



OSMTH

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

**Non Governmental Organization in Special Consultative Status
with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Member of the International Peace Bureau**

OVERVIEW OF THE ORDER'S PURPOSE & ACTIVITIES

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Origins

OSMTH (Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem) is a successor organization to the nineteenth century Order of the Temple. This Order was established in Paris in 1804 under the patronage of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

Like its nineteenth century predecessor, OSMTH takes inspiration from the traditions and highest ideals of the medieval Christian military and monastic order, the Knights Templar, who were founded by Hugh de Payens around 1118, to protect and support pilgrims, and dissolved by Pope Clement V in 1312.

OSMTH does not, however, claim any direct organizational descent from the medieval Templars; nor is OSMTH part of Freemasonry.

OSMTH was restructured in its present form pursuant to a decision adopted by its Member Grand Priorities in 1995 at a meeting in Salzburg. Today, OSMTH is an international, chivalric, confraternal and inter-denominational/ecumenical Christian Order.

Current International Status

OSMTH operates as a non-political and not-for-profit NGO (non-governmental organization) registered in Geneva, Switzerland, under Swiss Federal Registry number CH-660.197299-4.

Since 2002, OSMTH holds accreditation as a Non Governmental Organization in Special Consultative Status (Number: 19885) with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Accordingly, OSMTH maintains permanent missions accredited to the UN offices in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

The Order is an active partner, and since 2014 a Board Member, of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO).

OSMTH is a member of the International Peace Bureau, through which OSMTH can serve as a nominating body to the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. OSMTH also supports the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), founded by one of our members. The ICRD analyzes the impact of religion on conflicts, and identifies opportunities for religion to play a part in conflict transformation, diplomacy and peace-making.

Purpose

The purposes of OSMTH, as set out 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 admit associations as Members and to form and to 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.

The overall vision and mission of today's OSMTH are set out in the 2007 Brussels Declaration

In a spirit of Christian compassion, OSMTH directs its humanitarian work towards all peoples afflicted by poverty, injustice, conflict and disaster, regardless of their creed or ethnic background. The Order seeks to combat greed, selfishness, intolerance, injustice and cruelty, which are the ageless enemies of both Christianity and other great faiths.

Approach

As an inter-denominational/ecumenical Christian Order, OSMTH is composed of men and women of faith and good will. The Order aspires to a cosmopolitan society in which the differences in the many strands of humankind are respected and valued.

OSMTH is not a church, nor an esoteric society, and does not undertake missionary work. We are not "modern day Crusaders"; and OSMTH strictly rejects those individuals and organizations which use Templar symbols and heritage to promote extreme views and actions.

The word, not the sword, is the weapon of modern Templars in OSMTH. We express, defend and spread our values with spoken and written words, as well as through our behavior and our voluntary work.

The Order undertakes work, both locally and nationally, in the fields of charity, volunteering and humanitarian relief, through its national Member Grand Priors.

OSMTH undertakes international advocacy, diplomacy and bridge-building, through three key networks, namely:

- OSMTH international Officeholders;
- OSMTH international Chaplains and Legates; and
- OSMTH individual members, who are able to provide professional and vocational skills, knowledge and experience

Current Policies

The current international policies of the Order are:

- To support "Christians at Risk" in the Middle East, by aiding the Christian diaspora and other threatened faith groups, which find themselves in hostile environments, and by building bridges of understanding and mutual support between Eastern and Western Churches.
- To encourage and facilitate dialogue among religious leaders, particularly those of the great Abrahamic faiths, in conflict zones; and to promote their participation in conflict resolution.
- To support religious and educational institutions, which seek to sustain a diverse Christian presence in the Holy Land.
- To promote the preservation and restoration of historic buildings, particularly those associated with sites of Christian pilgrimage.
- To advocate, through United Nations' and other civil society forums, for human rights, with an emphasis on:
 - the status of women,
 - religious freedom,
 - peace-building, and
 - the provision of clean water, at an affordable price, for all.

Values

The Order's individual members are men and women of faith who accept a Modern Rule of Christian Life, the "Regula Moderna", which has been inspired by the precepts of St Bernard of Clairvaux, the great Cistercian churchman and spiritual father of the medieval Templars.

The Order's individual members also follow a modern Code of Chivalry, which is centered on ethical ideals of the highest standards.

In accordance with the modern Rule of Christian Life and the Code of Chivalry, individual members of the Order are expected to practice and demonstrate:

- honesty and integrity;

- civility, consideration and respect for all;
- courage, self-control and commitment;
- faith in the dignity of Man and in the holiness of his Creator; and
- trust in the Grace of God to sustain people of good will.

These are challenging values and expectations for individual members to live up to, but ideals can help people of good will to find meaning in their lives; and individual members can look to their sisters and brothers in the Order for fellowship and mutual support.

Activities

Every OSMTH entity is expected to pursue activities within the framework of the Order's underlying purpose and its current international policies.

At the international level, OSMTH maintains a modern and informative website (www.osmth.org) which provides information on the Order for members and non-members alike. Examples of our international advocacy and bridge-building work include:

- Assistance to religious leaders to reach conflict zones in order to start mediation efforts or witnessing programmes.
- Action taken under OSMTH auspices to prevent human rights abuses in conflict zones.
- Facilitation of, and participation in, inter-faith conferences to address issues of refugees and inter-community solidarity in the Middle East.

At national level, all Grand Pories, Pories, Commanderies and Preceptories engage in charitable activities according to their capacity and capabilities. Examples of typical local and national charitable efforts include:

- The support of youth groups to prevent criminalization of inner city children.
- Projects, such as peace education lectures highlighting the work of the United Nations.
- Donations to local programmes to alleviate homelessness.

Where they share common interests, Member Grand Pories may choose to collaborate in international charitable projects. Examples of such cooperative efforts include:

- Provision of grants for young and disabled people to undertake pilgrimages to major Christian shrines.
- Support of schools, hospitals, churches, pilgrims' hostels and other institutions of public interest in the Middle East, frequently through established channels of the Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran or Anglican Churches.
- Development of innovative engineering solutions to the provision of clean drinking water in under-developed countries or after natural disasters.

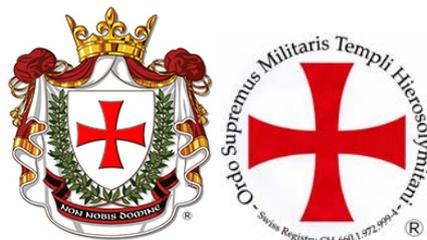
Involvement of Individual Members

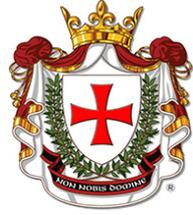
The Order does not underestimate the power of the individual. In practical terms, the Order expects individual members to demonstrate a substantive and sustained commitment to voluntary service; and also to support the Order's activities, according to their talents and financial means.

There are many ways in which members can serve the Order creatively. Personal initiatives, within the overall framework of the Order's vision, mission, and values, are encouraged and supported. In fact, they are an abiding characteristic of the Templar spirit. Many individual members choose to undertake acts of local charity and philanthropy quietly and without fanfare, in the spirit of the Order's motto: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

The Order is not elitist; nor is an aristocratic title a requirement for membership. OSMTH draws its individual membership from a wide spectrum of human society, ranging from care-workers to bishops, from nobles to home-makers, from police officers to university professors, from engineers to generals and admirals, from laboratory technicians to artists. What all members of the Order have in common, as decent and law-abiding citizens of their various countries, is a dedication to serve their fellow men and women and a belief in the ideals and values of the Order.

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HOW OSMTH FUNCTIONS INTERNATIONALLY AS AN ORDER

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Guiding Principles

OSMTH follows three key guiding principles, which are as follows:

- The Order is international in its outlook.
- The Order is democratic in its functioning.
- The Order is inter-denominational/ecumenical Christian in its membership.

Official Name

The correct full name of the Order, as registered in Geneva, is: Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani / Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem; abbreviated to "OSMTH".

Official Symbols

The symbol of the Order is the red cross pattée on white background, echoing the cross of the medieval Knights Templar.

OSMTH Member Grand Priorities, at the national level, may also use the other traditional shapes of crosses associated with Templar heritage.

OSMTH strictly rejects those other organizations and individuals which use Templar symbols and heritage to promote extreme views and actions.

The OSMTH Roundel and the OSMTH Coat of Arms are copyright symbols, which may only be used by the Magisterium, Grand Magistral Council and/or Member Grand Pories of OSMTH in accordance with the Statutes, Rules & Regulations and the Member Grand Priory License Agreements of OSMTH.

Member Grand Pories (National Associations)

As an international organization, OSMTH is legally structured as an 'association of associations', composed of those national Member Grand Pories which have been recognized and admitted by the Grand Magistral Council.

Each Member Grand Priory is made up of local Pories or, for smaller groups, Commanderies or Preceptories. There is only one national Member Grand Priory for a country. Exception is made for just one supranational body, the Grand Priory of NATO, which groups together individual members of the Order who are Reserve Officers of NATO countries, and is therefore not bound geographically.

For those countries which do not yet have a recognized Member Grand Priory, the Deputy Grand Commander appoints an existing Grand Priory to act as "mentor", on the basis that such a "mentor" is willing and able to fulfill the role and has relevant historical, geographical, and/or cultural links with the country concerned. The role of the "mentor" Grand Priory is to assist the development of the national entity and bring it progressively to the status of a recognised Grand Priory.

The Member Grand Pories of OSMTH are self-governing entities, operating autonomously as national associations under the laws of their respective countries, and setting their own domestic policies and programmes. Grand Priors, as well as Priors and Commanders at the local level, are elected by their national memberships.

As at November 2016 there are 21 recognised national Member Grand Pories in OSMTH: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Republic of Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Republic of Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America; and one specific, supranational Member association, the NATO Grand Priory.

International Governing Council

OSMTH is governed by the Grand Magistral Council (GMC), which is chaired by the Grand Commander, and on which each Member Grand Priory is represented by its Grand Prior or his/her officially nominated Proxy. The "one country, one vote" system has been implemented to ensure that all Grand Pories have an equal vote, whatever the sizes of their individual memberships may be.

The Grand Magistral Council is the legislative body of OSMTH and decides on the statutes, regulations, policies and programmes for the international operations and management of the Order.

The GMC meets twice a year, in spring and autumn/fall, hosted by a Member Grand Priory in a pre-designated country. The Priors and Commanders of "mentored" entities are welcomed to attend, and may be invited to speak, but do not have a vote on the GMC. The meetings are also open for individual members of the Order from Member Grand Priorities to observe.

The decisions taken by the Grand Magistral Council on international matters are valid for the whole of the Order, unless three Grand Priorities submit a veto.

International Committees

The Grand Magistral Council is supported by a number of international Committees, which currently include the following:

- Awards & Devices Committee
- Communications & Press Committee
- Financial Advisory Committee
- History & Archives Committee
- Organization (Governance) Committee
- Security Committee
- Venues Committee

The individual Chairs and Members of the Committees are recruited from among the Member Grand Priorities, appointed by the Grand Commander, and ratified by the Grand Magistral Council.

International General Assembly

Every two years, OSMTH holds a Grand Chapter General (GCG), which offers the opportunity for a wider assembly of individual members from the Member Grand Priorities to gather together. The Grand Chapter General receives reports from the senior international Officeholders of the Order, and the GCG may put forward matters for consideration by the Grand Magistral Council.

International Officeholders

The Grand Magistral Council elects four senior Officeholders to lead and manage the international work of the Order.

The **Grand Master**, elected for a single term of eight years, is the ceremonial head of OSMTH. The Grand Master also leads the international diplomatic work of the Order.

The **Grand Commander**, elected for a term of three years renewable once, is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of OSMTH. The Grand Commander chairs the Grand Magistral Council and also the Magisterium (International Executive) of OSMTH.

The **Deputy Grand Commander**, elected for a term of three years renewable once, deputizes for the Grand Commander, as and when necessary, and leads on the OSMTH "mentorship" programme.

The **Chancellor General**, elected for a term of three years renewable once, is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of OSMTH.

The Grand Magistral Council appoints two honorary Special Officeholders.

The **Religious Protector** is a senior church leader.

The **Royal Patron** maintains relations between the Order and various Royal and Noble Houses.

The Grand Commander appoints, for ratification by the Grand Magistral Council, other key international officeholders, including the OSMTH Delegates to the United Nations ECOSOC, and the Secretary General, the Treasurer General and the Chaplain General of OSMTH.

International Executive

The international administration of the Order, and the day-to-day management of international programmes of activity agreed by the Grand Magistral Council, are undertaken by the Magisterium (International Executive) of OSMTH. The Magisterium is chaired by the Grand Commander and also comprises the:

- Deputy Grand Commander
- Chancellor General
- Secretary General
- Treasurer General
- Advocate General (legal officer)

The Grand Master is an advisory member of the Magisterium.

Finances

The international administration and advocacy work of the Order is financed by the annual oblations (membership dues) of the Members Grand Pories.

Annual international budgets are approved by the Grand Magistral Council, and the Treasurer General provides annual financial reports to the GMC. The Grand Magistral Officeholders of OSMTH carry out their duties on an unpaid voluntary basis. The most senior Officeholders receive a limited contribution towards their travel expenses.

The charitable activities of the Order are carried on at national level through the Member Grand Pories, partly financed by the annual oblations of their individual members, and partly financed by additional personal donations from individual members, according to their financial means and their areas of interest. A number of Member Grand Pories also have associated charitable foundations, which carry out cultural and educational activities and/or provide humanitarian aid.

Individual Membership

Every individual member of the Order within OSMTH belongs to a Member Grand Priory or to one of its 'mentored' entities, as described above. An individual cannot be simply a "member of OSMTH".

Individual men and women, who meet the criteria for full membership of, and who are accepted by, the Member Grand Priory for their nation, join a local Priory, Commandery or Preceptory. If they distinguish themselves by their service and merit, then individual members may be promoted by the national Member Grand Priory to higher grades.

The Order has adopted forms of behavior and ceremonies based on the chivalric tradition, but grades and titles used within OSMTH do not carry any legal status or social precedence outside of the Order.

Grand Priories may also welcome men and women of good will, who wish to support the goals of the Order but who cannot become full individual members (for example, because of personal circumstances, or because they belong to another faith) as companions or associates. Such companions or associates may attend the Order's meetings and events, and support its work, but they cannot vote or hold office in the Order.

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