and one of my dearest friends, George V. Voinovich, used to say, "Together we can do it." Together we will continue to be successful.

Sincerely,

*Commander Claire Rosacco*

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### **FAITH – THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WORK**

For the second year in a row, the Cleveland Commandery has taken to heart the request of the International Order to address not only our service to others – but also that which is the foundation of our service, our faith. On June 24, 2020, the Feast Day of St. John the Baptist, members of the Cleveland Commandery met virtually to discuss the virtue of prudence. Thank you to Dame Sister Diana Stano for leading us as we considered words such as wisdom and insight and as we contemplated what is meant by the "true good." Perhaps the words of Ephesians 5: 15-16 are an apt summary: "Be careful then how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."



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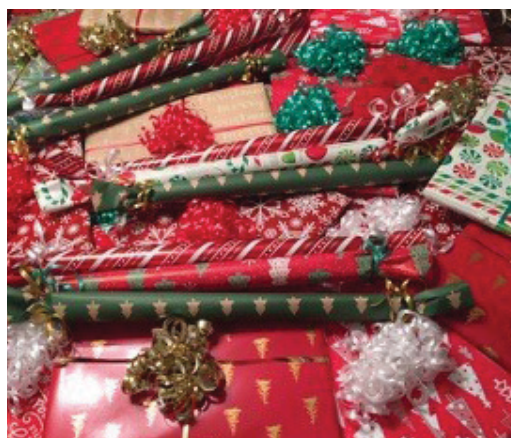
Since the discussion of prudence was so well received, Knights and Dames met again (virtually) on October 17, 2020, to discuss the virtue of justice. Led once again by Dame Sister Diana Stano, through the process of Lectio Divina we read Scripture (the Gospel of Matthew and the laborers out in the field), meditated on its words, and shared our reflections. Having gone through this process three times, many different views were shared and we began to “see” in new and different ways. Thank you, Sister Diana, for your guidance and for this lovely closing prayer: “Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it: a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor . . . a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love. Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.”

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## END-OF-THE-YEAR PROJECTS

Traditionally, the Cleveland Commandery participates in two end-of-the-year projects: a dinner and fun evening at Marion Sterling Elementary School and a dinner at the Hitchcock Center for Women. This year, however, due to the Covid 19 pandemic and our inability to gather together, those projects could not be carried out in the usual manner. Determined, nonetheless, to continue our outreach, a group of Knights and Dames found a different way to spread the joy of Christmas:

**MARION STERLING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** – This year, our project focused on the approximately 150 students who, during the pandemic, came to school to pick up a lunch. For each student, we provided a tote bag containing a gift-wrapped copy of the book *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* by Dr. Seuss, a gift wrapped bubble wand, and a Christmas card housing a \$25 gift card to Target. The SOSJ logo and a “This book belongs to \_\_\_\_” sticker were placed on the inside cover of each book. The school was deeply appreciative and noted that this year, because of the pandemic, we were the only community organization able to provide gifts for the students.





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**HITCHCOCK CENTER FOR WOMEN** – The Hitchcock Center helps women on their journey of recovery from addiction. In past years, our Knights and Dames served dinner – and then joined the women for dinner. This year, to replicate the evening to the extent possible, our Commandery arranged for the usual catered dinner to be delivered. Along with the dinner, we provided each woman with a Christmas card, a copy of the Serenity Prayer, and the following handwritten note: “SOSJ members will miss spending an evening with you at the Hitchcock Center. Every year, we are moved by your determination and hard work. Know that we are thinking of you – and wishing you a blessed Christmas and a healthy new year.” The SOSJ logo was placed on each envelope.

We are grateful to everyone who helped bring these projects to fruition. First, thank you to committee members Dames Donna Rae Smith, Diane Davies, Judith Bryan, Karen Kirk, Mary Khouri, Penny Floyd, Claire Rosacco, Carmella Calta, and Susan Smith. Thank you also to Chevalier Phil Wallace for helping to load the cars and to Chevalier Rick Bryan for helping with delivery to the school. Thank you also to all of the Knights and Dames who made personal monetary donations so that this project could take shape in a meaningful way. We are grateful for your caring and generous hearts, and we are hopeful that our remembrances this year prompted smiles, conveyed love, and provided hope.

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## **THE CLEVELAND COMMANDERY MOURNS THE DEATH OF CHEVALIER RICHARD FLEISCHMAN**

Chevalier Richard Fleischman was one of those unforgettable people who drew others in. His hospitality, grace, sense of style, and intellect were captivating. Walking into his home was like walking into a museum, and any guest who strolled through that museum had the additional good fortune of hearing the stories that brought their surroundings to life. A visit to the home of Richard Fleischman meant being surrounded by beauty (architecture, artwork, music, and nature), scintillating food for thought, and serene nourishment for the soul. To summarize the life of Richard Fleischman in a few words is impossible. To remember his charm is inevitable.



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## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

**Dame Karen Kirk** and **Chevalier John Kirk** were named the Christ Child Society of Cleveland's 2020 Persons of the Year for their continued support of children. Karen and John's philanthropy in the Cleveland area and beyond is long and deep and their generous and passionate support of literacy, health care, children, and families has made a difference in countless lives. Thank you, John and Karen, for your love of children - and congratulations on this wonderful honor!

**Dame Susan Ferraro Smith** published a book entitled *Joyful Possibilities* in which she shares her faith journey and explores the space "in between" the opposites. She discovers that such a space requires the best of our humanity, provides glimpses of God's divinity, and reveals unlimited and joyful possibilities. Susan has also been appointed to the Board of the Ohio Humanities Council. Congratulations, Susan!

