

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

Read More About It:
Membership

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Read More About It: Membership

First Edition
2021
Prepared by



Dr. Chev. Peter L. Heineman, GCTJ, CMTJ
2020 Avenue B
Council Bluffs, IA 51501
Phone 712.323.3531 • www.plheineman.net

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Background.....	2
Application Process	3
The GPUSA Application Form	4
Fees	6
Dames	6
Obligations of Membership	7
Commitment to the Order	8
Classifications of Membership	9
Transfer of Membership.....	9
Associate Membership	10
Expulsion	10

INTRODUCTION



Membership

The US Order encourages talented, accomplished men and women of high moral character to energetically pursue charitable and civic causes and to improve the Christian presence in the Holy Land. Those who join in such efforts in turn benefit personally from participation in the recovery and perpetuation of the Christian spirit and ideals that impelled the early Templar Knights to dedicate their lives to similar causes. The chivalry, ethics, and rich traditions of this Order shape our focus on those causes today.

Membership in the Order requires that the candidate be a Christian of any denomination and is by invitation only. The principal criteria in selecting members are good character, accomplishments in life and obvious commitment to the ideals of the Order. A candidate's involvement in other charitable, military, religious and hereditary organizations provides a means of assessing a candidate's eligibility, as does his or her professional and social accomplishments. The Order selects only those men and women who deport themselves in an honorable and chivalrous manner, who will be committed to the Order's values and precepts and who are Ecumenical in thought.

This publication outlines the requirements and process for membership, obligations, commitment, classification, transfers, and associate membership.

Background

Membership in GPUSA (the Order) as stated in the New Jersey Corporate *Charter*, Article Second, Paragraph “Q” provides:

"Qualifications for Membership: The applicant must be a Christian over the age of twenty-one years and of high moral character and chivalrous ideals; he or she must also be recommended to the Officers of the Order by at least two fully qualified members."

Membership is by invitation only. Candidates for membership must be Christian men or women with a demonstrated record of commitment and effectiveness in their life's work and in causes they have chosen to support that are in keeping with the values of the Order. Those who do not fit such a mold should not be asked to join.

The principal focus in selecting and approving members has always been on "quality, not quantity." Character is a primary consideration, as all members should bring honor, dignity, and respect to the Order by virtue of their own behavior and deportment. Membership experience in other organizations is most helpful, as it provides a measure for determining a candidate's ability to get along with fellow members. Demonstrated accomplishments in life are a major consideration. Obvious commitment to major charitable, professional, governmental, military, or societal endeavors is a highly desirable indicator that an individual may be an asset to the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem. The Order desires to take in only those people who deport themselves in an honorable and chivalrous way, who will be committed to the Order's values and precepts, and who are ecumenical in thought.

Recruitment of new members, while following the above guidelines, can be specifically targeted to enhance both the breadth and depth of the membership talent pool and to acquire individuals with appropriate leadership skills to assure effective succession planning at both the local and national levels. The Grand Priory Standing Committee on Membership, Recruiting and Retention (Article IX.A.I, Appendix B, Grand Statutes) is charged with developing recruiting strategies and tailoring recruitment to address specific needs, recruiting profiles it establishes and modifies to meet evolving needs for officers with special certifications (e.g., C.P.A.s,) shall be promulgated to all members of the Order. Grand Officers, Priors, and Commanders shall endeavor to use these profiles in the course of identifying, contacting, and interviewing potential new members, in addition to their normal recruiting activities.

The American form of honorary membership is membership in the **Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam**, which also encompasses the Order of Merit. The Order of Merit of the Grand Priory of the United States of America and the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem was created as a way to award distinguished persons and to recognize their service to the Grand Priory or to their community. Recipients do not need to be members of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, and they need not be Christians.

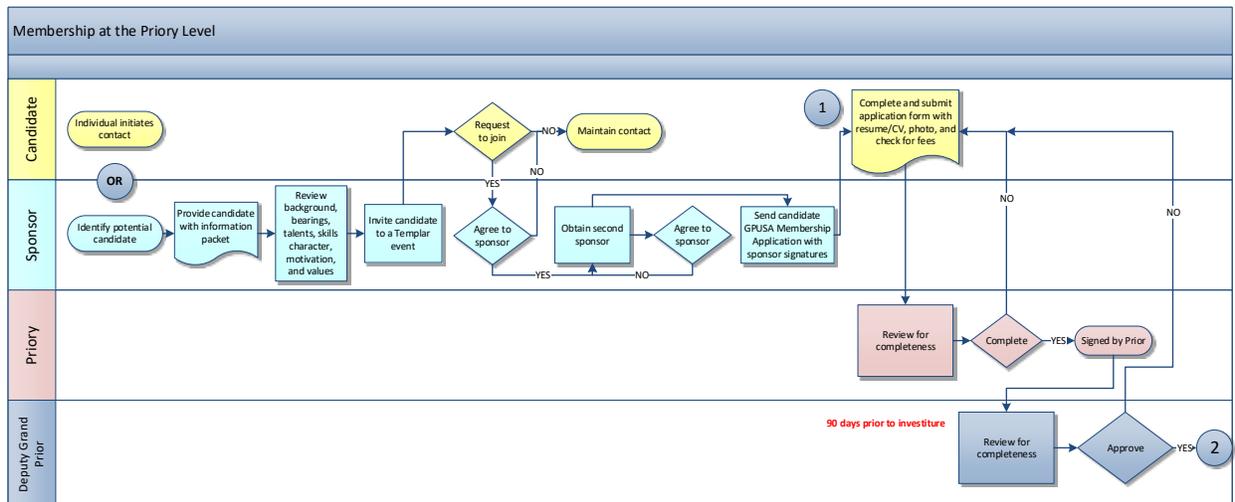
Application Process

The membership application process of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem is designed to ensure that only highly qualified, respectable individuals are brought into the Order. It also ensures that their entry is administered in a proper and timely manner.

Application for membership originates at the Priory level. Two or more sponsors for any candidate must favorably know that candidate. Sponsors should submit the name of a prospective member to the Priory Membership Committee (Appendix C) in writing. The Membership Committee then considers the candidate through a screening process of its own choosing—one that should involve many members of the Priory. If a favorable consideration is reached, the committee will send the candidate a Curriculum Vitae to fill out and return. Before investiture and affiliation with the Order, the candidate must be approved by the local Prior and the Grand Prior.

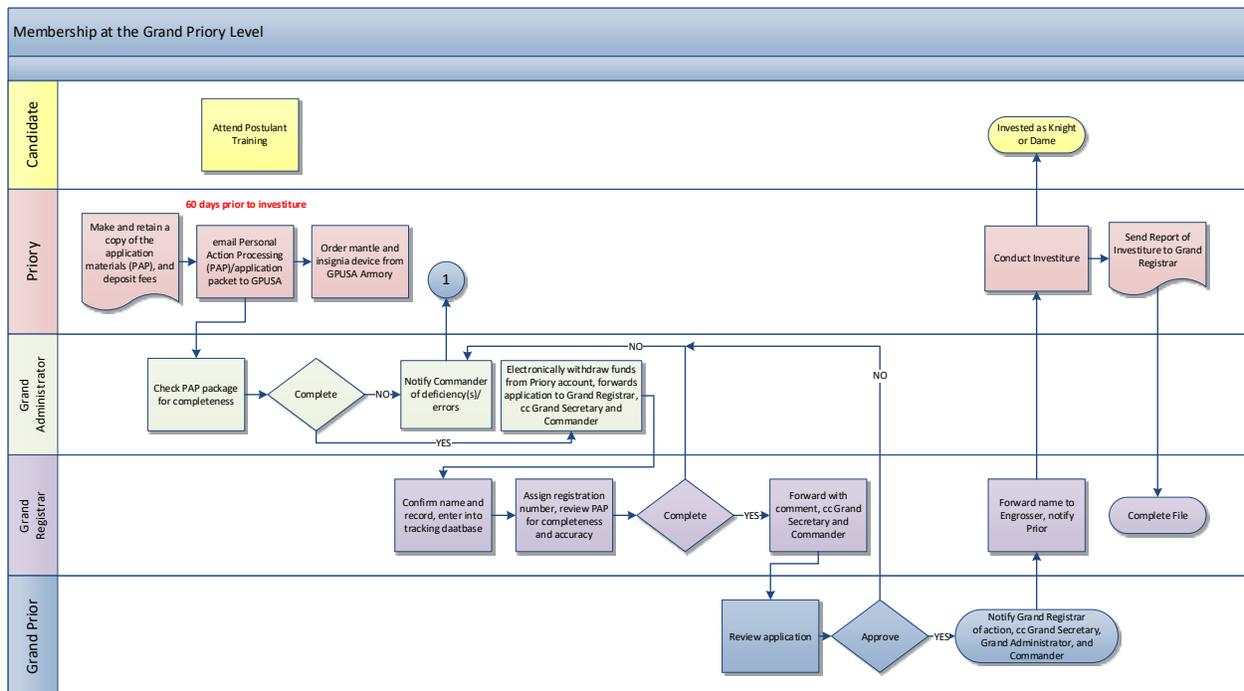
Members of foreign Grand Priories of the Order of the Temple in other nations may become members of the Grand Priory of the United States, but they must go through the same membership channels as other postulants and cannot enter automatically. In such transfers, retention of ranks earned in other Grand Priories is solely at the discretion of the Grand Prior, USA. There is no restriction on members of our Order belonging to other types of European Orders of chivalry. It is recognized that such persons may have a conflict of interest and should let their conscience be their guide as to what they discuss concerning the SMOTJ with members of another Order. The Grand Prior, of course, has the inherent right pursuant to ancient custom to exclude a dual Chevalier for good and sufficient reasons from any meeting of the Order.

The GPUSA Application for Membership form is checked at the Priory level for completeness and, if approved, signed by the Prior. The candidate's membership application and resume are emailed to the Regional Deputy Grand Prior (DPG) for review no later than 90 days before the investiture date.



After the DPG reviews the PAP, the Priory forwards the materials to the GPUSA Grand Administrator no later than 60 days prior to investiture. From there on, the application goes through a series of reviews before final confirmation by the Grand Prior and investiture of the Knight or Dame. The entire process is designed to operate in the background and appear seamless to the applicant.

While the application is being processed, the candidate undergoes Postulant Training with the Priory to prepare them for their role in the Order as a Knight or Dame.



The GPUSA Application Form

The GPUSA Membership Application form is designed to be completed electronically by the Postulant and/or their Sponsor. While most of the fields are self-explanatory, there are a couple of nuances that merit clarification.

A **name suffix**, in the Western English-language naming tradition, follows a person's full name and provides additional information about the person. Post-nominal letters indicate that the individual holds a position, educational degree, accreditation, office, or honor (e.g. "PhD", "CCNA", "OBE"). Other examples include generational designations like "Sr." and "Jr." (or often "Snr" and "Jnr" in British English) and "III", and legal ones such as "Estate" and (French) *Feme Covert*.

Phone, Fax, Email. The primary means of communication from GPUSA is by email. Home, work and cell phone numbers are optional but appreciated. No information from the application form is shared with external entities.

Date notation in the United States is typically written in the "month-day-year" order ("April 4, 2018") with a comma before and after the year if it is not at the end of a sentence. The military limits the number of letters used to abbreviate the month to 3 (three) as seen in the following example: 04 APR 18. Either format is acceptable but must be used consistently throughout the application.

The **Occupation** field must reflect current or retired status.

Honorary titles in academia may be conferred on persons in recognition of contributions by a non-employee or by an employee beyond regular duties. This practice primarily exists in the UK and some universities and colleges in the United States, Australia, Hong Kong, and Canada. Examples of such titles include Honorary Doctorate, Honorary Professor, Honorary Fellow, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Honorary Reader, Honorary Lecturer, Visiting Fellow, and Industrial Fellow.

Religious denomination refers to the various Christian denominations e.g. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and the many varieties of Protestantism including Adventist, Anglican, Baptist, Calvinist-Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, and Pentecostal.

Education may be a combination of Medical, Dental, Religious, and/or academic. The first space in each category – Correct title & abbreviated title and spelling – is for the title awarded for the highest degree earned.

Military service. Those serving or having served in the military will be familiar with the rank and rate designations for their branch(s) of service.

Military awards and decorations are primarily the medals, service ribbons, and specific badges which recognize military service and personal accomplishments while a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. Such awards are a means to outwardly display the highlights of a service member's career. These may include: U.S. military personal decorations, U.S. military unit awards, U.S. non-military personal decorations (Presidential awards, National Medals, DoD and JCS Distinguished Service awards, Agency-specific awards, Civilian unit awards and service awards), U.S. non-military unit awards: U.S. military campaign and service medals, U.S. military service and training awards, U.S. Merchant Marine awards and non-military service awards, Foreign military personal decorations, Foreign military unit awards, Non-U.S. service awards (e.g., United Nations, NATO, etc.), Foreign military service awards: Marksmanship awards, Awards of U.S. military societies and other organizations, and State awards of the National Guard.

Societies and club membership includes religious, charitable, advocacy, community, civic, and professional organizations. The list must include the name of the organization, role and/or office(s) held, and date(s).

Spouse's name - where appropriate - for women must be *First Name Middle Married Name, nee Maiden Name*.

Names of children must include first and middle names.

Body measurements for the Mantle of the Order must be in inches. The chest measurement is taken under the armpits, around the fullest part of the chest.

A **digital photo** in JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) format edited to 2" X 2" (600 X 600 pixels) is required for all applications.

Certificate. The membership application can indicate Military or Professional Rank (where appropriate) and must include Name (as the Postulant would like it to appear on their certificate) and KTJ (for Knights) or DTJ (for Dames).

Signatures. Typing the Postulant and Sponsor names serve as legal signatures for the purpose of the application. The **Applicant Signature** must be the Postulant's full legal name. The **Sponsor Signatures** must include the Knight's or Dame's Military or Professional Rank (where appropriate), Chev. or Chvse., First Middle and Last Name. **Templar Rank** is KTJ, DTJ, KCTJ, DCTJ, GOTJ, GCTJ, ACTJ, CTJ, SCTJ, or GCRTJ.

FINAL CHECKLIST

- Completed application form
- Curriculum vita or resume
- 2" X 2" (600 X 600 pixel) JPEG photo
- Passage fee

Dame

is an honorific title and the feminine form of address for the honor of knighthood in the British honors system and the systems of several other Commonwealth countries. The Order of the Hatchet (orden de la Hacha) was founded in 1149 by the Count of Barcelona, to honor the women who fought for the defense of the town of Tortosa against a Moorish attack. The Order of the Glorious Saint Mary was founded in Italy in 1233, and approved by Pope Alexander IV in 1261. It was the first religious order of knighthood to grant the rank of "militissa" to women. The Order was suppressed by Sixtus V in 1558. The Order of the Ermine, founded by John V, Duke of Brittany in 1381, was the first order of chivalry to accept women; however, female knights existed for centuries in many places in the world prior to this. Like their male counterparts, they were distinguished by the flying of colored banners and generally bore a coat of arms.

Fees

Each SMOTJ member is expected to make an initial payment related to investiture, such as the cost of mantle, insignia, etc. and towards a passage fee. Fees collected attendant to the induction of a new members are passage fees, not oblations. Each Priory can set its own annual dues plus the Grand Priory oblation which are remitted to the Grand Priory which currently retains \$125 and remits the balance received back to the Priory. The fees cover the passage (application), decoration, mantle/cape, and certificate.

Dames

Throughout much of the history of the Order, women were not originally eligible for membership. Today, however, they are a vital, proud, equal, and growing part of the Order in every way. This equal status is recognition of the marked changes in values and ways of life in the world in general in recent years, and in our American culture in particular.

The Grand Council, at a conclave at Lake Gerard in August 1968, approved a grade of *Dame D'Honneur*, which was restricted to close relatives by blood or marriage of a present or deceased Chevalier. In that time, the Dames D'Honneur could participate in the activities of our Order from time to time and be present at any installation of either the Local or Grand Priory. However, they were not voting members and took no part in the business meetings.



At a Grand Convent of the Order held in Chicago, the widening of the honorable estate of Dames D'Honneur was considered and, upon the 8th of July 1970, Grand Prior John Whelchel Finger, issued the following Proclamation:

"Know ye by these presents, that we for good and sufficient reasons are desirous of widening the basis of the Honorable estate of Dames D'Honneur in our Grand Priory of the United States of America as created in our original Proclamation of 14 November 1969, to include from time to time a strictly limited number of ladies who have demonstrated by their civic or patriotic interests and humanitarian activities their true chivalrous nature:

*"**THEREFORE**, hereafter the honorable estate of Dames D'Honneur shall include ladies in the above-mentioned additional category, who could not otherwise qualify by close relationship of bonds of blood or marriage to our Chevaliers.*

"All of these ladies shall be refined persons of impeccable high character and excellent reputation in the community in which they live. These ladies also shall be highly recommended in writing to the Local Prior by at least five Chevaliers or Dames D'Honneur or a combination of the same."

At the Grand Council meeting in Washington, D.C. in January 1994, Dames were accorded full rights and privileges, provided that they were formally admitted in an Investiture ceremony, and provided that they contributed to the financial well-being of the Order through payment of the initial passage fee and subsequent annual oblations.



Women are now screened for membership as Dames of the Order on the basis of the exact same high standards and qualifications as are required of male applicants for membership as Knights. No relationship to an existing member is required as a condition of membership, though any candidate (man or woman) closely connected by bonds of blood or marriage to a present or deceased Chevalier or Dame is considered to have an advantage in application. Once in the Order, Dames and Knights both are recognized by promotion for their own efforts on behalf of the Order in the United States.

The original custom in creating a Knight in the U.S. Order was to dub the gentleman postulant with a sword while he knelt, lady postulants were embraced when receiving the accolade. In the 1990's, the Grand Prior consented to accord the accolade to a lady postulant who had the right to bear arms (e.g., those who were/are commissioned military officers) in the fashion of a Knight, i.e., kneeling while being dubbed with the sword.

Knights and Dames are equal participants in the Order. However, the procedure of requiring Dames to serve under arms in order to be dubbed with the sword is not applied equally to men. Therefore, Grand Prior XVI chose to allow the accolade to be bestowed upon female postulants either by dubbing in the manner of a Knight or embracing them. It remains the choice of the woman. The female postulant should inform the Master of Postulants of her choice, before the Investiture.

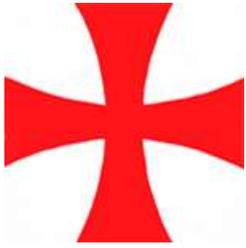
The female postulant who makes this choice may also elect to wear the Knight's insignia if dubbed in this fashion. Nevertheless, having been dubbed in the fashion of a Knight does not endow the woman with the style of a Knight; she is, and remains, invested as a Dame, Chevaleresse, or *Equitessa*. The U.S. Order follows the European custom, wherein a female member is always styled in the feminine. Therefore, in the United States, use of the terms lady and sir are discouraged. For women, the proper terms are Dame, Chevaleresse, or *Equitessa*, and for men, the proper terms are Knight, Chevalier, or *Equitess*.

Obligations of Membership

Financial

Members pay oblations annually to both the Priory to which they belong and to the Grand Priory. All active members must maintain current membership in both their local Priory and in the Grand Priory. Oblations commence in the year following the year in which a member is inducted into the Order.

Along with the mandatory oblations, members have the opportunity to make additional voluntary donations to both GPUSA, the Jerusalem Mite program, and to the Priory. While such donations are optional, they are very much encouraged. Member generosity helps GPUSA fulfill its mission to help Christians at risk in the Holy Land and elsewhere in the Middle East, and for the Priory to support local initiatives.



8 Points of Obligation

- 1) to live in truth
- 2) to have faith
- 3) to be sincere
- 4) to give proof of humility
- 5) to love justice
- 6) to be merciful
- 7) to endure persecution
- 8) to repent from sin

Other Obligations

The other Obligations of Membership are established under the spiritual rule of Bernard de Clairvaux dating back to 1128 A.D. Each member freely accepts an absolute discipline usual to a military organization and each Knight and Dame joining the order automatically, upon oath, subscribes to the provisions of the *Charter*, the Grand Statutes, and the Statutes and Rules of the local Priory to which assigned as the same exist and as may be amended from time to time.

Commitment to the Order

Membership in the Order is open to any Christian over the age of twenty-one years and of high moral character and chivalrous ideals. The Templar principles are based on three foundations:

1) A Christian Order.

One cannot be a knight without being a Christian. Indeed, some of the modern orders have no such requirement. Other orders may require that one be a specific sort of Christian, with membership restricted to those of a particular faith. For example, the Order of Malta (The Sovereign Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta) is restricted in its membership to Catholics.



The Order does restrict membership to Christians; The American form of honorary membership is membership in the Honorary Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam. The Order does not have any specific dogma or affirmation of faith, and do not restrict membership to any specific denomination. Members are expected to be able to affirm in good faith that they are Christian.

2) Commitment to being chivalric.

“Chivalry refers to the medieval institution of knighthood and, most especially, the ideals that were/ have become associated with it throughout literature. . . the chivalrous knight was . . . brave, loyal . . . merciful, humble, and courteous.” (Wikipedia)

A useful historical understanding can be found in the book *“Chivalry”* written in the 19th century by Leon Gautier, where the code of conduct includes:

- Thou shall respect all weaknesses, and shalt constitute thyself the defender of them.
- Thou shalt not recoil before thine enemy.
- Thou shalt perform scrupulously thy feudal duties, if they be not contrary to the laws of God.
- Thou shalt never lie, and shall remain faithful to thy pledged word.
- Thou shalt be generous, and give largess to everyone.
- Thou shalt be everywhere and always the champion of the Right and the Good against Injustice and Evil.

Much has changed from medieval times. Just as surely, much has not – for then, as now, each person (Postulant, Knight, or Dame) cannot avoid developing a code of conduct to help guide our actions and our lives.

3) Commitment to the support of charitable work.

As with the requirement that a person be able in good faith to affirm Christianity – but without any specific doctrinal requirement – so too is there an expectation that members have a commitment to service, though not with any specific requirement either of time or money.

Classifications of Membership

There are four classes of membership: active, inactive, withdrawn, and honorary membership which includes membership in the Order of Merit.

- Active membership consist of Knights and Dames who are current (paid) in their oblations.
- Inactive membership consist of all Knights and Dames who have failed to discharge the Obligations of Membership (unpaid oblations) for two consecutive years or who have requested transfer to inactive status.
- Dormant membership consist of all Knights and Dames who have failed to discharge the Obligations of Membership (unpaid oblations) for four or more consecutive years.
- Honorary membership may be bestowed, via induction into the Order of Merit, upon any person who does not otherwise request or qualify to be a member of the Order, but who is thought worthy of such prestigious recognition by the Prior of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam and the Grand Prior, upon favorable recommendation therefor by a member of the Grand Council. All such honorary members become members of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam.

Transfer of Membership

Within the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States, each American Knight and Dame is to have only one principal Priory or Commandery. Enumeration, promotion, and oblations will stem from this unit. Knights and Dames are still permitted, indeed encouraged, to become Associate members of other Pories and/or Commanderies.

Knights and Dames may transfer their principal Priory/Commandery membership as they desire; however, such action requires the acknowledgement/agreement of both the gaining and losing Priory or Commandery, and approval of the Grand Assistant Secretary for Membership.

Transfer from Grand Pories within OSMTH. A knight or dame within the OSMTH may belong to only one Grand Priory. Transfer between Grand Pories is possible; however, the applicant must have the permission of both the gaining and losing Grand Pories. The process must be initiated by the Knight or Dame who desires to transfer.

The GPUSA does not automatically transfer a member in grade, i.e. knight or dame Templar rank. If the transferee wishes to transfer in a grade other than Knight (KTJ) or Dame (DTJ) and has sufficient documentation (original certificates) to establish his/her current rank including the dates of promotion(s), a written petition must be submitted to the Grand Prior with transfer application. The Grand Prior

will consider each submission/request on a case by case basis and notify the individual before the transfer is accepted. It should be noted that a transfer in the grade of Grand Croix is extremely rare and normally will not be approved.

Transfer to Grand Priories from outside the OSMTH confederation is normally not permitted. Such an individual is more than welcome to join the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America, but they must do so as a new member. Members of the Grand Bailiwick of the Scots who were members before 2007 are permitted to transfer using the same procedures as other members of the OSMTH. Others who became members after 2007 are welcome to join but must do so as new members.

Associate Membership

Members of the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America belong to only one Priory. That Priory is referred to as the member's parent Priory. Members can and in fact are encouraged to join other Priories/Commanderies, which may be located near where they work, reside or vacation, as Associate Members. The requirements for Associate Membership as well as any possible cost is determined and administrated by each local Priory. Associate memberships are not recorded or tracked in the national data base. There is no form for requesting associate membership. Associate membership is considered a Priory specific matter.

Expulsion

Inasmuch as election to this Order carries with it the concomitant accolade of knighthood for life, membership requires constant adherence to a Christian life. Accordingly, there is a Standing Committee Court of Honor in the Grand Priory that may hear causes why membership should not be revoked.

Revocation of membership and expulsion may result from conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction of a crime involving a sentence of imprisonment, conversion to a non-Christian religion or any conduct not becoming a gentlemen or a lady as determined by the Court of Honor in accordance with the Statutes of the Order.

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Read More About It: Membership
