

Prior's Message



A. Marshall Acuff Jr.

Dear Confrères,

2013 was an eventful and successful year for the Priory in the USA. After an excellent market test, the St John Volunteer Corps (SJVC) was launched nationally in June, with all regions asked to participate. The SJVC's establishment was a landmark event for our Priory because now we have a service

delivery function similar to other Priories in the Order of St John. Importantly, the advent of the SJVC provides an opportunity for Confrères in the Priory to participate in some type of support for military veterans under the care of the Veterans Administration. Our hope is that all Confrères will become a part of this initiative. Our thanks go out to COL (Ret) D. Gray Heppner Jr., MD, and COL (Ret) Richard Southby, PhD, for inspiring the SJVC's creation and for their ongoing leadership.

Priory Members enjoyed a most successful Investiture Weekend in New York City. Attendance reached an all-time high, only to be surpassed by the enthusiasm and excitement of those who participated. The New York Committee and the Washington office deserve kudos for a job well done.

In 2013, the Priory sent gifts totaling \$862,655 to the Eye Hospital, a record amount for gifts without additional incremental monetary assistance from a US government agency (as was the case in 2012). Even better news is that we received word at the very end of 2013 of a USAID grant of nearly \$900,000. Clearly 2014 is off to a strong start in our Priory's support of the Eye Hospital.

During 2013, I appointed a Selection Committee, chaired by Chancellor Polly Coreth, to recommend my successor, who will take office on St John's Day, June 24, 2014. The Committee solicited nominations and diligently deliberated over the ones received. The Committee recommended

the nomination of Palmer C. Hamilton, CStJ, as our next Prior, and the Priory Chapter voted unanimously to accept his nomination, which was then forwarded to the Grand Prior for his review and action. I am very pleased to say that the Grand Prior has appointed Palmer Hamilton as the third Prior since our Priory was formally recognized in 1996. In my opinion, Palmer is superbly qualified to lead the Priory to new levels of success. As the Chair for the Gulf States Region, he has energetically and enthusiastically produced significant growth in the membership of the Order. As a Member of the Priory Chapter and Chair of the Government Relations Committee, he has also provided strong leadership in sending over \$3 million of government funds to the Eye Hospital. I am sure you will join me in wishing Palmer great success and providing the support he will need and appreciate to advance the Priory.

As my term of Prior ends I wish to thank all Confrères of our Priory for their loyal support. For me, it has been six years of watching the Priory grow in many ways. This growth, which has produced a stronger organization, has given me great pleasure, and I am happy to leave that legacy to my successor. Along the way, Chapter members have been most supportive. The Washington office — Ruth Ann Skaff, Cheryl Lueck, Sam Gearhart, Aga Simmons, and Melissa Corcoran — have worked tirelessly to support the Priory, and deserve a huge "shout-out" for their faithful pursuit of excellence.

While reluctant to single out individual Members, I nevertheless feel blessed to have had the pleasure to work with Chancellor Polly Coreth, who while caring for her now late husband Joe, carried on her responsibilities of overseeing the Washington office in a very professional and diligent manner. Karen Lamb and Jack Enoch have given the Priory constant support in their duties as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. We have all benefited from their expertise and wisdom.

Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Marshall Acuff Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

**A. Marshall Acuff Jr., KStJ
Prior**

Patients and Priory in the USA Contributions: The Numbers are Up

The great mission of the Priory in the USA is helping St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group help others in the Holy Land. If the numbers of patients treated is a monitor of success in accomplishing this goal, the 2013 statistics are gratifying — and very promising. In Jerusalem, Anabta, Hebron, the mobile clinics and Gaza, the Hospital Group treated a record number of 114,154 patients, and a third of these patients (37,157) were under the age of 18.

To make sure that those numbers continue to increase, in 2013 the Priory in the USA sent \$862,655 to St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group, more than any other Priory. Seven of the ten Priories contributed \$2,367,813. Through these funds, as well as through staff sponsorships, legacy gifts, and other contributions, the Priory will continue to serve our lords, the sick and the poor.