

Strengthening the collaboration between all Orders of St John: A St John's Day Message from our Chancellor



To mark St John's Day 2021, I am writing to greet all members of our family of the five Orders of St John – the Johannine Orders.

It has been a fascinating and important year for me [as the new Chancellor of the Most Venerable Order of St John](#), and the first woman to represent one of the Orders of St John at our formal joint meetings of the [Alliance headquarters in Europe](#), conducted online over the past twelve months.

Tracking worldwide co-operation projects



Following through a resolve made by the Alliance Orders, a “global collaboration mapping” initiative was put forward by Thomas Vorwerk under the aegis of the Co-operation Group of the Orders of St John, including the [Sovereign Order of Malta \(SMOM\)](#). Thomas is the Hospitaller of the [Swiss Commandery](#) of the [Johanniterorden](#). Our small working group reflects gender and age diversity among its members: Elise Stadlinger, former Vice-Commander of the [Austrian Hospitalservice \(SMOM\)](#), and Sally Hasler of the [Order of St John in Australia](#) have participated in the group, together with Jan Willem Storm van 's Gravesande, Chancellor of the [Johanniter Orde in Nederland](#), and Nils Bildt, former Hospitaller of the [Johanniterorden i Sverige](#).

This effective small and dynamic cluster is making swift and genuine progress. The group has tracked projects so far in at least eleven countries, including Estonia, Israel and occupied Palestinian territory, South Africa, Canada, and the Ukraine, as well as the home countries of the Headquarters of each Order, which offer mutual active practical co-operation between one or other or all five of the Orders.

Promoting peace and tackling the pandemic

I have been grateful to the Permanent Observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta at the UN in New York for daily updates during the recent conflict in

Gaza and Jerusalem, together with warm humane appeals to the UN to appeal for the ending of hostilities on both sides, and to protect all health facilities from attack, including the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem and Gaza and the Holy Family Hospital, run by SMOM in Bethlehem.

As a separate mark of mutual cooperation, hospitality and generosity, St John International is extremely grateful to [The Johanniter for sending a team of doctors, paramedics and nurses to support our Covid response in Papua New Guinea](#). The Canadian Government has been approached by [St John Canada](#) to fund SMOM work in the Ukraine.

Inspired today by our shared history

All of this shows the dynamic energy which can be released for our work within our traditional calling, to benefit 'the sick and the poor', ultimately inspired by Christian principles expressed in the original monastic hospital of St John the Baptist led by Brother Gerard, a lay brother of the Benedictine order in eleventh century Jerusalem.

[The Crusades, a military cross-cultural crisis, were the context in which his work flourished and eventually grew into all five Orders of St John.](#) We are committed to achieving the same good outcome in the current worldwide extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic.

Gerard's original appointment may have been routine, or an accident, but its practical fruit inspires us with the results of quiet, committed dedication to the needs of others in a context of faith and humanity.

Dr Gillian Willmore GCStJ
Chancellor

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