

# **Manual of the Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani**

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## **FORWARD**

The Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani (OSMTH) is an association registered under Swiss law. Its members are constituent organizations, called Grand Priories, which generally represent one country. The Order is not a secret organization and its members are not required to place the Order above any legal, religious or moral obligations which they may otherwise have. The Order is not a religious organization, but it is based upon ecumenical Christian principles. The Order is not an historical continuation of the Order of the Temple founded during the Crusades, but is an international Christian and humanitarian organization, founded in 1804, which is based on the ideals of chivalry maintained by the original Order. This manual provides an overview of the structure and traditions of the OSMTH. It is intended only as a guide and its contents are not binding on Grand Priories or individual members.

## PURPOSES OF THE ORDER

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The purposes of the Order, as defined in its Statutes, are:

- a. to provide an opportunity for the practice of ecumenical Christianity.
- b. to encourage and promote Christian humanitarian work and charity generally, but especially in support of people in the Middle East.
- c. to encourage all that makes for the spiritual and moral strengthening of mankind in accordance with the first great principle of the Order embodied in the motto.  
"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory"
- d. to support the precepts of Christian Chivalry.
- e. to investigate and emulate the historical ideals of the ancient Order.
- f. to form and administer establishments, councils, associations, centers or other subordinate bodies to facilitate the work of the Order in all geographical areas.
- g. to maintain contact and develop collaboration with kindred Orders and bodies.
- h. to establish and maintain libraries and museums, and to collect works of art and objects of historical interest to the Order.

**THE KNIGHTHOOD OF THE TEMPLE** (From a letter of ST. BERNARD, Liber ad milites Templi: De laude novae militiae, circa 1130).

"TO HUGH, KNIGHT OF CHRIST AND MASTER OF CHRIST'S MILITIA. BERNARD, IN NAME ONLY, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUS, WISHES THAT HE MIGHT FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT.

### ON THE LIFE STYLE OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE.

And now as a model ... we will briefly set forth the life and virtues of these cavaliers of Christ. Let us see how they conduct themselves at home as well as in battle, how they appear in public, and in what way the knight of God differs from the knight of the world.

In the first place, discipline is in no way lacking and obedience is never despised. As scripture testifies, the undisciplined son shall perish .... Therefore they come and go at the bidding of their superior. They wear what he gives them, ... Thus they shun every excess in clothing and food and content themselves with what is necessary. They live as brothers in joyful and sober company, ... the dwell united in one family ... careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. You may say that the whole multitude has but one heart and one soul ....

They never sit in idleness or wander about aimlessly, but on the rare occasions when they are not on duty, they are always careful to earn their bread by repairing their worn armor and torn clothing, or simply by setting things to order. For the rest, they are guided by the common needs and by the orders of their master.

There is no distinction of persons among them, and deference is shown to merit rather than to noble blood. They rival one another in mutual consideration, and they carry one another's burdens, thus fulfilling the law of Christ. No inappropriate word, idle deed, unrestrained laugh, not even the slightest whisper or murmur is left uncorrected once it has been detected. They forswear dice and chess, and abhor the chase ... they despise ... vanities and unsound deceptions.

When the battle is at hand, they arm themselves interiorly with faith and exteriorly with steel rather than decorate themselves with gold, since their business is to strike fear in the enemy rather than to incite his cupidity ... they set their minds on fighting to win rather than parading for show. They think

not of glory and seek to be formidable rather than flamboyant. At the same time, they are not quarrelsome, rash or unduly hasty, but soberly, prudently and providently drawn up into orderly ranks, as we read of the fathers. Indeed the Israelite is a man of peace, even when he goes forth to battle.

...Thus in a wondrous and unique manner they appear gentler than lambs, yet fiercer than lions. I do not know if it would be more appropriate to refer to them as monks or soldiers, unless it would be better to recognize them as being both. Indeed they lack neither monastic meekness nor military might. What can we say of this, except that this has been done by the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes. These are the picked troops of God, whom he has recruited from the ends of the earth: the valiant men of Israel chosen to guard well and faithfully that tomb which is the bed of the true Solomon, each man sword in hand, and superbly trained to war.”

## **MEMBERSHIP**

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Membership in the Order is open to Christian men and women who support the purposes of the Order. The criteria for membership in the Order emphasizes quality of members and not quantity, with character of the individual as the important consideration. The Order seeks to invest those who deport themselves in a chivalrous manner and are ecumenical in thought. As is stated in the Primitive Rule of the Temple (retrais 12), if one wants to join the Order, “do not consent to receive him immediately, for thus said my lord St. Paul: *Probate spiritus si ex Deo sunt*. That is to say: Test the soul to see if it comes from God.”

A member may belong to one or more Grand Priories but may only be counted once in the Grand Priory of their selection for purposes of determining the vote of the Grand Priory on the Grand Magistral Council

### **GRADES, INSIGNIA AND POSTNOMINALS**

1. Knight / Dame (KTJ/DTJ): A red cross suspended below a gold crown on a black ribbon (Croix surmontee d'une couronne et cravate noire, ordonnance en bronze dore).
2. Knight / Dame Commander (KCTJ/DCTJ): A red cross suspended below a gold crown suspended below a shield on a black ribbon (Croix surmontee d'une couronne et d'une trophée et cravate noire, ordonnance en bronze dore).
3. Grand Officer and Grand Cross (GOTJ/GCTJ): A red cross suspended below a gold crown suspended below a shield on a black ribbon (Croix surmontee d'une couronne et un trophée avec cravate noire, ordonnance en bronze dore).

A Grand Officer also wears a star or sunburst, which is the red cross mounted on a silver sunburst (Plaque, bronze argente).

A Grand Croix also wears a cordon sash (over right shoulder) from which the cross and crown are suspended (Grand Cordon noire, avec croix surmontee d'une couronne, ordonnance en bronze dore).

### **FORMS OF ADDRESS**

Membership in the OSMTH conveys no social titles and members of the Order identify each other within the Order without titles of honor. Thus all members, regardless of rank or office within the Order are addressed on envelopes simply by name. In direct address, both in writing and in person, members of the Order are addressed as FR. or brother and SR. or sister. The salutation “Chevalier” is also appropriate. The Complimentary close of correspondence may end with “Fraternally yours”. If the writer

is a present or former Prior he may add the Patriarch's Cross to the left of his signature. The Grand Prior may use the same Cross but with one added bar. Grand Magistral Officers of the Order may use the triple barred cross as a symbol of the Magisterium. By custom this right survives the individual's term of office as a mark of distinction.

## MEETINGS

### ORDER OF CONVENT

- I Opening Prayer
- II Installation and Investiture
  - A. The Oath
  - B. The Accolade
- III Closing Prayer

CONVENT The Order is not secret and its ceremonies may be conducted in the presence of guests. In the tradition of the original Order, all meetings are opened and closed with prayer. While the business of the Order is not secret, the discussions and debates which precede a decision are not discussed outside of the Chapter meeting, i.e. only the decision of the whole should be disclosed and no mention should be made of any dissenting position within a meeting. The following recommended procedures are presented.

- I OPENING PRAYER(Psalm 115, verses 1-11) (All respond with even verses)
  - 1. Not unto us, O Lord, Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.
  - 2. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where now *is* their God?
  - 3. But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.
  - 4. Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
  - 5. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not;
  - 6. They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they but they smell not::
  - 7. They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat;
  - 8. They that make them are like unto them; so *is* every one that trusteth in them.
  - 9. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he *is* their help and their shield:
  - 10. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he *is* their help and their shield:
  - 11. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he *is* their help and their shield..

### II INSTALLATION AND INVESTITURE

Conferring knighthood developed during the middle ages into a complex ceremony, much different than the beginning when only the accolade, a tap on the shoulder with a sword, was enough. Customarily, the ceremony began the previous evening when the candidate was shaved and taken to a special chamber where a bath was prepared with scented water and a covering of rich cloth. While he bathed, two old knights talked to him solemnly about the duties of knighthood. Later he was led to the chapel, where he stood throughout the night, keeping watch over his armor and saying prayers and meditating. At daybreak, he bathed again, confessed, heard mass, and offered a taper with a piece of money stuck in the white tallow. With his future squire before him carrying the sword and his spurs, he made his way to the great hall where he knelt on one knee and was given the accolade. The most important part of the ceremony was the pledge to relieve and protect widows, the fatherless, the oppressed and miserable, to defend the church of God, and to propagate and defend the Christian faith and to repel the violence and cruelties of the pagans and war.

Originally, only knighted nobles could become members of the Order. The ceremony for admission developed a ritual of its own, as described in the Rule of the Templars.

### **Reception into the Order** (Adapted from the Rule of the Templars, Retraais 657-686)

The applicant applies to become a member of the Order. After receipt of the application, and after general agreement that the applicant is worthy for admission, at a Convent held for the purpose of Investiture, the Prior states:

PRIOR: 'Good lord brothers, you see well that the majority is agreed to make this one a brother: if there is any among you who knows in him anything for which he should not be a brother directly, he should tell it,; for it would be a better thing for him to say it beforehand, than after he has come before us.'

Then the applicant is put into a chamber near the convent and two or three elders of the Order present go to the applicant to explain the procedure for investiture, saying 'brother, do you request the company of the Order?', to which if he replies in the affirmative, they explain the objects and purposes of the Order. They inquire as to whether he has any disability for membership, and if he replies 'no', the elders return to the Convent saying 'Sire, we have spoken to this worthy man who is outside and have indicated to him the obligations of the Order as we were able. And he says that he wishes to be a servant of the Order, and of all those things which would prevent him from being admitted he is quit and free, if it please God and you and the brothers.'

PRIOR: 'If there is anyone who knows anything else, he should tell it, for it would be better now than later. . . . Do you wish him to be brought on behalf of God?'

And the elders reply 'Bring him on behalf of God' and they return to the applicant and ask again 'Are you still willing?', and if he says 'yes', they instruct him as to the proceeding of investiture. That is that he should come into the convent, and should kneel before the Prior, hands joined, and should say 'Sire, I am come before God and before you and before the brothers, and ask and request you for love of God and Our Lady, to welcome me into your company and the favors of the Order, as one who wished to be a servant of the Order forever.'

PRIOR: 'Good brother, you ask a very great thing, for of our Order you see only the outer appearance. For the appearance is that you see us having fine clothing and good food and drink, and thus it seems to you that you would be well at ease. But you do not know the harsh commandments which lie beneath: our mission is to do battle for Christ wherever there is need or call, and to be a servant to Christ and to the Order for this purpose. Now decide, good gentle brother, if you could tolerate these hardships.'

And if he says 'Yes, I will tolerate them all if God pleases,' the Prior shall say:

PRIOR: 'Good brother, you should not request the company of the Order in order to have domains or riches, nor in order to have physical ease or honor. But you should request it for three reasons: one, to put aside and leave behind the sin of this world; the other, to do the work of Our Lord; the third is in order to be poor and do penance in this world, that is for the salvation of the soul; and such should be the thought by which you ask it. Do you wish to be, all the days of your life henceforth, a servant of the Order?'

And if he say "Yes, if it please God, sire," the Prior sends him once again into the chamber and says

PRIOR: 'Good brothers, you see that this worthy man has great desire of our company of the Order, and says that he wishes to be, all the days of his life henceforth, a servant of the Order, and I have said before if there is any among you who knows anything in him for which he should not be a brother directly, he should tell it, for after he is a brother he will not be believed in anything.'

And one more the applicant is brought before the convent.

PRIOR: 'Have you considered well, good brother, that you wish to be a servant of the Order?

And if he says 'Sire, yes, if it please God.'

PRIOR: 'Good brothers, rise and pray to Our Lord and Lady St. Mary that he does it well. Good brother, the worthy men who have spoken to you have asked you much, but whatever you have said to them and to us, are all in vain and idle words, and neither you nor we could suffer great harm from anything you have said. But see the holy words of Our Lord, and of the things which we ask you, you will tell us the truth, for is you lie you will be perjured and may be expelled from the Order, from which God keep you.

Now, good brother, now hear well what we will say to you, do you promise to God and Our Lady that henceforth all the days of your life you will be a servant of the Order? Do you also promise to God and Our Lady St. Mary that henceforth all the days of your life you will help to conquer with the strength and power that God has given you, the Holy kingdom of Christ, and that which Christians hold you will help to keep and save within your power? Do you also promise to God and the Lady St. Mary that you will never leave the Order for stronger or weaker, nor for worse or better? If, yes, swear or affirm the Oath of the Order.'

**A. The Oath:**

"I will uphold the chivalrous tradition and Christian ideals of the Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani and of the Grand Priory of \_\_\_\_\_; I will do my best to provide a voice to the oppressed, strength to the weak and afflicted, and largesse to the poor; I will bear only true witness to my brothers and sisters in Christ and will serve them and the Order to the best of my abilities, so help me God."

Whereupon, the Prior says, touching the applicant with the sword:

**B. The Accolade** (adapted from Rule of the Templars, Retrais 677):

We, on behalf of God and Our Lady St. Mary, and on behalf of My Lord St. Peter of Rome, and on behalf of and in the name of the Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost, and of all brothers and sisters of the Temple, welcome you to all the favors of the Order which have been done since the beginning and which will be done up to the end, and you and all those whom you wish to welcome of your lineage. And you also welcome us to all the favors which you have done and will do. And so we promise to you only the bread and water and poor clothing of the House.

Therefore, as Prior of the Priory of \_\_\_\_\_, of the ORDO SUPREMUS MILITARIS TEMPLI HIEROSOLYMITANI, by virtue of the authority vested in me, by and in the name of, the Grand Magisterium, I accept you as a brother/sister of the Temple.

- (a) SUS VEL FOIS CHEVALIER (DAME) AU NOM DU PERE, DU FILS ET DU SAINT ESPRIT  
or
- (b) SIS EQUES IN NOMINE DEI, PATRIS FILII ET SPIRITUI SANCTI, FOS POTLEA ADDIT,  
SURGE EQUES /EQUITESSA.

**III CLOSING PRAYER** (Psalm 133) (All respond with even verses)

1. Behold how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!
2. *It is* like the precious ointment from the head that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;
3. As the dew of the Her'mon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

## CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

### **THE CROSS OF THE ORDER**

The Cross of the Order is the red cross patee which was given to the Order by Pope Eugenius III in 1146.

### **THE CAPE**

The cape should be worn by all members in convent. The cape is white with a large red cross of the Order attached to the left side. All capes should be made to achieve a uniformity of design as no distinctions of rank are intended to be reflected in the capes.

### **FLAGS OF THE ORDER**

The flags of the Order are the Banner and the Beauceant or Battle Flag. The Banner is described as a white flag fringed in gold with the cross patee in the center, and the beauceant as a banner, top black and bottom white, or alternating black and white checks, either with the cross patee in the center.

### **WEARING OF INSIGNIA**

#### **A. AT FUNCTIONS OF THE ORDER**

1. Informal - A rosette, the undress insignia, is worn in the lapel of the coat when a tie is worn. With a dark blazer a pocket patch may also be worn.

2. Formal Evening Dress - Dinner Jacket, Dinner Coat, or Black Tie.

The neck insignia is worn under the collar with the medal just below the bow tie. The miniature mounted on a bar may also be worn. A Grand Officer may wear the plaque, but only one. Grand Cross do not wear the cordon sash. Only one neck ribbon insignia should be worn. The rosette is never worn with the neck ribbon or when miniatures are worn.

3. Full Evening Dress, White Tie, and Tails

The neck insignia is worn either under or over the tie with the medal just below the bow tie. The miniature on a bar should be worn. No more than four plaques should be worn. Grand Cross will wear the cordon over the waistcoat and under the coat. If the cordon sash is worn the plaque must be worn. No more than two neck ribbon insignia should be worn. The rosette again is never worn with the neck ribbon nor is it appropriate to wear a rosette with Full Dress.

#### **B. AT OTHER FUNCTIONS**

1. Informal - same as above.

2. Formal - Dinner Jacket, Black Tie. Unless the invitations states "decorations" or the like wear a rosette only. When decorations are in order most members will not wear the neck ribbon of the Order, but the miniature, in which case the rosette would not be worn. A Grand Officer may wear the star sunburst provided a miniature is also worn, as may the Grand Cross, but Grand Cross do not wear the sash.

3. Full Dress - White Tie and Tails.

It is generally considered inappropriate to wear a rosette with full dress. Therefore if the invitation omits "decorations" or the like wear none. Both large and miniature insignia are appropriate, but miniatures are more often worn. Most members will not wear the neck ribbon of the Order, however, so that they may save room to wear that of whose function they are attending. Grand Officer and Grand Cross may wear the star sunburst and Grand Cross may wear the cordon sash. If the cordon sash is worn the plaque must also be worn. Miniatures should in this case also be worn.

4. Miniatures should never be combined and worn with regular full size decorations, except when full size are worn around the neck.

**Adopted by the Grand Magistral Council in Buedingen, Germany, 7 November 2003**