



NEWSLETTER OF THE ORDERS OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT AND OF SAINT HELEN

December 2012



Message from our Grand Prior General Volume 8, Issue 4

Warmest greetings to all

During the months since our last newsletter, the leadership of our Orders worldwide have been making progress on a variety of issues and activities.

As many of you are aware, in late October a delegation of our members from the United States along with a large group of our members from Finland and other European nations will meet in Rome, Italy. We will participate in ceremonies commemorating the 1700th anniversary of Emperor Constantine's epic victory over the Roman pagans – an event that changed the world for all time.

We are also planning formal Investitures in Northern and Southern California; an inaugural event in the Virginia/Washington, D.C. area and our second annual gala in our beautiful State of Hawaii. In addition, in February we will participate in the always spectacular Investiture in Helsinki, Finland. We also have several special events being organized by the Order of Saint Helen. As plans are made firm, we shall announce them on the website and via upcoming editions of this newsletter. We encourage each of you to help us grow the Order and our ability to better serve those in need by asking friends and colleagues to join us in this "knightly renaissance."

Two weeks ago several of our members from California, Oregon and Virginia "headed for the hills" to attend a delightful Investiture weekend in the remote California mountain community of Idyllwild, which culminated in signing an "Alliance & Fraternal Agreement" with our fellow officers, knights, dames and members of the **Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem**. This 14,000 member Order is one of the most respected in the world. In the future, we plan to hold several joint-events with this outstanding organization each year.

The Supreme Grand Council met recently and I am pleased to announce a new level of membership in our Order – that of "**Member.**" This will be the introductory grade or rank -- at a reduced passage fee -- that new postulants may choose. Members will be formally accepted into the Order and will receive a full-size and miniature medal and certificate at an appropriate Investiture. At a future date they may apply for investiture as a knight or dame.



KNIGHTS AND DAMES COMMEMORATE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE'S BATTLE ON MILVIAN BRIDGE

Rome, Italy -- On the 1700th anniversary of Emperor Constantine the Great's epic victory over the overwhelming number of Roman pagan Emperor Maxentius' troops, members of our Order participated in the ceremonies of commemoration of that great battle in the year 312 AD.

Led by our Grand Prior General, the Grand Prior of Finland and the Baltic States, Count de Pierrefont; Grand Prior of the United States, and Grand Dame, our official party numbered 34.

More than 20 members and officials of our Grand Priory of Finland participated, and – in fact – were primarily responsible for the detailed planning that took us to visit the many historic sites of Rome where Emperor Constantine worked, battled and led the world into Christianity.

Rome and environs were at their absolute best in the bright and sunny Fall weather, as we traveled from historic site after site, following in the footsteps of the emperor. We enjoyed two long and relaxing Italian banquets, interspersed with daily visits to our favorite bakeries and gelato parlors!



Christmas Celebration – PNW Style

Submitted by H.E. John Quiroz

The Pacific Northwest Priory gathered Toys for Tots for the 2nd Annual Share the Love Event. The Marine who joined for dinner and to retrieve the toys was surprised and amazed at the generosity of our members.



One of the great highlights of the visit was a private guided tour of the famed Sistine Chapel at the Vatican. There we had our photos taken in front of the massive mural of Emperor Constantine in the heat of battle as he and his knights defeated the pagan Roman Emperor Maxentius on 28 October 312.



Another exciting highlight was our trek to witness the recreation of the battle of Milvian Bridge. Large groups of enthusiastic reenactors, in full uniform and gear, battled one-another to the cheers of thousands of spectators.



Queen Mary Investiture Long Beach, CA

The Annual Investiture of the Order in Southern California was held on the Queen Mary in Long Beach December 15, 2012. The event was well attended by Knights, Ladies and guests.



The procession began with flags and banners carried by the local cadets. The flag of our nation started it off, followed by the ancient instruments of knighthood, the spurs and the sword. The flag of Constantine the Great came next representing our companion Order, St Helen. Rounding out the procession were the Byzantine flag



This year's celebration included investing 3 Knights, 3 Dames, and awarding the Knight Grand Cross to 2 well deserving gentlemen. The Order presented special jade crystal awards to the evening's Emcee, who



Our Grand Prior General had an opportunity to meet with "Emperor Constantine" and present him with a coin of our Order.



The extended visit to Rome enabled us to hold an International Grand Council meeting on the rooftop terrace of the Finnish delegation's hotel, where we held discussions on the continuing growth of our ancient Order and made plans for continuing International visits to further strengthen our common bonds.

Our next overseas trip for the Order will be in early February to participate in the Investiture of new knights and dames in Helsinki, Finland.



Saint Helen's Activities

Saint Helen, Mother of Constantine the Great, and founder of the one True Cross was many things to many people. She cared for the sick and infirm, she fed and clothed the homeless, and she nurtured and taught children of all ages. Did you know Helena was solely responsible for the large population of cats in Cyprus? Local tradition holds that she imported hundreds of cats from Egypt or Palestine in the fourth century AD to rid a monastery of snakes.

We have been working toward a celebration of Saint Helen on her name day, August 18, with activities worldwide, and every year we get just a little bit closer to worldwide activities. This year, we have work scheduled at a food bank, children's hospital, homeless shelter and animal shelter, just to name a few events in the states. The activity can be as simple as a car wash, or walk-a-thon or something as elaborate as a pageant or Flash Mob. The idea is to plan an event, participate in an activity which relates to St Helen's life.

Have you given any thought to your participation in the International St Helen's event being planned for 18 August worldwide? What type of event will you be attending or planning to celebrate Saint Helen's life? What activities will be going on where you are?



Messages from the Council

Annual Membership Dues

Your dues, along with those of the other members of the Order, is one way we are able to continue our humanitarian efforts in the states and worldwide. Every year your dues are payable on the 1st of January, and are considered late if not received by 30 June.

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Our Recognition and Awards Committee has presented preliminary designs for new awards for longevity, service and merit. When the artwork is completed and the medals struck we will feature these full-sized and miniature medals on the website and in the newsletter.

Constantine's Sister?

While visiting Rome we toured the Vatican museums. We took a private tour in which we saw paintings and artifacts belonging to Constantine the Great and Saint Helen.

Also on display in the Pio-Clementine Vatican Museum was the sarcophagus of Saint Helen and next to her was the sarcophagus of Constantine the Great's sister. There was some discussion at dinner that evening among the members of the Order. None of those in attendance were aware of any siblings, nor if Saint Helen bore any other children. We determined that research would begin upon our return to our respective countries.

According to Wiki, Helen had no other children; thus, Constantine had no siblings. However, Wikipedia states Constantine had 6 children. He had a son by his first wife, Minervina named Crispus, and 5 additional children; 3 sons and 2 daughters by wife Flavius. Thus, it was determined that the sarcophagus referred to as Constantine's sister, was actually that of his daughter, Saint Constantina (by wife Flavius). Puzzle solved.

