

Imperial Order of Constantine the Great



Constitution for the Governing and Administration
of the Orders of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen

CONSTITUTION FOR THE GOVERNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE IMPERIAL AND CHARITABLE ORDER OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT AND OF SAINT HELEN

ARTICLE 1

According to ancient historical traditions the Order of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen has its origins in the imperial guard that was founded in the year 312 A.D. for the keeper ship and custody of the Imperial Labarum of Constantine the Great and in commemoration of all the locations of the Holy Cross by his mother, the Empress Saint Helen on 11 May 330 A.D.

The current Constantinian Order ties its history to the restoration and reformation after an 8 week siege and the last Emperor Constantine XI that was killed by the Sultan Mehmed 'the Conqueror' during the capture of Constantinople. This Order is the patrimony of the Eastern Orthodox Church recognized as the protectors of the Orders following the fall on 29 May 1453.

ARTICLE 2

The seat of the Sovereign Mastery is the residence of the Grand Prior General. H.G. Michael, Duke of Gardham.

ARTICLE 3

The Order recognizes as its patron Saint Martin de Tours and It has as its intercessory the Exalted Saint Helen.

ARTICLE 4

The goals of the Order are as follows:

The Order will sustain, teach, and propagate the principles of the general order of knighthood as it has been defined by those who have expounded upon these matters.

Although the Order assists philanthropic and charitable endeavors it does not accord them preeminence as its nature is primarily social, historical, and cultural. All things are done in the furtherance of chivalric values.

Among the nobility the Order will try to revive a service of identity and duty and struggle against the encroachment of the erosion of chivalric values.

In social matters the Order seeks the ethical growth of the individual and of society. The Order's goals are therefore cultural, traditional, knightly, ethical, social, and philosophical. Each of the subdivisions into which the Order is divided may have, in addition to these general goals, others particular to their needs and characteristics. These must, of necessity, be approved by the Grand Prior General.

ARTICLE 5

Candidates must be of good moral and civil conduct, have sufficient merits, and have rendered service to their community and/or their country.

ARTICLE 6

The Order is not a religious or a political Order. However, it does follow the standard Judeo-Christian ethics and values handed down by Constantine the Great, Saint Helen.

ARTICLE 7

Entry into the Order is not possible without a personal petition which should be seconded by a Knight or Dame of the Order, by the approval of the Grand Prior General, or the International Council. The Grand Prior General and/or the International Council can also elect to veto membership of any applicant. Veto decisions will be final without right to an explanation or formal appeal by the applicant. Only the Grand Prior General can name Knights and Dames.

ARTICLE 8

Membership of the Order is confined to professing followers of any nationality whose worthiness, repute, and evidence of sincere intent are acceptable to both the primary Prior and the Grand Prior having jurisdiction. Applicants should be prepared to honor and uphold the high ideals of the Order and contribute to its preservation and splendor.

ARTICLE 9

The minimum age for admission to the chivalric ranks is 21 years. Squires and Ladies-in-Waiting shall have attained the age of 14 years. Pages (males only) shall have attained the age of 7 years. Except for dispensations by the Grand Prior General the minimum age for the grade of Knight is 21 years; for the grade of Knight Commander, 33 years; and for the grade of Knight Grand Cross, 45 years.

The Grand Prior General serves as the Grand Master of the Order and is the constitutional head of the Order. He is vested with, and may exercise in Council, all the ancient rights, privileges and prerogatives traditionally due to and inherent in the sovereign title of his office. He is elected by the International Council. When elected he may retain and exercise the office as long as he lives unless he elects to retire early or is permanently prevented by incapacity from fulfilling his duties. Permanent incapacity shall be certified, in writing, by the Governor. When this happens the International Council must convene within 90 days to elect a new Grand Prior General to serve as the Grand Master.

ARTICLE 10

The Grand Prior General will appoint a Lieutenant Grand Master, titled Governor, to assist him. In the interim which occurs between the death or resignation of the Grand Prior General and the election of a permanent successor, or if, for any reason, the office of the Grand Prior General is left vacant, the Lieutenant Grand Master/Governor will act on his behalf. The Governor shall remain until a successor to the Grand Prior General is elected at which time the appointment of the Lieutenant Grand Master/Governor is terminated.

ARTICLE 11

The Grand Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer of the Order. He is responsible for implementing the policy decisions of the Grand Prior General, the Governor, and the International Council as well as serving as the head of the Special Staff Council. The Grand Chancellor shall serve for an indefinite period at the pleasure of the Grand Prior General or the Governor of the Order.

ARTICLE 12

There shall be a position titled Honorary Member for Life. These honorary members for life may, at the pleasure of the Grand Prior General, sit as a non-voting member of the International Council or Special Staff Council. Honorary life members will participate in deliberations in a consultative capacity.

ARTICLE 13

The Grand Prior General or the Governor has the ability to nominate an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for any specific issue(s) he deems necessary. When so nominated, the Ambassador's powers of inspection, control, and supervision are indicated in a specific decree and any following modifications. *This is an ad hoc position subject to need as determined by the Grand Prior General or Governor and can be terminated by them if/when there is no longer need for their services.*

ARTICLE 14

The official language of the Order is English and French. However, all acts and decrees of the jurisdictional priories may be compiled and set out in the most convenient language. In any case of conflict the Grand Prior General or the Governor will issue the final and definite version of said document.

ARTICLE 15

The International Grand Council is advisory in nature. Its function is to aid the Grand Prior General in the governance of the Order. It is comprised of the following officers: (a) The Grand Prior General; (b) The Grand Priors and Priors of the geographical subdivisions of the Order and their Chancellors; (c) The Governor (a non-voting member); and (d) The Grand Silver Master (a non-voting member). In all deliberations reduced to voting each geographical priory shall have one vote representing their geographical area. The Grand Prior General has the right to exercise his veto power in any contested deliberation. In addition there will be appointed by the Grand Prior General a Chancellery which shall be comprised of the following officers whose duties are summarized below: (a) The Grand Chancellor; (b) The Grand Prefect; (c) The Grand Silvermaster; (d) The Grand Master of Ceremonies; (e) The Grand Legal Counselor; (f) The Special Assistant to the Grand Prior General; and (f) The Grand Historian.

(a) The Grand Chancellor. The Grand Chancellor is the Chief Secretary. Under him serves the officers of the Chancellery. He shall be responsible for any duties or assignments appointed to him by the Grand Prior General.

(b) The Grand Prefect. The Grand Prefect is the head of intelligence and security issues. He is in charge of all examinations and investigations for the clarification of facts. His officers are the Provost Marshals. He serves as the Sergeant of Arms. He is responsible for the security of the Order and any background investigations directed by the Grand Prior General.

(c) The Grand Silvermaster. The Grand Silvermaster is the Treasurer and is in charge of all matters pertaining to property. Under him serve the officers of the Treasury.

(d) The Grand Master of Ceremonies. The Grand Master of Ceremonies arranges all receptions, meetings, investitures and ceremonies in general.

(e) The Grand Legal Counselor. The Grand Legal Counselor serves as the Order's lawyer and principal legal advisor to the Grand Prior General as well as advising the International Council and the Special Staff Council on all legal matters.

(f) The Special Assistant to the Grand Prior General. The Special Assistant to the Grand Prior General shall perform assignments as directed by the Grand Prior General and will serve as the head of all the information technology aspects of the Order.

(g) The Grand Historian. The Grand Historian shall be conversant with the Order's history and the histories of Constantine the Great and Saint Helen. He shall keep a compendium of the Order's newsletters and important documents. He shall be responsible for the safekeeping and appropriate redundancy of all printed works in electronic format including appropriate storage of original works and backup copies in separate locations.

Grand Priors and Priors are invited to attend all Special Staff Council meetings held in their geographical or adjacent geographical areas.

ARTICLE 16

The chivalric ranks for gentlemen in ascending sequence of seniority are as follows:

1. Knight
2. Knight Commander
3. Knight Grand Cross
4. Knight Grand Cross of Justice
5. Knight Grand Collar
6. Knight Grand Collar of Justice

The chivalric ranks for gentlewomen in ascending sequence of seniority are as follows:

1. Dame
2. Dame Commander
3. Dame Grand Cross
4. Dame Grand Cross of Justice

ARTICLE 17

The chivalric ranks of the Order with the words "of Justice" are awarded to those postulants who can provide proof possession of title(s) of nobility or royalty.

ARTICLE 18

The *Medaille du Merite*.

The Order of Constantine the Great and/or the Order of Saint Helen may also issue, to deserving members and nonmembers, a special certificate and neck decoration that denotes the award of the *Medaille du Merite*. All

candidates for this, the highest award given by the Orders, should be presented to the geographical Prior and then forwarded to the Grand Prior General for consideration. Each Priory may award up to two Medailles du Merite per calendar year in an appropriate ceremony in the geographical priory.

ARTICLE 19

Pre-accolade ranks for young men are as follows:

1. Page (ages 7-13 years)
2. Squire (ages 14-21 years)

ARTICLE 20

Pre-accolade rank for young women is:

Lady-in-Waiting (ages 14-21 years)

ARTICLE 21

The distinction of Knight Grand Collar is customarily reserved for the Grand Master/Grand Prior General, the Lieutenant Grand Master/Governor, Grand Chancellor and other Grand Officers of the Order as directed by the Grand Prior General. It may be conferred, upon occasion, to others whose service and devotion to the Order's interests merit exceptional recognition.

ARTICLE 22

Admission to the Order shall be by investiture after a probation period of postulancy. All investitures must be authorized in advance by the Grand Prior General and only the Grand Prior General has the authority of *fons honorum*. He is, therefore, the only person that can perform bestowal of knighthood required to bring new members into the Orders.

ARTICLE 23

Formal admission to the Order, the conferment of the accolade, or appointment to higher rank, honor, or office will be celebrated in accordance with the traditional rites and ceremonies at such times and places as may be deemed desirable and convenient.

ARTICLE 24

Promotion within the post-accolade ranks and from the pre-accolade to the chivalric ranks is subject to the member having attained the requisite age and having served the Order in an exemplary manner. A promotion to higher chivalric rank comes only through recognition of some substantial contribution to the works of the Order or work in the conduct of the administration of the Order. Promotions are only awarded at the discretion of, and with the prior approval of, the Grand Prior General.

ARTICLE 25

The Order is organized into Grand Priorities, Priorities, Baileries, and Commanderies as designated by the Grand Prior General.

ARTICLE 26

Baileries may be established to serve the needs of members within a defined area of an existing Priory. The designation of a Bailery must be confirmed by the Grand Prior General or the Governor.

ARTICLE 27

A Prior can be elevated to the rank of Grand Prior by the decree of the Grand Prior General.

ARTICLE 28

Associated with each Prior, for the administration of the Priory, shall be the Priory Council. The Priory Council shall consist of the officers of the Priory and such other members as may be determined by the geographical Prior to meet the needs of his area.

ARTICLE 29

The Priory Council shall be responsible for determining the charitable work to be undertaken by the geographical Priory's Chancellery. All charitable works shall be coordinated with the Grand Prior General in advance.

ARTICLE 30

The geographical Prior is the President of the geographical Priory Council.

ARTICLE 31

The officers of the geographical Prior Council shall be as follows and whose duties are summarized below: (a) The Vice-Prior; (b) The Chancellor; (c) The Silvermaster, and (d) The Prefect.

- (a) The Vice-Prior. The Vice-Prior shall preside and act in the absence of the Prior.
- (b) The Chancellor. The Chancellor shall have charge over the Secretariat and other office matters.
- (c) The Silvermaster. The Silvermaster shall have charge over financial matters.
- (d) The Prefect. The Prefect shall have charge over all ceremonial activities and all matters relative to order, discipline, grievances, and security.

ARTICLE 32

The Prior, together with the officers of the Priory, shall maintain proper records of all their acts and transactions and shall be responsible for preparing annual accounts in respect to all the monies received and disbursed by the Priory. These records and documents are at the disposal of the Grand Prior General, Governor, and/or Grand Chancellor.

ARTICLE 33

The Grand Prior General may, at his discretion, penalize Knights and Dames for acts deemed unbecoming or damaging to the Order or any of its members. The Grand Prior General will discuss any proposed penalty with the appropriate Prior, Grand Prior, and/or International Council before the action is actually taken. *This does not mean that they have to approve it.* The penalties which the Grand Prior General may inflict on Knights and Dames are, according to the severity of the offense, the following:

1. Censure.
2. Suspension for an indefinite period.
3. Expulsion.

ARTICLE 34

None of the said penalties may be applied without the accused being given an opportunity to justify him/herself within 15 days. He/she must submit his/her response, in writing, within 15 days to their respective Prior. As necessary the appeal may go up the administrative chain to the Grand Prior General. Any decision made by the Order's leadership must be made within a timely manner (15-30 days) and *will be binding without right to an explanation or further appeal.*

ARTICLE 35

Knights and Dames may separate themselves from the Order by their own expressed and communicated volition. Having once communicated the desire to be separated from the active rolls of the Order a Knight or Dame can only rejoin the active rolls of the Order by resubmitting a petition for application and undergoing a complete application process. Any dues in arrears for the time they have been off the active rolls must be made current as part of the readmission process.

ARTICLE 36

The official uniform of the Order for Knights consists of a white mess dress jacket and black pants with a gold stripe. At or above the 45th parallel of latitude between 30 September and 30 May a black mess dress jacket may be substituted for the official white mess dress jacket uniform of the Order. Devices denoting the Knight's rank shall be worn at all occasions. Miniature medal devices shall be worn on the left lapel of the mess jacket. The official manner of dress for Dames of the Order of Saint Helen shall be a long evening gown of any color. Devices denoting the Dame's rank shall be worn at all occasions. Miniature medal devices for Dames shall be worn on the upper left portion of the dress. A chapel cape or mantle will be worn by girls and women at all official functions conducted in a chapel, church or cathedral. Nobility or royalty in some countries may wear, at official functions, some variation of the Constantinian official uniform. Examples are the kilts of the nobility of Greece and Scotland. The Grand Prior General may, at his discretion, grant a knight/dame permission to wear the official uniform of the nobility of their home country.

ARTICLE 37

The official decorations and accouterments of rank are as follows:

1. The Grand Prior General and Governor shall wear the Grand Collar of the Order as well as a four-inch wide purple sash with embroidered gold edges denoting their rank and position.
2. All Royal members of the Order of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen shall wear a four-inch wide purple sash.
3. All members who have attained the rank of Knight Grand Cross in the Order of Constantine the Great shall wear a four-inch wide red sash draped from right shoulder to left hip as well as an all gold Constantinian breast badge to denote the rank of Knight Grand Cross.
4. All principal officers such as the Grand Chancellor, members of the International Council, and members of the Special Staff Council who have attained the rank of Knight Grand Cross shall wear a four-inch wide red sash denoting their position.
5. All members who have attained the rank of Knight Commander in the Order of Constantine the Great shall wear the Constantinian neck decoration and a silver Constantinian breast badge to denote their rank. There shall be a special designation of Working Knight Commander. Working Knight Commanders shall be allowed to wear a four-inch wide red and white sash to denote their position.
6. Members who are designated Knights in the Order of Constantine the Great shall wear the Constantinian neck decoration without a breast badge.
7. Members who are designated Squires in the Order of Constantine the Great shall wear the gold Constantinian Medallion on a gold chain and a full-sized Constantinian medal on the left side of the suit coat, tuxedo, or the Constantinian official uniform.
8. Ladies who have attained the rank of Dame Grand Cross in the Order of Saint Helen shall wear a four-inch wide light blue sash from right shoulder to left hip as well as the star of Saint Helen below the left breast.
9. Ladies who have attained the rank of Dame Commander in the Order of Saint Helen shall wear a one-inch wide light blue neck ribbon with the small Hellenic Medal attached.
10. Ladies who are designated Dames in the Order of Saint Helen shall wear any one-inch wide white neck ribbon with a small Hellenic Medal attached.
11. Ladies who are designated as Ladies-in-Waiting in the Order of Saint Helen shall wear the gold Hellenic Medallion with the key of Saint Helen on a gold chain and the miniature Hellenic Medal from a one-inch wide white ribbon on the upper left portion of their dress.

ARTICLE 38

THE OATH

I (state your name) upon my word of honor, before the standards of the Orders and the blade of the sword of His Grace, The Grand Prior General of the Orders of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen.

I hereby affirm to abide by loyalty, honor and by all those ideals that are alive and true and which inspire the spirit of Chivalry, with a free hearth that I shall allways respect, protect and defend the Grand Prior General, the Officers and the Constitution of the Orders.

With this spirit, I accept this signet which is a symbol of dignity, but most of all an honor that I pledge in humility and solidarty. May God be my help that I will fulfill all these things with diligence.

ARTICLE 39

The present Constitution for the government and administration of the Order of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen supersedes all previous Constitutions and enters into effect this 23rd day of April 2008 and revised on October 27, 2010.

His Grace Michael Schmickrath KGCI
Grand Prior General
Order of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen

His Excellency John M. Wilson, Jr. KGCI
Grand Chancellor
Order of Constantine the Great and of Saint Helen