



FOR THE FAITH AND  
IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY



**St John**

# Eyes on the Future

THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

PRIORY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRIOR

Executive Director Michele Blair, Sub-Prelate The Rt. Reverend Andy Doyle, and I have just returned from Grand Council in Canberra where we gathered with our St John colleagues from around the world.

Michele saw Roo's, Andy a wombat and me a koala, so we are now honorary Aussies. Seriously, it was a time of good debate and many discussions regarding this year's theme: sustainability of St John and the younger, future leadership. This was Andy's first Grand Council as our Sub-Prelate, and he was a great addition to our team. One of the great interchanges I had was with the CEO of St John Australia, Brendan Maher. I was surprised to learn that they have sold 135,000 St John defibrillators, generating AU\$10m!

I met with the Lord Prior Professor Mark Compton and Chancellor Tom Budd to discuss the evolving membership criteria for our Priory. I am pleased to report that, after much discussion in the intervening weeks and months, that "we can continue with our primary existing mission of raising funds for the SJEHG and our St John Volunteer Corps (SJVC) volunteer projects." Once the Priory transitions over the next five years, all interested participants of the U.S. Priory will join the SJVC, and those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary contribution to the Order, as defined in the Royal Rules and Regulations grade standards, may be considered for membership.

Sir Andrew Cash, Chair of the St. John Eye Hospital Group, and Order Hospitaller Dr. David Verity were also at Grand Council, so we had multiple opportunities to discuss the current SJEHG situation. CEO Dr. Ahmad

Ma'ali broadcasted live to Grand Council from Jerusalem, and I paraphrase the latest news:

As the war in Gaza will soon be entering its third year, hostilities continue to intensify across the entire Gaza Strip, resulting in an estimated 65,000 people killed, and more than 185,000 injured.

In response to recent evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military for all residents of Gaza City, and in line with our unwavering commitment to staff safety, we instructed all personnel at our Gaza Hospital (SJEHG-Gaza) to comply fully with all military orders, and all have been evacuated to the south. Twenty of our staff members and their families have established a camp in Deir El Balah and are currently working to set up two field clinics, which are expected to become operational within days. Our work in Gaza has continued at Al Nuseirat Camp, located in the middle of the Gaza Strip. During the past week, a total of 406 patients received eye care services. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no further damage to our Gaza City Hospital.

Since the conflict escalated, we have treated over 60,000 patients, delivering essential and life-changing care under extraordinary conditions.

In recognition of the extraordinary hardship faced by our staff—particularly in the face of skyrocketing food prices and basic living costs—the Chair and Board of Trustees have approved a second one-time hardship bonus for our Gaza-based team this month. We have also secured food parcels for our staff and their families, thanks to the generous support of our partners at Malteser International. As poor diet is a primary factor in eye disease and blindness, the need for our ophthalmic care in Gaza escalates as the shortage of food for all grows.

The security situation in East Jerusalem and the West Bank remains volatile, with incidents occurring on an almost daily basis. This has significantly hampered movement within the West Bank and between the West Bank and Jerusalem.

We hope and pray that the current U.S. government proposal for a ceasefire is successful and that Ahmad, who has a three-month visa to visit the U.S., will be able to join us in Washington, DC, for Investiture, where I look forward to seeing you as we welcome new Members and Esquires and reaffirm our calling of *Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum*.

Nigel G. Heath, KStJ  
Prior

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## INVESTITURE 2025: USEFUL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

For those Members making the sojourn to our Nation's capital for this year's Investiture and Rededication Weekend, we have compiled a few notes to help you effortlessly navigate travel, ceremonies, and the Priory's schedule of planned events.

**October Weather in Washington DC** usually offers high temperatures around 68-69°F and lows near 48-50°F, with the possibility of with some light to moderate showers. Overall, expect pleasant conditions with crisp air and beautiful fall foliage.

**Our host hotel is well-located;** just a 10-minute walk to Georgetown and a 25-minute ride to Washington National Cathedral. Learn more about [The Fairmont Washington, DC - Georgetown](#).

**The full schedule of events** is [here](#).

**If you signed up for a group tour**, you will receive those details in advance.

**Family and guests** are welcome for the Investiture Service, though the Welcome Reception and Gala Benefit Dinner are limited to Members and immediate family members only.

**Breakfast on Saturday morning** is 'on your own' before the Service of Investiture and Rededication. Options include in-room dining, [Juniper restaurant](#) on the lobby level, and several other local eateries outside the hotel.

**Buses to the Investiture Service** depart from the hotel lobby beginning at 8:30 am and continue until 9:30 am. Those being invested or participating in the procession should be at the cathedral by 9:15 am and are asked to take the first available bus.

**Attire for the gala benefit dinner** is black tie, and all other events are business attire. Dark suits and dresses are worn for the Investiture Service, and guidelines for the proper wearing of decorations—the when, where, and why—is [here](#).

**Schedule of local Sunday church services** can be found [here](#).

**For those departing on Sunday, allow extra time for the airport return.** The Marine Corps Marathon takes place that morning, and traffic delays can be expected. Consider using Metro as an alternative. Travel details can be found [here](#).

**Getting around using the Metro** is easy. Blue, Silver, and Orange Lines are a 10-minute walk from the hotel and will take you to the National Mall and downtown attractions. The Red Line at Dupont Circle Station is a 15-minute walk from The Fairmont. [Click here](#) to learn how to navigate the Metro.

We look forward to seeing you in Washington DC for the Investiture Weekend. Please email [events@saintjohn.org](mailto:events@saintjohn.org) with any questions. ☼



## AN EXCERPT FROM *TREASURES*

### The Ashford Litter

late 19th century

Born in 1836, Sir John Furley was a pivotal figure in the development of the first aid movement, and he devoted his adult life to the provision of organised treatment for the sick and wounded. Not only did he play a crucial role in the foundation of St John Ambulance, he also pioneered important technological advances in transportation, which transformed patient care.

The rise of mechanised warfare in the late 1800s resulted in unprecedented levels of death and injury in battle. Observers were horrified by the carnage and the poor conditions in which casualties were treated. Furley, having witnessed first-hand many of the major wars of the period, was moved to campaign for the provision of medical care to all. As a founder and active member of the Red Cross Society in Britain, he toured hospitals in war zones, providing first aid and supplies during the Franco-Prussian War, the Carlist Wars of Spain and the Serbian-Turkish War.



*Sir John Furley's influence over the fledgling St John Ambulance has shaped much of the charity's modern first aiding work, particularly in the development of first aid equipment and ambulance transport.*

However, unlike many contemporaries, Furley's humanitarian beliefs extended beyond the battlefield. He believed strongly that an organisation like the Red Cross should exist in times of peace as well as war. Furley saw a real need for first aid in industrialised Britain, and he recognised that the lack of a national health or ambulance service resulted in many preventable deaths. A member of the Order from its foundation, Furley was also among the founding members of St John Ambulance, which was instituted to fulfil this peacetime first aiding purpose in accordance with the Order's motto: 'in the Service of Humanity'. As the first Director of Stores for St John Ambulance, Furley was responsible for sourcing and distributing first aid equipment and materials,



*In 1879, Sir John Furley developed the first commercially available first aid kit, known as the ambulance hamper. This 20th century example came from the Savoy Hotel.*

based at St John's Gate. He used his extensive experience, observing the treatment of soldiers in field hospitals, to determine the most effective equipment for first aid and he equipped St John members accordingly—with first aid manuals, bandages, stretchers and ambulance equipment. In this role he developed the original first aid kit – known as the ambulance hamper—in 1879, to meet the immediate needs of injured people.

Furley continued to innovate, drawing on his experiences with wounded soldiers to develop important new technologies for transporting the injured. Noting that the two primary models of stretcher available at the time had significant design flaws that made them impractical for civilian use, he set about modifying the design to develop the 'Furley Stretcher'. He also developed the wheeled 'Ashford Litter' for circumstances where it was not possible to carry a stretcher during the recovery of a patient. This innovation led to the development of a whole new industry in Ashford, Kent, where they were produced and sent around the world. Furley also designed a train for transporting patients during the South African War. During the conflict, the train travelled 67,777 kilometres (42,115 miles) and carried 7,208 patients. Given this pioneering work, it is no surprise that he was asked to advise on the use of hospital trains during the First World War. In 1918, John Furley was made a Companion of Honour to recognise his charitable and humanitarian work. ✱



*The St John Ambulance First Aid magazine offered a wealth of advice to improve readers' medical knowledge, and it also advertised a diverse range of products that no committed volunteer could do without.*



## PRO FIDE

I met Jeff and Will when I lived in Mexico during the late 1970s. They were with families who traveled, and both had homes in the little town where I lived, San Miguel de Allende. We would pal around and find trouble to get into.

***I suggest that faith is not assent to abstract ideas; it is embodied orientation—feet aligned to melody, fingers tracing grooves in red earth.***

I remember we heard about underground streams in the hills. So, we went and found the caves, crawled in where it was cool, and you could listen to the water running deep below us in the dark. Another time, we heard about a swimming hole, so we found it, too. We hiked down a very precarious, rocky waterfall in the depths of a canyon to swim with other kids from the town.

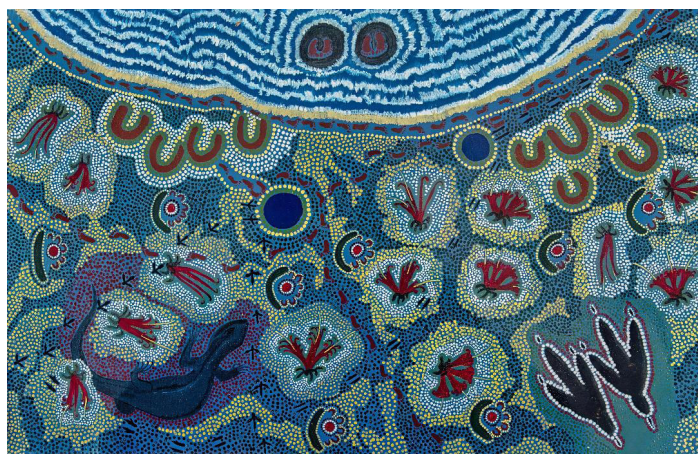
There was no written map or GPS. I can't tell you if Will knew where to go. Was it Jeff who knew the paths through the hills? We heard and followed the lines out of the city to these places. They all seem like dream

places or songs whose words I have long since forgotten. What is important in this brief reflection is that we learned our direction (our paths) through relationships with others and by word of mouth. Our paths were like lines woven by words handed down.

### **Song-lines & Dreaming-lines—cartographies of and for the body**

Fast forwarding to much more recent times, while the Grand Council gathered in Canberra, Australia, I took time to explore the wilderness, with two artists who shared with me the traditions of the people and the land, and spent a whole day with Uncle Glenn Loughrey (Uncle is a title for an elder in an Aboriginal family mob or group). I read a good deal too—I wanted to learn about the people of this place. I learned that Aboriginal elders talked of dream spaces and places—and the meaning of lines in the art. These were and are ancient places and paths that cross over Australia. They are places that Aboriginal art finds meaning in the past, the present, and the future. These dream lines go with the ancestors and generations to come.

Song lines in South America are similar, according to author and sociologist Bruce Chatwin. The melody is the map, or “memory jog.” Chatwin says the elders believe, “to sing the land is to belong to it,” and that walkers “hear” direction before they see it. They can sing it before they walk it.



*Esperance, Australia, 02/25/2014. Aboriginal dot painting: Walich Dreaming Story at Thistle Cove by Gail Yorkshire-Selby, as told by the Nyungar Aboriginal people on the south coast of Western Australia.*

For the Aboriginal people, sand drawings serve as stories and as maps of the landscape, indicating landmarks and distances to be travelled. These dream lines may be found on rock, in the sand, upon the body, and in art. Some fade away in time, while others are preserved and passed down from generation to generation. According to Uncle Glenn, these are three-dimensional worlds of relationship.

I suggest that faith is not assent to abstract ideas; it is embodied orientation—feet aligned to melody, fingers tracing grooves in red earth. The body remembers what the mind alone would forget. Faith is a participation in the dimensionality of cosmos with our body in relationship to the whole. Here, Uncle Glenn, an archdeacon in the church, said, “spirituality is not an addition to his body, it is a part of being.” He said for him this is an “aboriginality” not a “spirituality.”

### **The Order of St John — motto in motion**

*Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum:* “For the Faith and in the Service of Humanity” is our motto. These words are song lines, dream lines, sand drawings, and bodily evidence for our Order. These words take shape in ambulances; in eye hospitals, clinics, and outreach vans in Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza; in youth first aid classes; and in the hearts and spirits of volunteers who put the power of first aid into everyone's hands. The Order's charism is tactile: bandaging, lifting, washing, suturing—works that require sleeves rolled up and palms open. It is passed along as an art of caring. Consider then our hands on ministry as a contemporary songline.

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Just as Aboriginal artists and singers passed along dream and song lines, the St John volunteer acts out and sings a gospel of presence.

Christianity insists that God “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Ministry that never touches a wound risks betraying that doctrine. The Order of St John, therefore, invites Members to pray a Benedictine prayer that goes along with service to all humanity. Our service echoes early Hospitaller monks who washed pilgrims’ feet outside Jerusalem’s walls.

To borrow Chatwin’s language, a volunteer’s shift is its own path: a repeatable liturgy (a dream-time, a song-line) whose lines are compression, breath, and reassurance—each action a note sung for the healing of the world. We do this by showing, telling, sharing, and by doing, going, and acting.

Each day during the Grand Council meeting, we gathered in a small chapel, some twenty of us, for morning prayer and eucharist. We gathered for song lines and dream time together. This became enfleshed in our voices and bodies as we prayed the Lord’s prayer. To my left, I heard the language of Fiji, German from across the room, French, Japanese, Māori, and my own becoming part of a whole. Here was a moment, the Order’s song lines and dreams of the heaven that has come and yet is to be. Let us find our way together singing songs of heaven along our way.

The Rt. Rev. C Andrew Doyle, D.D., OStJ  
Sub Prelate

## INAS’S STORY

For over a year, Inas suffered from a persistent chalazion—a painful eyelid condition that severely impacted her vision and caused ongoing discomfort. She frequently rubbed her eye and complained of not feeling well. As time went on, the swelling worsened, occasionally even leading to bleeding.

***Her mother expressed deep gratitude for the support they received, saying, “If we hadn’t come to St. John Eye Hospital, we could not have made this surgery happen.***

Inas was first diagnosed at the Kufor Aqab Center, where the medical team quickly recognized the seriousness of her condition. She was referred to St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem for further treatment. There, she underwent surgery under general anesthesia, followed by a biopsy to ensure there were no underlying complications.

After the surgery, Inas returned to Kufor Aqab Center for follow-up care. Thankfully, the biopsy results were clear, and Inas has since made a full recovery. Her vision has improved significantly, and she is once again enjoying her daily life, free from pain and discomfort.

Her mother expressed deep gratitude for the support they received, saying, “If we hadn’t come to St. John Eye Hospital, we could not have made this surgery happen. The costs



were completely covered by the hospital, and the team was fantastic. This condition was affecting her vision a lot. Now, she’s healthy and back to normal!”

Thanks to the dedication of the medical team and the support provided through your generosity, Inas’s life has changed for the better 🌟