

The BULLETIN

The Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller

THE GRAND PRIORY OF AUSTRALASIA

Under the Royal Charter of HM King Peter II of Yugoslavia

AUGUST 2025

A grand setting for a grand tour: Members and guests from the Priory of Western Australia relax over dinner during their recent pilgrimage to Malta and Gozo.



**THE PRIORY OF QUEENSLAND AND
COMMANDERIES:
BRISBANE, GOLD COAST**

THE PRIORY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST

**THE PRIORY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
THE PRIORY OF THE DARLING DOWNS
THE PRIORY OF VICTORIA**

AUGUST 2025 Vale David Rees **3** | Queensland and Sunshine Coast Investitures **4-9** | Brisbane Luncheon **10** | Vale Bishop John Parkes **11** | Darling Downs Fundraiser **12** | Vale Dame Mary Wagner **13** | Western Australia Investitures **14** | Western Australia Pilgrimage **19** | Commander's Drinks **21** | Vale Rev. Dr Noel Park **21** | Sunshine Coast Innovative fundraising **22** | Victoria Diary **23** | Vale Ross Douglas **24** | Gold Coast addresses homeless issues **25** | New senior appointments approved **26** | Brisbane celebrates Nativity of St John **26-27** |



CHEVALIER CHARLES CLARK OAM GCSJ MMSJ

From the Editor's desk

THE BULLETIN IS OVERLOADED!

The cost-saving decision taken last year by the Grand Priory Council to produce only three Bulletins in 2025 is causing editorial problems. We have enough material for 28 pages – too much text and too much to read, as well as editorial overload. As this edition will be confined to 28 pages, some material may be editorially reduced, not something I like to do, and some will be held over to the next issue.

There is a sense of change. The printing company we enjoyed working with for many years has closed down. Fortunately, Chevalier Mark Osborne and his son, Kyle, operate a large printing business in Toowoomba and are prepared to take us on. The sense of change includes consideration of the Bulletin going digital, as so many organisations are already doing. Will we follow this path?

Along with such possible changes, other structural upgrades need consideration. Why are the

most senior administrative positions all huddled in south east Queensland – the Grand Prior, Deputy Grand Prior, Chancellor, Registrar, Prelate, even the POE (poor old editor).

Once we had Bailiffs who could range across the Priory structure. As each died he was not replaced. Now the only active Bailiff in Australia is the Grand Prior himself – not a meaningful position in lone isolation. But who will make the changes?

It won't be the old guys like me and more than half the membership of the Order in Australia. It will be the younger, newer members, with energy and vision, and those senior members who can lead without the taint of complacency.

We must always hold to those characteristics that set us apart from other charitable organisations – almost 2,000 years of unbroken tradition, chivalry, and above all our Christian faith grounded in the Benedictine Rule which gives us the right and privilege to say *Pro Fide Pro Utilitate Hominum*.

'The Bulletin' is the official magazine of the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, Grand Priory of Australasia: ACN 147 338 501

The Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller

THE GRAND PRIORY OF AUSTRALASIA

The modern Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller is a Christian, chivalric, ecumenical, and international community directly descended from the Hospitaller activities at the Hospice founded before the turn of the 11th century by Amalfi merchants, for pilgrims in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem 1048-1291; Cyprus 1292-1310; Rhodes 1311-1523; Malta 1530-1798; Australia 1969.
Australasia: osj.org.au Sovereign Order: sosjinternational.org

CORRESPONDENCE

Chevalier Charles Clark OAM GCSJ MMSJ
email: cqc1@optusnet.com.au

EDITORIAL GROUP

Reverend Dr David Pitman (Prelate),
Chevalier Charles Clark, Serving Sister
Leith Robinson, Chevalier Reverend Dr
David Mackay-Rankin, Chevalier Robin
Kleinschmidt. *Contributors:* Dame Jenny
Cant, Chevaliers Garry Page, Anthony
Howes, Rodney Smith, Dame Tracy Dobie.
Design and layout: Joan Queitzsch.

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A brief tribute

From the Editor, an old friend and fellow worker.

Anthony John Parkes was born in the United Kingdom in 1950. After completing a law degree at Sheffield University he moved to Australia in the 1970s, working both as a barrister and a solicitor in Sydney. His work involved industrial conciliation, and arbitration, commercial and family law.

However, the Church called him, so in 1980 he gained his Bachelor of Theology and worked as a priest in the Canberra Diocese. In 2004 he was appointed Dean of St John's Cathedral, Brisbane, where he worked tirelessly to raise the necessary millions of dollars and complete the final third of the magnificent neo-Gothic building.

From being ordained as an Assistant Bishop and Principal of St Francis College, he then moved to become the Bishop of Wangaratta. He had hardly begun his ministry there when the devastating fires of Black Saturday (2009) occurred and he had to deal with the loss and suffering, especially the complete destruction of the town of Marysville. His term as Bishop was not always smooth and he was widely and publicly condemned by conservatives for his stance in favour of blessing – though definitely not marriage of same sex couples.

John Parkes was a man of many and rare talent. Unknown to many would be that he made a beautiful violin, which is still being played by a professional musician in Brisbane. He was invested into the Order of St John in 2007 and became the Chaplain of the Priory of Victoria. ☩

GRAND PRIOR VICTOR FEROS OAM GCSJ CMSJ

**David Rees – Gentleman.**

Chevalier David Rees, Knight Grand Cross of Justice, Grand Priory of Australasia, the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knight Hospitaller, a most ancient Order of Chivalry and of Charity, the longest surviving Order, founded in Jerusalem in the eleventh century to provide sustenance to Christian pilgrims on their long journey of faith to the Holy Lands, and to this day devoted to service to Our Lords the Sick and Our Lords the Poor, served the Order most dutifully and with distinction.

I had the honour of meeting David soon after his arrival in Brisbane in 2001.

I do so clearly recall, now with affection rather than then, at the time, in a quizzical frame of mind, when this extremely well-presented, urbane, gentleman, learned, upright in stature self-assured, announced himself as David Rees, invested into the Order, in Cyprus, in 1989, in the presence of His Honour Constantine (Dino) Philippides OBE GCSJ GCSA, Consul-General to Australia for the Republic of

In memory of David

Chevalier David Rees GCSJ**8 August 1932 – 28 April 2025**

Cyprus, Prior of the Priory of Queensland of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, at the Inaugural Ceremony of Formation and Investiture of the Commandery of Cyprus, attached to the Priory of Queensland.

I frankly did not know what to make of this introduction. I believed then, though not at all now, that not only was I being “sized-up”, so to speak, but so too the Order and its presence in Australia – Australia being, in reality, at the other end of the world.

I have since learnt that this person was a wonderful human being, who so unselfishly devoted his time, his energies, his resolve, to others, having passed through, life-long, amazing personal experiences, throughout the world – literally – in the way that he had.

As I proceed now with this memorial to David here today, chronicling his remarkable journey through an incomparable life, I am indebted to David, having read, and now having re-read, his published memoir, “Around the World in Eighty Years – a brief life of David Rees”, for my understanding of David, in my interpretation of his printed words, which I now present.

David Rees was born in 1932, in Buckinghamshire, England. Memorably, as a Boy Scout, not quite 16 years of age, David carried the name sign “Great Britain” announcing the entry of the Great Britain Olympic Team

into a packed Wembley Stadium at the 1948 Olympic Games, with the team following. Great Britain, being host, as tradition required, processed last, to deafening applause – with David, Boy Scout, Herald, in front.

Marrying Kay, also from Buckinghamshire, north west of the City of London, in 1959, David was, in every respect, the peripatetic wanderer, as soon, too, Kay was to become – in work and private life.

For almost 40 years, before marriage and after, David worked in the service of NCR – National Cash Register – a huge multinational company headquartered in Dayton, Ohio. David, commencing in London, served for extended periods in postings to Ghana (then the Gold Coast in West Africa) to start with, then Nigeria, Singapore, Malaysia, the U.S., the Bahamas, Kenya, Cyprus, amongst other locations, in the course of which, while stationed in America, he served as Regional Co-ordinator, Middle East and Africa, and also the Far East and Australia.

NCR was at the world forefront of computerised business data processing technology, as was David himself. I recall his telling me that he presented, at times, lectures at Cambridge, no less, of which he was, justifiably, quite proud.

Returning to the narrative of David and the Order, in June 2003, after his first meeting with me, David was confirmed as

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The two Priors traditionally combine their efforts to produce a large, meaningful Investiture Ceremony. The Cathedral of St John the Evangelist in Brisbane, with its spacious, vaulting, neo-Gothic architecture, is an ideal venue for a ceremony which is both solemnly sacred and yet triumphant in spectacle and tradition of the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller.

So on the evening of Friday 13 th June seven new Knights and Dames were invested, four for the Priory of the Sunshine Coast and three for the Priory of Queensland. The service was conducted by the Prelate, Chevalier the Reverend Dr David Pitman AM GCHSJ, the Allocution was delivered by the Chaplain of Brisbane Commandery, Chevalier the Right Reverend William Ray GCHSJ, and Accolade bestowed by the Grand Prior of Australasia, HE Bailiff Victor Feros OAM GCSJ CMSJ. Planning of the service was by a committee chaired by the Prelate and the ordering and conduct of proceeding was under the mace of the Marshall, Chevalier Andrew McBryde OAM KCSJ.

The Banquet

Following the ceremony, the Banquet was held in the Sofitel Hotel, a short walk or drive from the cathedral. During the course of the dinner the Loyal Toast was proposed by Chevalier Adrian McCallum, a new investee from the Sunshine Coast Priory, the Toast to the Order was by the Chamberlain, Chevalier Rob de Martini, and responded to by the Grand Prior. The Commander of the Gold Coast, Dame Trina Hockley

AM proposed the Toast to New Members and this was replied to by a new investee from the Sunshine Coast, Dame Tara Knobel.

Serving Brother Oscar Liu SBSJ came from the Priory of Victoria to attend the ceremonies.

He writes:

On the 13th and 14th of June, I headed up to Brisbane to be a part of the Grand Priory's Investiture by singing in the choir but to also participate in the GPA's AGM, church service, and lunch the next day for 2025. Not only did I immerse myself in our Order's ceremonies, but I caught up with all of my friends that I made in Queensland at the International Sovereign Council Meeting in 2024.

It was an absolute pleasure to be welcomed back by the wonderful Knights and Dames in Queensland, and it's fair to say that the Grand Priory of Australasia is thriving. With a half-working rental vehicle, I trundled to and from St. John's Cathedral, the Sofitel and Centenary Uniting Church with 24 hours of celebration and worship welcoming new Knights and Dames.

The 2025 Investiture in Brisbane was, as always, a special celebration and sacred service for the instalment of several new Knights and Dames. In the all-inspiring St. John's Cathedral, our traditional liturgy and powerful music directed by our dear friend, Chevalier Charles Clark, made it a night to remember.

Standing in the choir stalls and singing Parry's 'I was Glad' amongst other brass/organ/choir

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Presentations at the banquet



New Investee Dame Sharon Ward with Prior Garry Cant



Elevation for Chevalier Dr James Griffin, with Prior Michael Haliday



Chevalier William Savage appointed Knight Grand Cross of Justice,



Elevation for Gold Coast Commander Dame Trina Hockley



The Grand Prior presents the Medal of Merit to Chevalier MAJGEN Darryl Low Choy



Certificate signed by The Grand Master SOSJ and Grand Prior Australasia

Thank you, Michael Bloyce and Laurie Young

Chevalier Michael Bloyce KCSJ who for seventeen years has sung the solo verses in the hymn "I the Lord of sea and sky" will no longer do so. Michael joined the Sunshine Coast Priory when resident there and singing in the choir of St John's Cathedral, but for some years has lived in Adelaide singing in the choir of St Peter's Cathedral and is a member of the Priory of Victoria. He continued to come to Brisbane investitures until this year.

Serving Brother Major Laurie Young, with friends, provided brass music for the fanfares up to 2021 when his health began to fail.

Our grateful thanks to both for their dedicated service.



Images New Investees left to right:

Chevalier Adrian McCallum, Chevalier Kieran Fawcett, Dame Sharon Ward, Dame Tara Knobel, Prior Gary Cant, Grand Prior Victor Feros, Prior Michael Haliday, Dame Frances Emmerson, Chevalier Warren Tapp, Chevalier David Aitchison.

A warm welcome to our Investees



Chevalier David Aitchison KSJ is the Director of Infrastructure Safety at the Queensland Government's Department of

Transport and Main Roads, providing leadership across major government construction and maintenance programs.

With a career spanning technical and executive roles in both the private and public sector, he brings a pragmatic, systems-focused approach to public service.

His areas of study include engineering, computing science, business administration, occupational health, and leadership. While studying at The University of Aberdeen, David served as a Reserve officer in the Royal Navy University Unit. He also holds a strong interest in

aviation safety and is a qualified pilot, having earned his licence in the United Kingdom at the age of 18. David holds Chartered Member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (CMIOSH) status.

Born in Scotland, he is the son of a British Army officer and a Church of Scotland minister. A committed Christian, he seeks to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ in the workplace and wherever he may be.

David was honoured to be invested into the Sovereign Order of St John and is proud to support its mission of compassion, care, and service to those in need.

continued from page 3

Knight, attached to the Priory of Queensland.

In 2007, David was appointed Priory Minutes Secretary. His skills, his enthusiasm, were so well-received that in 2008 he became Priory Treasurer, and soon after Grand Priory Treasurer of the then Grand Priory of Northern Australia, ultimately assuming the management of the Grand Priory memberships data base – his NCR skills to the fore – and produced, annually, the Grand Priory Roll of Honour of Knights and Dames, as appointed Registrar – all senior-most appointments.

Yet, on top of all this fulfilling of roles vital to the Order in Australia, in time he acceded to Chancellor – in effect the Chief Administrative Officer of the Grand Priory, serving also as Company Secretary and appointed as a Trustee of the Charitable Fund of the Order.

David became, in the truest sense, indispensable in his service to the Order and its Mission, reflecting, admirably, the service of all Knights and Dames to others

less fortunate.

In February of this year, with David's health in most serious decline, I sadly accepted, with utmost regret, his resignation from all his duties within the Order, remaining, notwithstanding, resolutely, a true Knight of Saint John.

David had risen to the highest rank and office within the Order – Knight Grand Cross of Justice.

In elapsed time, David's 35 years since investiture in Cyprus placed him among barely a handful of members – only – of such longevity within the Order, internationally.

"Once a Knight, always a Knight"

From my first meeting with David I learnt, without reservation, that he was, always, a wonderful human being, so selflessly giving of his time, his attention to others.

David passed, life-long, through truly amazing experiences throughout, literally, the entire world. In his own printed words *"I calculate that I have been to 108 separate countries, have lived in eleven, and have inhabited 29 houses or flats. Packing and moving is not*

a thing that ever bothers me!"

It has been an honour which I share with my wife, Dame Marion, and, I am certain, with his many friends within and outside the Order, to have known David – Marion, who just the other day said to me that if she were asked to describe David in a word, it would be *"Gentleman"*.

David Rees, Chivalric Knight, Gentleman

To David's dear wife Kay, to loving daughters Melinda and Catherine, their families, we, the Order extend our thanks for David, and express our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies for your loss. We are most grateful for David's gracious service to Humanity.

Rest in Peace, dear David,
Rise in Glory.

Victor Feros OAM GCSJ CMSJ
Grand Prior, Grand Priory of Australasia

Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller

12 May 2025 ☩



Dame Frances Ward Emmerson DSJ began her working life with training and development management at Seaworld Resort in 2001.

After four years she moved to SCISCO, a training and development organization assisting young people, especially those at-risk and disengaged, in their transition from schooling to further training and education. This led to management roles in training organisations and in Aged Care Training Services at General Manager level. She became General Manager Training Services of Autism Australia facilitating the transition to NDIS business models.

She founded and directed a not-for-profit (NFP) charity focused on supporting distressed farmers with fodder to protect their breeding stocks in South West Queensland and Northern NSW during the devastating 2019 drought and bushfire events. Over 30 cattle and sheep breeders were assisted and over \$1m raised.

Since 2022 she has directed another NFP charity focused on the mental health and well-being of rural Australians through provision of mental health support programs, disaster relief and socio-economic development support.

Frances has been responsible for the design, management and delivery of several award-winning training programs.



Chevalier Kieran Fawcett KSJ brings over two decades of diverse experience in the construction and commercial management sectors, both in Australia and the UK.

Professionally, he has held senior roles across civil, industrial, and residential construction, with a particular focus on quantity surveying, commercial governance, project leadership, and stakeholder engagement. He is currently employed as a Senior Commercial Manager with Ventia, overseeing national contracts and contributing to strategic growth and operational excellence.

He is an active member of the Knights of the Southern Cross and the Stella Maris Parish Finance Committee. He also previously served on the Housing Advisory Committee for the St Vincent de Paul Society in the Northern Territory, supporting initiatives aimed at addressing housing insecurity with compassion and respect.

Kieran is guided by a strong Catholic faith and actively supports parish life at Stella Maris, Maroochydore. He is honoured to be invested into the Sovereign Order of St John and is committed to upholding its values of compassion, humility, and service to others.

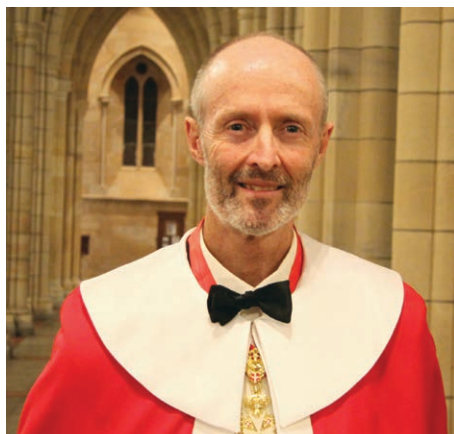


Dame Tara Knobel DSJ is currently Managing Director, Commercial, in a global outsourcing firm, with over two decades experience in driving commercial strategy, high-value partnerships, business transformation, and cross-functional leadership in complex, multinational environments.

She is passionate about mentoring emerging leaders and advocating for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Dame Tara holds a Bachelor of International Business (Hons), a Bachelor of Laws, and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

A passionate advocate for breast cancer awareness, Tara brings both lived experience and leadership to the cause, championing community, connection, and wellbeing. Tara is President of Sunshine Coast Dragons Abreast, a dragon boat club that fosters inclusion, friendship, and wellbeing for women of all ages – particularly breast cancer survivors.

Returning to Queensland after 25 years, Dame Tara is based on the Sunshine Coast after a move from Melbourne. She balances a demanding professional career with a rich personal life as mum to her ten-year-old daughter, Cleo. Together, they enjoy dragon boating, beach days, music, and baking.



Chevalier Adrian McCallum KSJ is Head of Engineering at University of the Sunshine Coast and manages courses in soil mechanics and weather and climate. He has led a life of adventure and exploration around the globe and is an expert in remote area science and engineering. He holds a PhD from the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge and additional degrees in oceanography, meteorology and civil engineering.

In 2002 he was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for his stewardship of the 2001 Australian Army Centenary Everest Expedition. He is a Menzies Scholar and previous Director of the Menzies Foundation.

During twenty years' service across the Australian Defence Forces he served in numerous diverse roles such as helicopter navigator, meteorologist and civil engineer and has led or participated in adventurous scientific expeditions around the globe. These investigations have taken him to many locations including Svalbard, Greenland, the Arctic and Antarctica, to the Himalaya and the ice caps of Patagonia.

He orchestrated Sir Ranulph Fiennes' 2013 winter Transantarctic expedition and regularly consults on polar infrastructural and operational matters. He is passionate about empowering youth via immersive expedition journeys for mind, body and soul.



Chevalier Warren Tapp is semi-retired but still consults to Boards of Directors. He has been a Non-Executive Director on 28 Boards and Chair of 14. He has facilitated the AICD Company Directors courses and has published three books on Governance and the role of Directors, and is currently completing a PhD in law on Not-for-Profit Governance.

Warren served for 25 years in the Army Reserve as an Artillery Officer and was awarded the Reserve Force Decoration and the Prince of Wales Award.

He is married to Sandra and has three children and eight grandchildren, with whom they spend lots of time with baby sitting. His interests include his Church and reading, as well as frequent holiday travel locally and overseas. Warren resides in Brisbane and is pleased to have been invited to be invested in the Order, to which he hopes to contribute.

Warren is a believer in helping others within the Christian context, and is keen to see the Order of St John plan to raise much larger amounts of donations and find causes that resonate with the public, so that the Order achieves public awareness of who we are and what we do in the community. Warren is happy to contribute ideas to achieve this – not to meet for meetings sake but to contribute to achieving some strategic goals for the Order in Brisbane.



Dame Sharon Ward DSJ is an experienced Primary School Relief Teacher with over 20 years of experience in teaching roles.

She brings a deep commitment to fostering positive, supportive, and engaging learning environments. Her work spans a variety of educational settings where she has taken a student-centered, professional approach.

Throughout her career, she has actively contributed to school leadership and community development through involvement in key committees including the Principal's Consultative Committee, School Steering Committee and various whole-school development groups. These experiences have strengthened her collaborative and strategic skills and deepened her understanding of school operations and community engagement.

Dame Sharon has also completed facilitator training for a Resilience Program designed for primary students, which has enhanced both her teaching practice and her ability to support student wellbeing. She strongly promote a 'can-do' and 'have-a-go' mindset in the classroom encouraging students to develop confidence, persistence and a love of learning.

Beyond the school setting, she has actively participated in the wider community through involvement with C&K Committees, P&F Committees and as a dedicated member of her parish church. ✠

CHEVALIER THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM RAY GCGHSJ

Transformation, grace and love

Allocution by The Right Reverend William Ray, Bishop
Combined Priories Investiture 13 June 2025
St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane

I am sure many of you know the song, "What a wonderful world". The lyrics by Thiele and Weiss, sung by trumpeter and vocalist Louie Armstrong, challenge us to focus on the positive side of life. This song highlights the beauty of nature, and the kindness of people at a time when there were protests against issues like the Vietnam War, social injustices, women's rights and environmental destruction.

Yes, it is a wonderful world, and we give thanks to God for all the blessings that we enjoy including the gift of life itself. Sadly, the reality today is that there are still many societal issues and injustices that we need to address.

It is into this reality that the Order of St John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, was founded and exists today. One of the Vigil prayers that has been used this past week contains these words:

"We give thanks for nearly a thousand years of courage, devotion, commitment and service, and for the work and vision of our Founder Blessed Gerard".

It is into the social conditions of today that the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knight Hospitaller continues to reach out to those in need. We seek to provide practical help and aid for those who struggle with the daily challenges of life. However, it is important that we pray not only for those in need, but for ourselves as we strive to assist and support those in need by showing love, grace and mercy in all that we do.

Tonight, seven people are being invested into the Order and we rejoice and welcome them. However, tonight is also an occasion for each of us who are Dames and Knights to hear our vows again and renew our commitment to these vows and to the Order. If you like, tonight for all Dames and Knights, is an opportunity for an "OSJ stock take".

The Epistle reading was from the letter to the Romans, and I want to pick up on four points from that reading. First, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed, by the renewing of your minds, so you may discern what is the will of God..." It is easy to go along with the crowd, to conform. But Paul makes it very clear, we are not to conform but be transformed.

Transformation is not just tweeting this or that aspect of our life and behaviour; transformation involves radical change, to live according to the will of God as we learn from Holy Scripture and other key faith texts. Transformation involves all aspects of our life – body mind and soul. The reason we discern the will of God is so that each one of us will do "what is good and acceptable and perfect" with justice and mercy.

Second, we are reminded that grace comes from God, and we are to think with sober judgement of ourselves. For the Order to be positive and forward moving, it is important we offer our different skills, those that God has blessed us with, as we work together for

the good of those we serve with love, grace and mercy. Third, Paul goes on to say that "love must be genuine, and we are to hold fast that which is good". Paul also wrote the first letter to the Corinthians and in Chapter 13:4-8 we read:

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

I invite you from time to time to read this passage to yourself and where the word love occurs replace it with your Christian name. In my case it would read, "Bill is patient, Bill is kind, Bill is not arrogant or rude, etc., and I can assure you I am still a work in progress in all these areas of my life."

So, as you read each section, stop and reflect on how you live into that aspect of genuine love. The final point I want to highlight from the text is "Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord and rejoice in hope".

When I was at Teachers College, my Education Lecturer often said to us as student teachers, you will teach children how to add and subtract, multiply and divide; you will teach students what is a sentence as well as many other aspects of knowledge. However, never forget the students will watch you, copy you and very quickly pick up what is important and valuable to you. How you respond says much about you as a person.

Note the text states, "rejoice",
continued page 21

CHEVALIER COMMANDER IAN AIREY OAM KCSJ

Harmony, Empowerment, Hope



On 29th March, the Brisbane Commandery hosted a luncheon at the Queensland Club. The theme of the event was Harmony, Empowerment, Hope.

For five years, the Commandery has been supporting Zephyr Education Inc. a remarkable organisation dedicated to assisting children whose lives are disrupted by domestic violence, in transitioning to new schools. Zephyr provides these children with essential supplies, including uniforms and other educational necessities, ensuring they have a fresh start despite difficult circumstances, with the hope they will achieve their full potential.

The Commandery's support for Zephyr continues. The space in which Zephyr operates is domestic violence which is a tragic scourge on our community. The vision of the Commandery is to bring harmony

A fundraising luncheon with moving speeches, enticing auctions, and an inspiring piano performance

to lives in which domestic violence has brought disharmony. In so doing, the Commandery want to encourage empowerment, not only to the affected children, but by extension to their families and the wider community. In all this the Commandery is seeking hope for the victims that their lives may once again be enriched.

The luncheon was attended by forty guests who were deeply moved as they learned about Zephyr's impactful work. Mrs Carmel Martin, one of Zephyr's cofounders, delivered an inspiring speech about the organisations origins from a conversation between two sisters and their husbands who had a vision. She spoke of Zephyr's journey and mission. Carmel emphasized that all of Zephyr's team members are volunteers, keeping financial overheads to an absolute minimum, and ensuring that financial contributions directly benefit those in need. Over the past twelve years, Zephyr has grown significantly, establishing a nationwide presence and supporting countless children across Australia.

Following Carmel's address, guests had the privilege of hearing from Chevalier Peter Dornan AM KSJ, an accomplished physiotherapist, mountaineer, sculptor and author. Peter shared insights from his latest book, *In Search of Manhood*, which delves into the underlying psychological factors that contribute to domestic



Vale

Right Reverend John Parkes AM GCHSJ,
Chevalier, Bishop, Facilitator

From the Grand Prior of Australasia

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Saint John

It is my sad duty to announce, with deep regret, the passing of Chevalier the Right Reverend John Parkes AM GCHSJ, Bishop, on the third of July 2025, in Victoria, after a long illness. His Grace, then Anglican Dean of Brisbane, was invested into the Order in Brisbane in 2007 and was elevated in 2018 to the most-senior ecclesiastical rank of Knight Grand Cross of Honour

His passion for, his commitment to, our Order, its Christian, its ecumenical mission, was undoubted, complete. He served as

ornament to our Motto – “For the Faith, For Service to Humanity”.

John’s towering physical presence, befitting of a “tall timber” Rugby forward in his playing days – as he was wont to remind us, matched his outstanding intellect, his imposing stature at Investitures and Church Parades, his animated delivery of thought-provoking, always inspiring, allocutions, his homilies – always in full force.

We extend to John’s wife, Margaret and family the condolences and deepest sympathies of his Brothers and Sisters in Saint John. He will be greatly missed by his



extended family. Rest in Peace, dear Chevalier John, Brother in Saint John. Rise in Glory

Victor Feros OAM GCSJ CMSJ

Grand Prior

Grand Priory of Australasia ☩

See also “A Brief Tribute” page 2

violence. Through his analysis, Peter explored themes such as societal pressures on men to assert dominance, appear invincible and always be right: issues that may play a role in the development of domestic violence. (See page 24)

The audience was captivated by Peter’s thoughtful and multifaceted perspective, which challenged conventional narratives and encouraged deeper understanding of the root causes of such harmful behaviour.

The luncheon also featured a



breathtaking piano performance by Eric Neumann, a young virtuoso who performed the Glaznov variations. Eric, a senior high school student, astonished the audience with his exceptional talent and emotional depth. Each variation he played evoked a unique sentiment, leaving the audience spellbound and demonstrating the power of music to unite and inspire.

Notwithstanding these wonderful presentations, the focus of the event was fund-raising to support Zephyr. Prior to the gathering, members participated in a raffle, the prize being one week’s accommodation at a Noosa penthouse, generously donated by Chevalier Ian Hanger KC AM KCSJ and Dr Marika Hanger.

During the luncheon, a silent auction was held featuring two superb items: a seaside getaway donated by Dame Suzanne Brooks DCSJ and Mr. John Brooks, and an exquisite oil painting by Chevalier Charles Clark OAM GCSJ MMSJ, who graciously contributed this artwork to the cause. These

fundraising initiatives, coupled with individual donations, culminated in raising \$18,165 for Zephyr Education Inc.

In conclusion, the Brisbane Commandery’s fundraising luncheon at the Queensland Club was an inspiring and successful event that brought together members and friends committed to making a difference to the lives of vulnerable children. Through engaging speeches, stunning performances and fund-raising efforts, members and friends were inspired to support Zephyr in fostering empowerment and hope, in keeping with the luncheon’s theme Harmony, Empowerment, Hope. The dream of the Commandery is to bring hope to those whom we serve: our lords the sick and our lords the poor. ☩

Images

Preceding page at top: speaker Chevalier Dr Peter Dornan

Lower, from left: Mrs Carmel Martin, Zephyr Foundation

Centre: Dame Gwen Jull, Mrs Anne Halliday, Dame Marilyn Redlich

Right: Lunch, served with a side of auction and a piano performance.

LTCOL DAME TRACY DOBIE DSJ

Under a chandelier: Darling Downs Priory Fundraiser



On Saturday, 14 June 2025, the Darling Downs Priory hosted its annual fundraiser at the picturesque Preston Peak Winery.

Blessed with sunshine and laughter, guests enjoyed Preston Peak's renowned food and wine – graciously donated by the family of Darling Downs Prior, Chevalier Mark Osborne.

This year's fundraiser supported the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, with proceeds directed toward a research project for bowel cancer which is focusing on individual patient therapeutics. This research program has been awarded a dollar-for-dollar subsidy, resulting in the \$31,000 raised on the day being doubled to \$62,000 for the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

The cause holds profound personal significance, as Chevalier Mark's young daughter-in-law is currently undergoing treatment for Stage 3 rectal cancer and has received invaluable care from QIMR. Given that one in 16 Australians is affected by this cancer, many in attendance had a personal connection to the disease—making the occasion even more heartfelt.

Guests heard from Professor Vicki Whitehall, Group Lead of the QIMR Gastroenterology Laboratory, who shared insights into her team's groundbreaking research. Her work explores the molecular genetic changes that drive the progression from benign bowel polyps to bowel cancer, with a strong emphasis on personalised approaches that take into account how



each individual responds to cancer and its treatment.

Sincere thanks go to the dedicated organising committee: Dame Amanda Boyce, Chevaliers Peter Brodie, Wayne Anderson, Perry Dayas and Daniel Wallis; and to the generous donors who contributed a wealth of items for the raffle gift baskets.

The spirit of the day was a reminder to cherish life, and to participate in the national bowel cancer screening program. Our thoughts remain firmly with Chevalier Mark's family and all those who are supporting loved ones through difficult times.

New Prior for Darling Downs

On the 8th of May 2025, at the Darling Downs Priory meeting, Chevalier Mark Osborne, KCSJ, was officially commissioned as the new Prior. The solemn yet celebratory service drew a strong gathering of members and their partners, who came together to recognize both Mark and his predecessor, Dame Sue Fox, DCSJ.

Grand Prior, HE Bailiff Adjunct Professor Victor Feros OAM GCSJ CMSJ, led the proceedings, offering heartfelt gratitude to Sue for her outstanding service. He commended her grace, quiet yet formidable competence, and remarkable accomplishments, noting that she was the first Dame Prior in Australia.

Sue graciously acknowledged the Grand Prior's words, expressing her deep appreciation for the support and confidence shown by her husband, Chevalier George Fox, KCSJ, as well as her fellow members throughout her three-year term.

In his address, Mark reflected on the profound honour and responsibility of his new role. He paid tribute to Sue's exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication, particularly her compassion toward members facing difficulties.

He emphasized his commitment to upholding the long-standing values of the Order, stating, "Together we will strengthen our outreach, enhance our programs,



Chevalier Mark Osborne and Mrs Fran Osborne at the SCM24 Gala Dinner.

and cultivate partnerships that amplify our impact. I believe our collective efforts can create a ripple effect of hope and healing in the lives of those we serve."

Mark also encouraged those in attendance to reflect on how they might deepen their service to the

community through volunteering. He underscored the significance of personal connections made through hands-on service, highlighting how such engagement fosters hope, solidarity, and empowerment.

Mark took the opportunity to announce new leadership appointments within the Darling Downs Priory. Dame Mandy Boyce, DCSJ, was named Vice Chancellor; Chevalier Bill Barrett, KCSJ, assumed the role of Treasurer; and Chevalier Sam Wright, KSJ, was appointed Assistant Treasurer.

The Priory Chaplain, Chevalier The Rev. Fr Kerry Costigan, KCSJ, along with Deputy Chaplain Chevalier Rev. Rob Callow, KSJ, led prayers and a blessing for Chevalier Mark. Members then affirmed their loyalty and warm support for their newly appointed Prior.

Following the service, attendees participated in the Priory meeting and dinner, concluding the occasion in fellowship. ✠

Vale Dame Mary Wagner AM 1935 – 2025

With profound respect and affection, we honour the extraordinary life of Mary Wagner, AM—a cherished leader, entrepreneur, and humanitarian whose enduring legacy has profoundly shaped Toowoomba, Queensland.

At 89, Mary, the beloved matriarch of the Wagner family, passed away peacefully at home on Saturday, the 3rd of May, following a period of intermittent illness. In her final hours, she was surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, just two days shy of her 67th wedding anniversary.

Born Mary Doyle on the 3rd of April, 1935, at Warwick Hospital, she spent her early years in Clintonvale, attending Clintonvale State School before continuing her education at Warwick Convent and All Hallows School in Brisbane.

Driven by a deep calling to care for others, Mary began her nursing training at Mater Hospital in Brisbane and completed it at St Vincent's Private Hospital—where, on her very first shift, she met her future husband, Henry Wagner. They married in 1958 and together raised eight children: Kate, John, Tricia, Denis, Greg, Elizabeth, Neill, and Joe.

Mary's life was defined by devotion—to nursing, her family, and her faith. She played a pivotal role in Toowoomba's Catholic diocese,

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Images

Preceding page, top left, under the Preston Peak Winery chandelier Sue-Ann McGowan, Ian McGowan, and Robyn Bargh

Top right: Sally Bligh, Sue Fox, Mark Osborne, Adele Roberts

Centre: Peter Brody, Wayne Anderson, Lynne Duffill

Lower: Regan Cass, Lois Speed, Sue Hawkins.



THE REVEREND LUKE HOARE

If you ever find yourself walking down St James' Street, London, you might just pass an almost hidden walkway that leads to the famous Dukes Hotel. It's where Ian Fleming reputedly concocted the highly unorthodox, and still not recommended, idea that James Bond should order his martinis shaken, not stirred.

You'll walk past Truefitt and Hill, the world's oldest barbers, graced by none other than the Duke of Wellington. You'll pass St James' Palace. Eventually you'll find yourself in St James' Park. And if you turn right and keep on walking, what you'll see rise before you is Buckingham Palace.

And if you enter that palace, as you pass the art-lined corridors and staircases, and move past the secret passageways, you'll come to the throne room. And in that throne room, you might just notice a rather discrete piece of furniture.

It looks like a low-level padded seat with a hand rail. A carved and gilt frame with crimson velvet padding. It looks small and discrete. But its function is profound. For this is a knighting stool. This humble piece of furniture is where knights and dames are made.

In the Middle Ages, knights

Exalting Humiliation

The Allocution, OSJ Evensong and Investiture
St Georges Cathedral Perth, 13 May 2025
The Reverend Luke Hoare, Priory Chaplain.

were a social elite. Their origins are shrouded in mystery. They may have partly derived from the Ordo Equestris of Roman times, a mounted nobility. They were warriors; fighters. But thanks to the influence of the Church and French poets such as Chrétien de Troyes, the knight came to represent more.

Becoming a knight required years of training, often from boyhood. First a page, then a squire, a young man would train in the arts of combat and war. But also in the courtly arts of polite society. They'd learn how to sing and how to dance; about the responsibility of the strong to protect the weak; and of the requirement to conduct oneself honourably and respectfully always.

When the time came to be elevated to the knighthood, it could sometimes happen on the battlefield. More often, it would be part of an elaborate ceremony; one infused with Christian symbolism.

This spiritual meaning is particularly important for the Order of St John. Derived from the mediaeval Knights Hospitaller, the Order was the great rival of the Knights Templar. While the Templars were suppressed in the fourteenth century, the Hospitallers continue to this day.

And the Knights Hospitaller weren't your everyday knights. They were part of what Bernard of Clairvaux heralded as the 'new knighthood'. For these fighting

men were also monks. They fought; they could join polite society. But they also took monastic vows. They prayed seven times a day, lived simply, and in community.

They administered the Hospital in Jerusalem; which could care for 1,000 patients, or 2,000 in an emergency. The staff-to-patient ratio was one nurse for every two patients. They'd treat everyone who needed care, regardless of their race or their faith.

And patients would be served food of a higher standard of extravagance than the knights themselves. They made vows literally to obey any command a sick patient would give them.

Generally in those days, the process of being made a knight would be composed of three parts. A Vigil before the ceremony. The ceremony itself, known as the Accolade. And a celebratory feast afterwards. These three elements – Vigil, accolade, and feast – are elements that remain part of tonight's Investiture of new knights and dames.

After a ritual bath representing baptism, the mediaeval Vigil would last all through the night prior. The aspirant would spend hour after hour in prayer, kneeling before an altar on which rested his weapons. There was no sleep, only prayer; often in full armour.

Having been spiritually prepared, the ceremony would commence in the morning. The aspirant would wear a white tunic and a red cloak. The white



Archbishop Sir David Moxon KNZM read the lesson.

represented purity. The red stood for the blood the new knight would shed for Church and king.

Aspirants would often wear brown hose, or leggings. Brown was the earth to which the knight would return at the end of his life, whether long or short. This is a reminder that this moment of elevation is also a moment of lowering oneself, a moment, literally, of humiliation. The Latin word for earth is humus.

So, 'humility' is living with the awareness that we are dust and to dust we shall return. 'Humiliation' is the process of growing in

humility. We see this dynamic of a lowering and a rising in the very act of knighting itself. The aspirants would kneel, lowering themselves, for the dubbing. These days, we're used to a dubbing being a gentle little tap on the shoulder. But in the Middle Ages, it was different. It was an almighty blow, with the flat of a sword or an open hand. It would send the aspirant sprawling to the ground. Whether we revive that ancient practice this evening, I'll leave to be a surprise.

The point was that this moment – this moment of being sent to the ground – this moment of 'humiliation' – was the moment of transformation. When the aspirant arose, things were different from before. The former self was dead. He'd arisen a knight.

This equation of a descent with an ascent, of a dying with a rising, is a distinctively Christian insight. We find it throughout the Scriptures. The Gospels in particular are replete with it. We heard from Luke's Gospel earlier. Jairus was a synagogue leader, and his daughter had died.

She'd fallen into death; returned to the earth. So Jairus falls at Jesus' feet. He humbles himself. It's this that starts the process of transformation.

When Jesus comes to the dead daughter, he tells her simply 'get up' – 'arise'. In the original Greek, it's *egeiro*. It's an important word. It's the very same word often used of the resurrection, when Jesus 'arose' from the grave.

That little girl had been brought to her lowest point – to death. And that's when she's exalted. For it's then that she shares in the resurrection of Jesus, true life flowing into her. The healing stories of the Gospels often use this resurrection language. Jesus often says 'arise', 'get up', 'resurrect'. When he heals Simon Peter's mother-in-law, what does she do after but 'arise'?

Now, we shouldn't take any of this overly literally. The physical act of kneeling or 'being on the ground' and then 'getting up' is secondary. It's what it points to that's important. And that is the

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CHEVALIER ANTHONY HOWES OAM KCSJ

WA Priory Investiture with Gala Dinner, July 2025

Sunday, 13th July, Perth, Western Australia. The rain had stopped. The procession of Dames and Knights, followed by the Cathedral clergy, passed through the West Doors of the WA Priory's Conventual Church, St George's Cathedral in the centre of Perth, for Evensong with Investiture.

Within the midst of red and white cloaks, was a splash of black and white: the cloak of special guest, Archbishop Emeritus Sir David Moxon KNZM, KstJ. The Archbishop was returning to Australia and New Zealand, following meetings at the Venerable Order of St John headquarters in London. Sir David is the International Prelate of that Order.

The procession passed by the eight aspirants seated halfway down the Nave, from where, later in the service, they would be verged to the Cathedral Crossing for the ceremonial that would see them created Dames and Knights by the Grand Prior, following the traditional instruction from the Priory Chaplain and requirement of the taking of vows.

Evensong began and proceeded, with Officiant, the Dean of Perth, the Very Reverend Chris Chataway; readings from (then) Aspirant Scott Stirling and Chevalier John Goodlad; prayers led by Archbishop Sir David; and the WA Priory psalm and hymns. The preacher was Chevalier the Reverend Luke Hoare. Fr Luke's sermon was highly praised by Sir David, whose comment was echoed

by all in the Cathedral – "The finest understanding of what real knighthood means".

The warmth which the congregation extended to the two new Dames and six new Knights in the Cathedral, and echoed by their colleagues in the Order, signalled the continuation of the feeling of celebration which followed in the Gala Dinner held immediately following in the historic Weld Club, only a five minute walk from St George's.

Chevalier Justin Freind, one of Perth's finest tenors underlined the Dinner being the continuation of the Service by his choice of music with which guests were entertained immediately before the National Anthem, the Loyal Toast and Grace. During the meal, toasts and responses were made to the Order, and our new colleagues.

The Grand Prior, Adjunct Professor HE Bailiff Victor Feros OAM GCSJ CMSJ, presented certificates of Elevation to Dame the Venerable Canon Kathy Barrett-Lennard OAM – Dame of Grace; Chevalier the Reverend Luke Hoare – Knight of Grace; Chevalier Allan Downs – Knight of Justice; and Chevalier Prior Jamie Edwards – Knight Grand Cross of Justice. This allowed the MC (yours truly) to quiz the Prior on how he became involved with the Order.

In his reply, Chevalier Jamie spoke of the inspiration given to him by the then Commander Dame Maree Leinster-Mackay and her husband Chevalier Donald; and the support of so many talented Dames



and Knights with whom he had worked alongside since that time. The whole evening, from Evensong and Investiture to the Gala Dinner, proved a most uplifting 'entity' bringing the celebrations of Sunday, 13th July to a very happy conclusion. ✠

Images

Above: At the banquet following the service, Prior Jamie Edwards was made a Knight Grand Cross of Justice, the highest rank in the Order both here and overseas. Lower: Chevalier Justin Freind, tenor, delighted the company before the dinner.



Chevalier John Griffiths KSJ. Prior to retirement, John had senior financial management roles in the public and university sectors. Currently he is joint owner of an accounting practice and teaches some university classes. John has had extensive involvement with community services including entities providing employment support services for people with disabilities and rehabilitative treatment and support for people with chronic dependencies. Over a long period, John has served on committees and as team coach and manager for community hockey and cricket clubs. John is married to Maureen, and they have two adult sons and three grandchildren.



Chevalier Michael Ryan KSJ is a retired barrister and solicitor currently at the University of Western Australia carrying out research for his Masters degree in law. He has been involved in community service including having spent 21 years in the Darlington Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade. He is currently Chair of the Mundaring Bicentennial Scholarship Trust that raises funds for young artists. He and his wife, Dame Margaret Pride, have a close and exciting involvement with music, especially choral performance. He looks forward to this opportunity to contribute to the works of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, WA Priory.



Chevalier Peter Sinden KSJ is a recently retired legal practitioner and academic. He is an expert on Intellectual Property and Competition Law who, for much of the last 20 years, was the Director of UWA Law School's Business Law Major. During his working life he taught and practiced extensively in Hong Kong, Beijing and New York. He was, prior to his retirement, a Visiting Law Fellow at both Renmin University in Beijing and Fitzwilliam College in Cambridge.

Aside from the Law, he has three other passions in his life: his family, rugby football and overseas travel. He and his wife, Wendy, have, throughout their married lives, been heavily committed to supporting organisations that provide educational opportunities to socially disadvantaged youth, and he looks forward to continuing this and other valuable work in the service of St John.

Peter and Wendy have two adult children Cameron and Alistair, and one adorable grandchild, Jack, with, they hope, many more soon to follow!



Chevalier Chris Waters KSJ is the Assistant Commissioner for the Australian Border Force for

Western and South Australia.

He has worked in a number of federal and state enforcement and regulatory agencies, including postings to India and Indonesia.

Chris was recently elected as a lay representative for the Anglican (Perth) Synod.

He has an Executive Master of Public Administration, Master of International Studies, Bachelor of Social Science and a Diploma of Health Science. Chris lives with his long term partner, Manfred.

Dame Prof. Dr Heather Wardell-Johnson DSJ is an esteemed member of the Open International University for Complementary and Intergrated Medicines in Sri Lanka since 1990.

Heather is versed in all area of alternative medicine with a foundational background in nursing.

Her Perth based clinic started in 1986 extending to Tom Price and Paraburdoo with annual visits to the holistic charity



teaching hospital in Sri Lanka.
The past 35 years her internat-

ional travel and contributions hold her to one of the highest ranking positions of the university hospital today as Clinical Supervisor and Lecturer, Vice Chancellor, Dean of Cosmetology, Grand Secretariat of OIUCM, Senate Member of OIUCM, Associate Professor of Cosmetology for Astica University USA.

Heather has three daughters 11 grandchildren and five great grandchildren



Chevalier Michael Tindall KSJ is now retired from a broad and challenging career across the public and private sectors. In the Australian Trade Commission he was a Consul-General for Australia in Milan, Italy and managed a major industry support grants scheme in Australia.

He has been a director of economic analysis at the Department of Agriculture, was the state director of the Australian Bureau of Statistics and was a policy adviser to the Victorian Premier. Michael's community contributions include many years as a director of Ruah Community Services, president of the Manning Rippers football club and is currently the chair of the South Perth Learning Centre.



Dame Zara Torre DSJ is a practising dentist and founder of Healing Smiles, a WA based charity providing pro bono dental treatment to survivors of domestic violence. She was the founder of Australia's first mobile round up app for charitable giving, The Difference. Currently, Zara is a director of the Australian Dental Association (WA) Dental Health Foundation with a focus on providing care within the community to underprivileged groups such as the homeless. She is a qualified lawyer with experience in both community and commercial law. Zara is married to Francis, and has three young children – Jacob, Raphael and Olivia.



Chevalier Scott Stirling KSJ is a project manager at the City of Stirling focusing on the development of artificial intelligence to improve customer service and productivity.

He has worked for an Assistant Federal Minister and Member of Parliament as a media advisor, and is Vice Chair of the Board of Harrisdale Senior High School.

He is currently studying an MBA at RMIT and the Company Directors Course at the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Scott is married to his wife Cindy, who he met in high school, and who is his greatest support."

The Marian Pilgrimage to Malta and Gozo

May 22nd to May 28th saw our Marian Pilgrimage to Malta and Gozo, the second of our Priory's Pilgrimages. Twenty-one pilgrims made up the company. While the pilgrimages provided a collective experience, it is in the personal that the real values of our journey are significant.

I was privileged to have been the Priory coordinator, aided by gifted and hard-working colleagues: Chevaliers Hugh Stowell (our 'home secretary'), Neil Williamson (timetable / communications) Tony Sheppard and Bill Munro (finances) and the guidance of Prior Jamie. The contributions made to our well-being, comfort, safety, (and understanding that a pilgrimage isn't the same as a tourist holiday) of our hosts, was outstanding. In Malta / Gozo, the latter now being her home, Dame Dr Maree Leinster-Mackay, for months before our arrival, travelled between Gozo and Valletta evaluating what was feasible and relevant in the time available for us. Maree formed two small committees of clerics and academics from the Order of St Lazarus to build the program with her. In her welcome to us Dame Maree had written in one of the two publications to guide

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Comments from some of the Pilgrims:

"Going to Malta helped me realise its strategic importance and the gift of military support the Knights of St John gave to the Maltese people when the island was attacked by the Ottomans and in the following centuries. The harbour, the cities, the excavations and the history of that ancient island nation were fascinating, and closer to home, I felt the pilgrimage cemented us as companions on our journey of faith." Dame Kathy Barrett-Lennard OAM.

"A wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with the history of the Order and to get to know the other Knights and Dames who travelled on the Pilgrimage". Chevalier Neil Williamson.

"Tracing the history of the Order at the Grand Master's Palace, visiting St Paul's Grotto and the monument to the snake which bit but did not kill St Paul (Acts 28); being moved by the religious paintings, especially Caravaggio's 'Beheading of St John the Baptist', and celebrating Mass with the Order of St Lazarus, to name but just a few, all these made a profound, spiritual impact on me; an experience that drew me so much closer to God." Dame Rose Guok.



Images top: Pilgrim Dames and Knights with Order of St Lazarus, hosts at the Investiture Mass, Zebbug Parish Church, Gozo. **Centre:** Speaker of Malta, the Hon. Angelo Farrigio (centre) host at Parliament House, Malta, to Pilgrims, with Gozo OSL Commander, Chevalier Carmelo Saliba. **Lower:** Pilgrim Dames take a refreshment break. **At right:** Chevalier Anthony Howes OAM KCSJ, welcomes all aboard the heritage charabanc bound for the Investiture Mass.



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our journey: *"For Christians, a pilgrimage is a holy journey. It is a journey where the individual has the opportunity to seek truth, faith, justice and mercy. It offers the opportunity for the pilgrim to imitate Christ: to learn to follow in the steps of Jesus"*.

The Pilgrimage allowed so much: to examine the links between our Order and that of St Lazarus through our common founder, Brother Gerard; discuss the needs across denominations of the poor and the sick with the Bishop of Gozo; prayer at St. Ta'Pinu Shrine; participate in a Mass in a magnificent Parish Church followed by an Investiture; to be the guests at Malta Parliament House by the Speaker of the Nation; and to host a dinner where we presented a letter of Greeting to the Australian High Commissioner from the WA Priory Patron, His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM, Governor of Western Australia.

There was so much more; quiet meditation in the famous

Church of the Assumption; visits to St Paul's Caves and Museum, the Grand Master's Palace and St John's Co-Cathedral. Of particular significance was a mini-symposium where papers (all printed in special booklet – some presented, others for later reading) were authored by leading academics for the occasion. The overall subject being the history and relevance of our Orders.

Thanks must be recorded here to our Chaplain, Chevalier Luke, for his contribution. It looked from a past history to a picture of the future, where in conclusion, he stated the emphatic importance of Faith in God. Otherwise, as our Chaplain concluded in his paper, without that Faith ... *"Orders in the present age would simply be relegated to the ranks of any number of secular volunteering organisations that do charitable work. Perhaps the greatest guidance from the past is very simple. We find it in no other place than the medieval Hospitaller Rite of Profession."*

"Take this Sword, its brightness



stands for FAITH, its point for HOPE, its guard for CHARITY. Use it well".

The WA Pilgrimage 2025 gave us much to ponder, but also reminded us that our past has given us insights into God's love which remains unending for us to share with His Poor and His Sick. ✠

Image

Above: With grateful thanks – the pilgrims toast Dame Dr Maree Leinster-Mackay.

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attitude of the heart. Because this attitude of heart means sharing in the heart of God.

The Epistle to the Philippians says that, though he was in the form of God, Christ humbled himself to be human. So, lowering oneself, humbling oneself, is a Divine act. It's when Christ dies that his humbling is complete. So, it's then that the resurrection is complete. And the rise continues. He ascends into heaven itself so that the lowest and the highest may be made one.

When we seek to elevate ourselves, we're brought down. Descending is how we ascend. Dying is how we live. Dying to ourselves, to our illusions. This is a

spiritual truth. But it's something that we have to keep working at.

Soon, we'll hear those to be made knights and dames make vows. They'll be presented with the white cross of Malta and reminded what it stands for. They'll be reminded to 'humble yourself to those who injure you'.

If someone injures you, don't lash out. Don't seek to humiliate them. Humble yourself instead. Simple words. Not simple is practice. It will be painful, difficult, uncomfortable. Growth always is. But it will be right. This is what is expected of dames and knights of the Order of St John.

But it's applicable to every person. For it's when we humble ourselves, when we nurture our

humility, that's when we grow. We grow out of the illusions we delude ourselves with. And that tends to make us a little easier on other people, a little more compassionate, a little more understanding.

If we don't puff ourselves up, but shrink ourselves, then God enlarges us. It's when we're thrown down to the ground, that Christ himself helps us up. We are transformed. We rise too. And at the end of our days, when we too are returned to the earth, that's when our exaltation will be complete and we'll experience the heights of heaven.

Amen. ✠

Commander's Drinks

On 24 July 2025 13 members of the OSJ Brisbane Commandery, along with their partners, gathered for the Commander's Drinks at the New Farm Bowls Club. The event was enriched by the presence of Chevalier Noel Grummitt, Deputy Commander of the Gold Coast Commandery.

It was a particular pleasure to welcome Chevalier David

Aitchison, our newest member. The atmosphere was relaxed and convivial, as members enjoyed drinks and light refreshments while unwinding at the end of the day.

The Commander briefly addressed the group, highlighting the importance of fostering a sense of community among like-minded people. He also spoke of

the contribution the Commandery makes to Trinity Pantry, a service to homeless people in the city. Members were encouraged to consider how they can contribute to this service.

The evening provided an excellent opportunity for members to connect informally, share stories and strengthen bonds within the Commandery. ✠

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but not only rejoice, but rejoice in hope. When I was active as a Bishop I went to a Church where there was not 100% agreement about many things. I told them they did not look or sound happy, or showing the love of God in action.

When it came time for me to leave one of the leaders said to me something like this, "You're probably right Bishop, I suppose we could try to be happier!"

As it says in another letter of apostle Paul, "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice". I often think Paul said "rejoice" and then he thought in case you did not hear me the first time, "again I say rejoice".

Yes, we live in a wonderful world where there are many wonderful acts of kindness shared with love, grace and mercy. Not only do we celebrate a wonderful world, we seek to assist people to grow in appreciation of this wonderful world.

Our "OJS motto" – when translated means: "For Faith; For service to humanity". May we continue to grow into our motto and live it out in our daily lives now and always, so that the world continues to be a wonderful place.

Amen. ✠

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working alongside her brother, Monsignor Pat Doyle, and tirelessly raising funds to support Catholic education in the Darling Downs.

Her philanthropic efforts extended far and wide, including fundraising for Lourdes Home and St Saviour's Primary School, sponsoring Sudanese refugee families fleeing civil war, serving as a patron of the Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Service, and spearheading the \$4.4 million campaign to establish Downlands College's Sports Science Centre.

She also led fundraising for the Cobb and Co Museum's National Carriage Factory expansion and later became a Patron of the John Wallis Foundation.

Yet, Mary's greatest joy — and the accomplishment she held most dear — was raising her children alongside Henry and witnessing their successes. Today, the Wagner Corporation stands as one of Australia's most influential businesses, a testament to the strong foundation built by Mary and Henry.

A visionary in every sense, Mary's dedication to family,

business, and community touched countless lives. Her true strength lay in her compassion—her unwavering commitment to welcoming and uplifting Toowoomba's migrant communities was unparalleled.

Mary was invested into the Order in 2014 and quickly became a valued friend to many of the Darling Downs Priory members.

She, and the Wagner family, were heavily involved in many of the Order's fundraising ventures including the support of Lifeline, the Toowoomba Hospice and The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, just to name a few.

Mary became a Dame of Grace in 2021. Her involvement in the Priory activities and her friendship will be greatly missed.

Mary's legacy will live on through those who loved her — her family, friends, colleagues, and the broader community she nurtured. Though her physical presence will be dearly missed, her generosity, leadership, and devotion to Toowoomba will continue to inspire for generations to come.

May she rest in peace, leaving behind a world forever shaped by her kindness and strength. ✠

DAME JENNY CANT DSJ

Innovative fundraising in the Sunshine Coast Priory

The Sunshine Coast Priory, in common with many other organisations, is pursuing a range of interesting and unusual ways in which to raise money in its support for our lords the sick and our lords the poor. In 2024 the Priory ran a raffle which proved very popular, with excellent ticket sales. The prize was a fully catered dinner for twelve at the home of the winner, with all food and wine donated by the Priory. The dinner took place on 12th April 2025.

It was an amazing occasion with extraordinary food, the catering being done by Dames Sarah Roberts, Melanie De Wet and Jenny Cant (the latter despite a broken wrist), and Ellie Roberts, who would have made any restaurant proud. Chevalier Tony Welsh served as maître' d. Special thanks to Chevalier Swain Roberts, who opened his cellar door and donated some outstanding wines for the occasion.

A social gathering in May was held in the gorgeous home of Chevalier Swain and Dame Sarah Roberts, where members of the Priory were welcomed by this most hospitable couple.



It was with great pleasure that the Priory welcomed four new intending members of our Priory of the Order at a Solemn Vigil on the 9th June in the Chapel of St Nicholas in Matthew Flinders College, Buderim. Dames Tara Knobel and Sharon Ward and Chevaliers Kieran Fawcett and Adrian McConnell were invested later in that week.

Following the Vigil, members enjoyed the fellowship, with food and wine coordinated by the Hospitaller Committee. At the Solemn Vigil the Priory was also delighted to welcome two members from the Darling Downs



Priory who have come to live on the Sunshine Coast, Chevalier Julian and Dame Nerida Turner.

2025 marks 25 years of the Order's presence on the Sunshine Coast. The occasion will be celebrated at the Siege on Malta event. In 2000 the Sunshine Coast Commandery was established following a service at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Buderim, with Chevalier Tom Ledwidge as the first Commander. The Priory will return to Immanuel Lutheran Church for this momentous occasion on Sunday 14 September, followed by a luncheon. ✠

Images Above left: The catering team: Vice Prior Dame Jenny Cant, Dame Melanie De Wet, Ellie Roberts and Dame Sarah Roberts
Above right: Our hosts, Chevalier Swain and Dame Sarah Roberts

Vale Reverend Dr Noel Park OAM KSJ

Chevalier Rev Dr Noel Park OAM KSJ passed away in February 2025 at the age of 83. The funeral service was held on Friday 28th February. He was a member of the Sunshine Coast Priory, and previously of the Sunshine Coast Commandery, which he served as its first chaplain. As a minister of the Uniting Church, he served parishes in Dalby, Redcliffe, Winton, Sarina, Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast, as well as in Churchill in Victoria. In Toowoomba he was the Community Services Director of the SES, and the

Managing Director of Lifeline (Toowoomba and South West Queensland.) After the move to the Sunshine Coast, he served on the Maroochy Shire Council Welfare Committee.

He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1997 for services to the community.

The home which he shared with his wife Lyn in Buderim was known locally for its annual display of Christmas lights. However after suffering a stroke, he and Lyn moved to Little Mountain, from where he finally moved into care. Knights and Dames of the Order offer sincere sympathy to Lyn and the members of their family. ✠

CHEVALIER RODNEY SMITH KSJ

Dinners, a film and speakers: convivial fundraising in Victoria

Conversations over dinner

The Victorian Priory hosted two very successful fund raising events at the Holy Trinity Kew Centre in May and June that brought together both members of the Order and Congregation in a very convivial environment. These nights are now a regular calendar events and called "Conversations over Dinner".

16 May – Film Night

We hosted a film night and chose the old classic "The Importance of being Earnest" a 1952 British adaption of the 1895 famous play by Oscar Wilde, set in Victorian England. The film has a star studded cast including Michael Redgrave, Michael Denison and Margaret Rutherford amongst many other leading British actors.

The night was a lot of fun and included a light supper at interval

together with ice creams and yes the traditional Jaffas. No chipped teeth were reported. Attendees were encouraged to bring their own wine and nibbles.

20 June – Presentation by Rev Robert Newton

Our very own Rev Robert Newton KSJ very kindly spoke and called his address "The Vicar of Ashford Carbonell: characters from an English country Church – a real life vicar of Dibley experience". The night was a huge success thanks to Robert's fabulous talk. There were PowerPoint slides accompanying his presentation showing many wonderful photos of the surrounding Parish.

Before the talk a dinner was prepared by members of the Order accompanied with some superb wines kindly donated by Robert.

22 August guest speaker

Our next scheduled fundraising night is Friday 22nd August, 2025 at Holy Trinity Kew, 1A Pakington Street, Kew commencing 7.30 pm. We are very fortunate indeed to have Emeritus Professor Michael Manton speak to us on the topic "What has happened to our weather".

He is a leading Australian expert in this field having spent twenty years as Chief of the Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre providing support for the Bureau operations and services. Before that he lectured mathematics at Monash University and was a research scientist with the CSIRO Division of Cloud Physics. In his retirement he continues part-time research at Monash University and provides advice on weather and climate to a range of clients.

He has worked and lectured extensively overseas including with the World Climate Research Programme and the Global Climate Observing System. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PHD) Oceanography from the University of British Columbia, Bachelor Science and a Bachelor Engineering and is assured to enlighten us on this very important topic affecting us all now and into the future.

The night includes a Casserole Dinner that will be served before the talk. You are welcome to bring any guests and wine if you wish.

The cost is only \$30 per person with donations appreciated. Please deposit funds into the Order of St John account BSB 633000 A/C 222800872 or you can pay on the night. To assist with catering can you please respond by Tuesday 19th August, 2025 to sosj@holytrinitykew.org.au and advise numbers and any dietary requirements. ✝

Planning underway for Priory of Victoria Investiture 2025

Recruiting is almost completed for our investiture this year. We are investing four candidates and they are very special people.

With the special permission of our Grand Prior, Serving Brother Oscar Liu, who is well known to many of you from his involvement in the SCM24 Conference and the Queensland investiture this year, will be elevated as will our Serving Sister Darcy Newton, daughter of our Chaplain, Father Robert Newton.

To make the occasion even more special Father Robert's wife, Jane, will be invested as a Dame,

meaning we will have the whole family as members of the Order.

We believe will be very special for us and perhaps very rare in the history of our Order. Our fourth investee is Richard Elkington who is a former Grand Master of Freemasons Victoria.

We extend a warm invitation to our colleagues from other Pories to join us on the 31st of October. ✝



Vale Chevalier Ross Howard Douglas KCSJ

24 September 1947 – 4 July 2025

“The truest measure of a man is not in what he has, but in what he gives.” This sentiment, used in his eulogy, truly reflects the character of Chevalier Ross Howard Douglas KCSJ who passed from this life on 4th July this year.

Born in Brisbane on 24th September 1947, Ross was the eldest son of Howard Dardanelles and Ruth Isabel Douglas, part of a large pastoral family in Mungallala. His childhood was spent immersed in the rural lifestyle, particularly on the family properties. In 1962 Ross attended Scots College in Sydney. There, he excelled in sports, and served as a prefect and house captain. After school, he returned to the family property, Hoganthulla, when pivotal opportunity arose as a classifier for the Santa Gertrudis Association. This job allowed him to travel extensively, he met with Anne in 1970 and they wed in March 1972.

In 1983, they purchased their family property, Colanya, where they raised their family until retirement in 2007. Ross remained

involved with the Santa Gertrudis breed, serving on the council and establishing his own stud. Life at Colanya brought challenges, including significant droughts in the 90s. Retirement offered Ross the chance to enjoy time with friends, especially during weekly snooker games. His love for the Australian bush was matched only by his pride in his Scottish heritage, often sharing tales of his lineage back to Sir William ‘le hardi’ Douglas.

His commitment to community service was evident through his involvement with various organizations, including the Queensland Club of which he was a President, the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland and the Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, where he served with pride.

Chevalier Ross Douglas KCSJ was a valued member of the Darling Downs Priory. He was invested into the Order in 2009 and served the Priory faithfully for many years and rose in the ranks to become a Knight of Justice.



Image: Anne and Ross Douglas

Ross was a man of integrity and humour – always ready for a chat or to offer guidance, while never hesitating to remind us to “pull ya head in” when needed. He taught all of us to prioritise what truly mattered in life, embodying a steadfast strength like a towering gum tree—rooted in family and reaching out in friendship.

As we remember Ross Howard Douglas, let us celebrate the life he lived and the legacy he leaves behind. In the words of a cherished poem, “And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him, in the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars.”

The sympathies of the Order of St John go to his wife Anne and all of his family.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory. ✠

In Search of Manhood

Chevalier Dr Peter Dornon AM KCSJ gave a memorable presentation at the Brisbane Commandery fund-raising event in March 2025.

After a celebratory climb of Mount Kilimanjaro at age 60 in 2003, he became a serious advocate for men's health, but while researching for a book on this subject, he unearthed answers to another problem he wasn't looking

for... and they related to domestic violence. Why do men think it is okay to violate their partner? Forty per cent of Australian women report violence over their lifetime; physical, sexual or coercive. Why, in 2024, did 100 women in Australia lose their lives to their partner? There is a connectivity to these questions. To appreciate ‘manhood’, Dr Dornan's research suggests men

need to shed layers of stereotypes and myths, particularly their macho mantle.

To understand the harmful effects of conforming to these macho ideals, particularly in relation to misogyny and homophobias, men need to nurture and grow their emotional intelligence, and find the power within for change.

Dr Dornan's excellent book, “In Search of Manhood”, is available from bookshops and online.

The essence of what makes a good man has never changed: Trustworthiness, a fierce capacity for love, unselfish action for the common good, and the ability to laugh in the face of hardship.

CHEVALIER NOEL GRUMMITT KSJ

Gold Coast addresses the homeless problem



Dame Commander Trina Hockley, Chevalier Lex Bell with plaque, Chevalier Deputy Commander Noel Grummitt.

On Friday 16th May, Gold Commandery gathered to hear several presentations about the current homeless situation in the City, very generously hosted by our local Southport MP, Rob Molhoek.

We heard from Dianne Kozik from the *St Johns Crisis Centre* in Surfers Paradise (a long time recipient of support from the Commandery) about the breadth of issues addressed by the charity, including a wide range of support services for homeless and domestic violence (DV) victims, including meals, housing, liaison with Government services, employment interview support and a wide range of other services.

They have purchased premises which will be used for medium term support for DV victims and are actively searching for premises for initial support for DV victims, utilising grant funds from a local charitable trust.

Ellen Davis and Patrice Poutu from *Set Free Gold Coast* spoke on the support services for the homeless offered by *Set Free* from their Southport premises. They spoke particularly of the response during Cyclone Alfred where they (and Ray James' Church at Burleigh) took in street sleepers and housed them for the duration of the event. They received support from a wide range of faith based and other community groups and noted how the different groups worked together and how the homeless people, when given safe shelter, acted with appreciation and dignity.

Sue Pope, from *Common Ground* in Brisbane spoke of the supported housing model used in South Brisbane in partnership with Micah Foundation, where CG provided the housing and Micah the wrap around support services. Tenants were an even mix of low income and homeless residents.

The service has a distinguished and long record of successful housing and integration of its tenants, with dramatic reductions in the need for Government services when people become residents of the centre. *Common Ground* was hopeful of offering a similar model for a Government provided tower block to be built in Southport.

The night was a very informative showcase of the current homelessness situation and some of the avenues and groups making a difference in this space. The recent changes by some local governments to the plight of the homeless was predicted to result in increased social disfunction and distress as previous contacts with homeless would be lost.

The night was also particularly special as it gave us opportunity to present our longest serving knight – Chevalier Lex Bell OAM KCSJ – a special plaque made by the men of the Labrador Men's Shed, for his extended and exemplary service to the Commandery.

A list of potential new inductees was tabled for review before proceeding with proposals for membership, with a very promising group identified. It was decided that we would initially support charities working with disadvantaged youth and children with chronic illnesses, through Radfly and Aussie Kids, and that every gathering would include an option to raise funds for the Commandery, with a major profile function to be held in 2026.

Upcoming events, apart from Priory events include: Car rally, combined with Brisbane Commandery, on September 20, (more on page 26) and our Christmas end of year luncheon function at the Grummitt residence on November 29.

We are excited and positive about the opportunities in front of us for the year ahead.

CHEVALIER COMMANDER IAN AIREY OAM KCSJ

Celebration of the Nativity of St John the Baptist

On 22 June 2025, the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, celebrated the Nativity of St John the Baptist, our Patron Saint, at Holy Trinity Church, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. The service was attended by twelve Knights and Dames, led by our Grand Prior, Bailiff Victor Feros.

The Eucharistic service was presided over by Rector, the Reverend Dr Rodney Wolff, who extended a warm and generous welcome to the Order. Throughout the liturgy, Fr Rodney made several references to the mission and charitable work of the Order, with particular emphasis on the contributions of volunteer Knights and Dames to the Trinity Pantry and Welfare Centre, an outreach ministry of Holy Trinity Church.

In his homily, Fr Rodney reflected on the life and vocation of St John the Baptist, recalling that his mission began in quiet humility with his naming by his mother Elizabeth, and the written affirmation by his father Zechariah,

who was mute at the time. He reminded the congregation that the name John, or *Johannes*, means "God is gracious". Fr Rodney emphasized that St John lived out his divine calling through decisive action, paralleling the Order's commitment to serving those in need.

The service was inspirational. Attired in robes and neck regalia, members of the Order processed into the church behind the choir, creating a colourful scene. Scripture readings were delivered by Prior Michael Halliday and Commander Ian Airey. The choir enriched the liturgy with music of exceptional beauty, lifting the hearts and minds of all present. The harmonious interplay of scripture, music and ceremonial tradition made for a profoundly moving and memorable occasion.

Following the service, members of the Order and their guests were welcomed to a convivial morning tea, providing an opportunity for fellowship and engagement with the parish community. ✠

Appointments approved

The Grand Prior has approved the following senior appointments in the Grand Priory structure following the passing of Chevalier David Rees GCSJ: **CHANCELLOR: Chevalier William Savage GCSJ** takes over this office. He will carry out the administrative work of the Grand Priory Council in a secretarial capacity, issuing notices of Grand Priory Council meeting, coordinating reports, minutes, and all correspondence, within Australia and to other members of the SOSJ. He is responsible for determining and collecting Oblations annually. He will work closely with the Grand Prior. Chevalier Bill is currently the Grand Priory/Queensland Priory Treasurer and is managing the website, two functions of which he needs to be divested.

REGISTRAR: Chevalier Dr Ian Airey OAM KCSJ is the new Registrar, being responsible for all membership records of the Grand Priory of Australasia. He will record new members and elevations annually and be responsible for the Roll of Honour and all member records. Chevalier Ian is also the Commander for Brisbane Commandery. **BRISBANE DEPUTY COMMANDER: Dame Elizabeth Fisher DCSJ** will take up this position, vacant for almost three years, appointed by the Prior of Queensland. ✠



Join the Gold Coast and Brisbane Commanderies Car Rally

September 20, from 9.30 am until after lunch, commencing at Zarraffas, Distillery Road Yatala and ending with a visit to the Gold Coast Motor Museum with lunch in Stanley's Bar at the Museum.

Image courtesy Gold Coast Motor Museum, Queensland Australia

Prepare the way not by shouting, but by serving

Reverend Dr Rodney Wolff, Sunday 22 June 2025
at Holy Trinity Church Fortitude Valley,

I'd like to start with some facts about St John the Baptist's diet. You can check them in any reputable medical textbook – say, Spallanzani's 1760 manuscript *Experiments and Observations on the Gastric Juice and the Digestion of Food*. A great read just before dinner. In short: the chitin in locust shells can cause serious gas, and too much wild honey – how shall I put this – somewhat accelerates the digestive process. So, no wonder we picture St John the Baptist as a wild-eyed prophet shouting in the wilderness. His zeal may have had some gastrointestinal encouragement.

Today, it can feel like only the loudest voices are heard. Whether through social media or politics, we're surrounded by those with the sharpest outrage, the most dramatic opinions, and – worryingly – the most convincing lies. In that kind of world, naming something loudly and publicly is treated as virtue in itself.

And yet, here is the quiet surprise of today's feast. The great forerunner of the Christ, the voice crying in the wilderness, does not enter with thunder. His story begins instead in a small house, among two elderly parents – one of whom can't even speak.

That's no accident. Today we celebrate not St John's ministry or martyrdom, but his birth – one of the few saints, along with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary, honoured in this way. And the scene is humble. A child is born. The neighbours gather. When it's time to name him, Elizabeth says,

"He is to be called John." The crowd protests – that's not a family name. They turn to Zechariah. Still mute, he writes: "His name is John." And in that moment, his voice returns – not with small talk, but with prophecy. Praise. Benedictus.

This quiet scene is the real beginning of St John's mission. Not in the wilderness, not beside the Jordan, but here – in the obedient naming of a child. It is a small moment, but one filled with spiritual clarity: Elizabeth and Zechariah choose to name him not according to social tradition, but according to God's instruction. They surrender his identity to God's purpose. They don't define his future; they offer it up. That's not noise. That's faith.

The name John – or Yohanan – means "The Lord is gracious." It isn't a name pulled from family history, but from divine revelation. And in that name, a kingdom begins to break in.

This is about more than a baby name. It is about the courage to speak truthfully according to God's Word, even when that truth sounds unfamiliar or unsettling. To name rightly is to participate in God's own work of creation and renewal. This is the start of the Gospel's unfolding – not through spectacle, but through faithful speech.

To be a Christian, then, is to name well. That means calling things not as the world names them – according to power or convenience – but as God names them: with truth, with justice, and with compassion. Sometimes that means calling something unjust

that others call legal. Or calling someone beloved when the world has written them off. Or naming as holy something the culture finds inconvenient or strange.

St John the Baptist lived this out with unwavering clarity. He left behind the centre of society to speak in the wilderness, where he named sin, named repentance, named Jesus as the Lamb of God – and rightly named himself not as the Christ, but as the forerunner. He understood his task: to prepare the way, not by taking the spotlight, but by pointing to the one who would come after him.

That same calling rests on us. In a time when truth is politicised, when compassion is dismissed as weakness, and when justice is easily manipulated, the Church is called to speak differently. That doesn't mean speaking louder. It means speaking faithfully – with prayer, with discernment, and with courage.

Sometimes we'll need to speak softly, like Elizabeth. Sometimes, like Zechariah, we'll have to learn silence before our words can serve God's truth. But whatever the circumstance, the speech of Christians should carry the sound of God's kingdom – not noise, but light.

And speech becomes action. To name someone as a child of God is to treat them with love. To speak of justice is to work for it. To call Jesus Lord is to follow him, especially where it costs us. Our lives must echo the truth we proclaim – at home, in public, in small things as well as great.

We see this faithfully embodied in the witness of the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, whose members are with us today. Their service – in healthcare, in compassionate outreach, in steadfast care for the vulnerable

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OSCAR LIU SB

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scored music beside Chevalier Commander Dr. Ian Airey and other professional musicians added to the memorable service for me. The service was live-streamed on YouTube, and I strongly encourage you to hear the service and its music in full form, details to access this recording and below this article.

Post service, the Gala Dinner Banquet was held at the Sofitel Hotel just down the road from the Cathedral. GPA Chamberlain, Chevalier Rob de Martini, assigned me to help him. Small assignments such as this really make the experience memorable! As another surprise, Prior of Queensland, Chevalier Michael Halliday, gave me a formal welcome in his introduction at the dinner and said some kind words about my attendance in Brisbane and about our Priory of Victoria.

There were also several promotions on the night and a notable award/promotion announced was Chevalier Major General Darryl Low-Choy receiving the first Medal of Merit (MMSJ) in the GPA since 2014, a very well-deserved award after he and



*Charles Clark conducting the investiture choir.
SB Oscar Liu back row, far left*

his sub-committee put on such a successful Sovereign Council Meeting last year in Brisbane.

My newly-minted friend, Chevalier David Aitchison, was one of those invested on June 13 and many congratulations to him and the others who were invested too. The next day, AGMs and a special church service were held for the GPA and the Priors/Commandries followed by lunch, well catered for by the parishioners at the Centenary Uniting Church.

Such a special and meaningful time was had once again with multiple conversations and catch ups. In closing, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to those

who I caught up with and who welcomed me back to Queensland; Grand Prior Victor Feros, Chevalier Charles Clark, Chevalier Rob de Martini, Prior Michael Halliday, Prior Garry Cant, Chevalier Commander Dr Ian Airey, Chevalier Bill Savage, Chevalier The Reverend Bishop Emeritus Noel Noack, Chevalier The Reverend Dr David Pitman, Dame Liz Fisher, Chevalier David Aitchison, Chevalier Major General Darryl Low-Choy, Chevalier Mark Osbourne, and Dame The Reverend Dr Linda Hamill and Malcolm Hamill.

I look forward to going back to Brisbane again next year for the 2026 Investiture! ✠

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– is a powerful act of Christian naming. In their hands, the sick are called worthy of dignity. In their work, the forgotten are made visible. Like St John, they prepare the way not by shouting, but by serving.

We are called to that same witness. Our Baptism gives us each a name in Christ – and with it, a mission. To bear that name in the world with integrity means living the Gospel in action: naming what is holy, pursuing what is just, speaking what is true, and doing it

all with compassion.

And it usually starts small. Around a dinner table. Beside a hospital bed. In a moment of quiet forgiveness. Just as St John's story began not in the wilderness, but in a household, so too our witness begins in the everyday.

Perhaps that's the grace of this feast: it reminds us that the kingdom of God doesn't always arrive with cymbals. It begins with people willing to name rightly, even when it goes against expectation. It begins with the courage to listen for God's voice –

and to echo it, gently but truly.

There's much in our world today that's unpalatable, morally and spiritually. Plenty that is hard to digest, and even harder to live with as people of faith. But the way we respond isn't with noise. It's with naming – truthfully, faithfully, courageously – in word and in deed.

And maybe, just maybe, that voice in the wilderness starts with a whisper in a house. May we have the same courage and the same trust. May we speak truthfully, live justly, love tenderly – and in so doing, prepare the way of the Lord. ✠