

OSMTH BUILDS A BRIDGE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

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A fall 2018 *Beauseant* article based on an address by **Patrick Rea, Grand Master Emeritus** of *Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani* (Latin for “The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, abbreviated as “OSMTH”), described how OSMTH typically attempts to “build bridges” to pursue its humanitarian missions:

“... [OSMTH] help[s] those in need by using quiet diplomacy, ‘back channels’ and personal relationships with players of all stripes: all faiths, governments, types of leaders, politics, agendas, etc. Such are the necessities of international advocacy. [Much of OSMTH’s work] is significant but unheralded... [I]t’s often a matter of ‘baby steps’ that might not warrant a major headline, but ‘baby steps’ in this arena are meaningful progress.

An Introduction to the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome

Recently, however, Patrick Rea received an invitation to take a “baby step” that has the potential to become a “giant leap.” **His All-Holiness (HAH) Bartholomew I**, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarch, requested an update on the organization and work of OSMTH. The request was made through Patrick Rea’s personal liaison to the Ecumenical Patriarch. It is indeed a great honor to have the Ecumenical Patriarch reach out to OSMTH for an update and to learn more about the “bridge building” efforts of OSMTH in the Holy Land. When informed of the interest of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Patrick Rea stated: “It is safe to say that no living Head of a Christian Church has greater world stature than Bartholomew I. His over 25 years as head of the 300+ million Orthodox Christians has been crowded with international achievements. His continued interest in our Order is humbling.”



HAH Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome

HAH Bartholomew I (born in northwestern Turkey as **Dimitrios Arhondonis**) is the 270th successor of the 2,000+ year-old Christian Church in Constantinople founded by the apostle, St. Andrew. To give you an idea of the preeminence of this patriarch, the term “Holiness” is the form of address reserved for supreme religious leaders: “Your Holiness” is the proper form of address for the Pope, the Dalai Lama and the patriarchs of the Orthodox churches.

The title “Ecumenical Patriarch” dates to the sixth century and historically belongs to the

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Patrick Rea, Grand Master Emeritus

Archbishop of Constantinople (now Istanbul). Serving as the primary spokesman for Orthodox Church unity as a whole, the Ecumenical Patriarch occupies the First Throne of the worldwide Orthodox Christian Church, presiding as “First Among Equals” of all Orthodox Primates. Apropos to the mission of OSMTH, His All-Holiness has co-sponsored international peace

conferences and theological conversations, as well as meetings on the subjects of racism and fundamentalism, bringing together Jews, Christians and Muslims for the purpose of generating greater cooperation and mutual understanding. He has been invited to address the European Parliament, UNESCO, the World Economic Forum, as well as numerous national parliaments, including the United States Congress, and he has organized eight international, inter-faith and inter-disciplinary *symposia*. Patriarch Bartholomew is spiritual leader to over 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide.

He has worked tirelessly for reconciliation among Christian Churches and championed reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion and other confessions, through theological dialogues, bilateral consultations, and personal encounters to address issues of common concern. The role of the Ecumenical Patriarch as the primary spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian world and transnational figure of global significance continues to prove increasingly vital.

With the renewed channel of communication between OSMTH and the Ecumenical Patriarch, it is hoped that opportunities arise for each to use their experience and good offices to further their mutual dedication to peace, foster mutual understanding among the three Abrahamic religions and continue the never ending job of building bridges. As long time international advocates, both OSMTH and the Ecumenical Patriarch know what it means to patiently take “baby steps,” using quiet diplomacy, “back channels” and personal relationships to accomplish humanitarian goals.

How well do you really know OSMTH?

You know the basics: OSMTH is the acronym for “*Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani*,” (Latin for “**The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem**”). You may also know that OSMTH is legally chartered in Switzerland as an association of associations, comprised of those national Member Grand Priorities that have been recognized and admitted by the Grand Magistral Council, including GPUSA and 20 other Grand Priorities. You may also know that OSMTH is a United Nations Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and a Member of the International Peace Bureau.



But did you know:¹

- OSMTH is the successor to the Order of the Temple, which was founded in 1804 by Fabr -Palaprat. Since 1932, it has carried the name *Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani* ("*Supremus*" is sometimes translated somewhat imprecisely as "sovereign").
- OSMTH:
 - Is a democratic organization governed by elected officers.
 - Has, as its primary missions, charitable activities and activities promoting peace education.
 - Does not offer spiritual teachings of any kind beyond mainstream Christian ecumenical ethics.
 - Does not claim direct descent from medieval Templars.
 - Does not claim sovereignty under international law (despite its historical name).

¹ The following information about OSMTH is excerpted from information provided by COL David N. Appleby, Grand Master IV, OSMTH, and George MacLean, International Grand Commander, OSMTH, and other sources for presentation to HAH Bartholomew.

- OSMTH consists of 21 Grand Priories (20 nations and NATO).
- Organizers in 31 other nations (in Asia, Africa, South America, Central America and Europe) are currently being mentored by OSMTH. With time, it is hoped that they may become full Grand Priories.
- OSMTH is an ecumenical Christian organization. OSMTH is established not only in countries where the major Christian denomination is descended from the Latin Church, but also from the wider Orthodox community, where Grand Priories represent senior Grand Priories under Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, Ukrainian, Russian confessions.
- OSMTH welcomes all Christian denominations into its Grand Priories and delights in having Latin Rite, Anglican, Protestant, Reformed, Free and Orthodox members across its international organizations.
- OSMTH-member Grand Priories support and visit leaders and schools and charities in the Holy Land operated by many different Christian denominations. Among the institutions and persons visited and supported are the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope in Beit Sahour; in Ramallah, West Bank the Episcopal Technical Vocational Training Center, the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope and the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School; the Evangelical Lutheran Bishop for Jordan and the Holy Land; the Russian Orthodox School for Girls in Bethany; the Coptic Patriarch and the Coptic Colleges of Jerusalem; and the Augusta Victoria Hospital, which has been run since 1950 by [The Lutheran World Federation](#).
- OSMTH supports the Martyred Coptic Church and counts many Copts within the Order.
- Each Grand Priory is autonomous and conducts charitable activities, peace building and Christian actions within its own country and also in the Holy Land.
- Each Grand Priory encourages its Knights and Dames to participate in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land sometime in their lifetime as part of each member's personal Christian journey.
- OSMTH considers Christians still living in the Holy Land as most "at risk." OSMTH seeks to support all Patriarchs and the *Custos* to remain in the Holy Land to succour the minority Christian presence there.
- OSMTH also supports the Ancient Churches of the East and particular Christian churches in all their forms, since they retain a direct link to a common Christian origin. To OSMTH it is critical that these churches know that their Christian brothers and sisters are doing their very best to support their activities, which are carried out often under extreme pressure and threat.
- OSMTH believes that education of Christians in the Holy Land is of great importance, and in addition to OSMTH funding educational programs, some Grand Priories place great importance in preparing the next generation of Christians with the best education possible. OSMTH and its Grand Priories fund schools directly or indirectly through various agencies on the ground and many members fund scholarships on behalf of students in need.
- In addition to financial and prayerful support for the Christian churches in the Holy Land, OSMTH is active in supporting its persecuted Christian brothers and sisters in Syria and Iraq with direct support to the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East, an organisation OSMTH has supported for many years.
- OSMTH believes the Christian voice must be heard in as many international bodies as possible. It is a rare honour for OSMTH to have Special Consultative Status at the United Nations. Its offices at the UN's missions in Geneva, Vienna and New York are staffed by unpaid OSMTH volunteers.



Fabre-Palaprat



The Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East supports Christian refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraqi Christian

- Because OSMTH is known for its skills in bridge building among those of goodwill who are also trying to make the world a better place, OSMTH has been called upon to support or Chair various UN NGO Committees, all with great success. Peace building and conflict resolution are cornerstones of OSMTH's national and international activities.
- OSMTH is an active member of the International Peace Bureau, one of the oldest international peace federations, founded in 1891.

OSMTH's Vision and Commitment is best summed up as follows:

- Christian Ethos, Spirituality and Chivalric Values.
- Domestic Charity and International Humanitarian Aid
- Human Rights and the respect for Human Diversity
- Interfaith Dialogue and Bridge-Building

OSMTH's *raison d'être* is expressed through the [Brussels Declaration](#):

“Aiding humanity on the pilgrimage through life.”

[Note: An excellent and more detailed Overview of the Purposes and Activities of OSMTH may be viewed by [clicking here](#).]

NON NOBIS DOMINE, NON NOBIS, SED NOMINI TUO DA GLORIAM

