

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

Read More About It:
Structure

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INTRODUCTION



Structure

The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem® (SMOTJ) is international in nature with members from over 40 nations, ecumenical Christian in our religious beliefs welcoming Members of all Christian religions, and focused on matters of human rights, political and religious freedom, and humanitarian aid to the world's less fortunate.

Like the Knights Templar of old, we operate as a modern-day worldwide network of educated professionals in such widely diverse protocols as senior government officials, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, senior clergy, military officers, physicians and surgeons, engineers, historians, and humanitarian aid caregivers. We represent many of the most respected and credible senior officials in their home nations, providing both a highly respected body of expertise, an influential voice to support commitment to the less fortunate of the world, and to promote the time-tested chivalric ideals of honor, honesty, civility, tolerance, care for our fellow man, and support for ecumenical religious faith throughout our individual nations and throughout the world community.

This publications reviews the structure of the international Order and the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America.



International Structure

The *Ordo Supremus Templii Militaris Hierosolymitani (OSMTH)* is the international chivalric organization that coordinates and promotes the interest of the constituent Templar Grand Priorities around the world that have allied themselves with the OSMTH. The Grand Priority of the United States of America is formally affiliated with the OSMTH but was created as an autonomous entity and remains autonomous. The OSMTH is referred to by members as “*The Order*.” The motto of the Order is the Biblical phrase *Non Nobis, Domine, Non Nobis, Sed Nomini Tuo Da Gloriam* (Not unto us, O Lord, Not Unto Us, But To Thy Name Be Given Glory).

The Order is based on an ancient Christian brotherhood of Templar Knights and its purposes are to:

1. Provide an opportunity for the practice of ecumenical Christianity;
2. Encourage and promote Christian and humanitarian work and charity generally, but especially in support of people in the Holy Land;
3. Encourage all that makes for the spiritual and moral strengthening of mankind in accordance with the first great principle of the Order as embodied in its motto;
4. Support the precepts of Christian chivalry;
5. Investigate and emulate the historical ideals of the ancient Order;
6. Form and administer the establishment of councils, associations, centers, or other subordinate bodies to facilitate the work of the Order in all geographical areas;
7. Maintain contact and develop collaboration with kindred Orders and bodies; and
8. Establish and maintain libraries and museums, and collect works of art and objects of historical interest to the Order.

On October 13, 2007 the Order formally adopted the Brussels Declaration (quoted below) which best describes what the Order stands for in the modern world:

OUR VISION – Today, the OSMTH – Knights Templar International looks for a world in which:

- A constructive dialogue between the great religious faiths, and the individuals and nations who adhere to them, is conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and peace;
- The holy sites of Christianity and other great faiths are respected, protected and maintained, and pilgrims can travel to them safely;
- The dedication, generosity and integrity of all those engaged in providing humanitarian aid are recognized and valued, and aid workers can carry out their vital work in an ethical manner without fear of discrimination;
- The principles of active charity, courtesy, dedication and honesty, inherent in the highest ideals of a code of chivalry and a personal rule of life, are spread wider and wider in society; and
- The contribution of the Knights Templar, medieval and modern, with regard to agriculture, construction, transportation, crafts, medicine, finance, inter-faith affairs, diplomacy and philanthropy is both well researched, and also widely understood and valued by the public.

OUR COMMITMENT – the OSMTH – Knights Templar International aspires to be the modern organization the original Knights Templar might have become, if their historical development had not been broken.

Like other orders of military and monastic origins, whose traditions stem from Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, our membership has long ago put aside swords for purely ceremonial use and turned our attention, as a civil society organization, to charitable, cultural, humanitarian and reconciliation endeavors. In our members today, we look for Christians sufficiently confident in their own beliefs to respect and value the beliefs of those of other faiths and of none.

Today Templars in the OSMTH – Knights Templar International seek, by their collective action and individual personal example, to put into practice in the modern world the highest ideals of the code of chivalry and the personal rule of Christian Life inspired by the spiritual father of the medieval Order, St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

Our modern Order also adheres to the principles adopted by the General Assembly of The Order of the Temple in Paris in 1841 in that:

- Our membership is open to Christians of all denominations and from all social backgrounds;
- We operate as an openly accountable, democratic and non-political organization;
- Our members have a duty to promote the causes of peace and human dignity; and
- Our work in humanitarian aid is undertaken for the benefit of the diverse strands of all humanity.

OUR ACTION – In addition to the local and national activities of each of its constituent Member Grand Priorities, the OSMTH – Knights Templar International undertakes a range of collective programmes, our modern Order particularly seeks:

In choosing and implementing these collective international programmes, our modern Order particularly seeks:

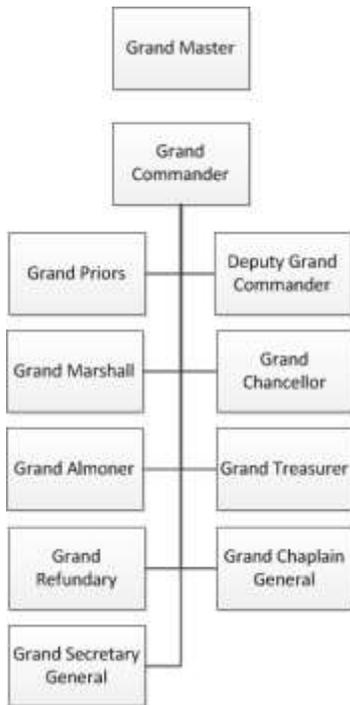
- To promote dialogue amongst, and between, the Abrahamic faiths and the other great religions of the world with the view of establishing better understanding and greater tolerance;
- To assist Christian communities around the world, and especially in the Holy Land, whenever their human rights are at risk;
- To build bridges of understanding and support between the Eastern and Western Churches of the Christian faith; and
- As a UN-recognized Non-Governmental Organization, to support the United Nations and other civil society organizations by our active participation in programs of disaster relief, humanitarian aid, peace building and sustainable development, that respect the full range of human diversity.



The OSMTH is administered through the Grand Magistral Council, a legislative body consisting of the:

- Grand Commander
- Grand Priors (heads of national jurisdictions), who have decisional voting powers
- Grand Magistral Officers, who have consultative voting powers.

The Grand Magistral Council makes all appointments and exercises administrative and executive control over those areas of the Order which the Autonomous Grand Priorities cede to them. It also provides guidance for its member Grand Priors, Priors, other subordinate organizations, and their members, as agreed to by affiliated organizations.



The Grand Magistral Council elects a series of Grand Magistral Officers. These officers include the:

- Grand Master (8-year term)
- Grand Commander of the Order (3-year term, renewable once)
- Deputy Grand Commander
- Chancellor General
- Marshal General
- Chaplain General
- Almoner General
- Referendary General
- Secretary General
- Treasurer General

The Grand Master is the ceremonial head of OSMTH, representing the Order at diplomatic and international functions, and performing other appropriate duties agreed to by the Grand Magistral Council. The Grand Master is elected by sitting Grand Priors from the member Grand Priorities. In addition, the Order has established a Religious Protector and a Royal Patron. The Religious Protector is a senior Christian religious leader who consents to provide religious protection and guidance to the Order. The Royal Patron is a member of a royal house who has agreed to accept the honorary position as Sponsor of the Order.

The OSMTH currently has constituent Grand Priorities in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, England, Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, United States and NATO. It also has mentoring relationships with Commanderies in, Cyprus, Denmark, Jerusalem, San Marino, South Africa, Spain and Sweden.

The OSMTH recognizes a grade and post-nominal structure similar to those in place in the Grand Priory of the United States of America. It accepts dues and oblations volunteered by member bodies to further its charitable and humanitarian works.



The Order in America

The Grand Priory of the United States of America (**GPUSA**) is affiliated with the International Organization (**OSMTH**) but retains autonomous status. Each country with a Templar organization has a Grand Priory, with a Grand Prior who is elected according to its own grand statutes.

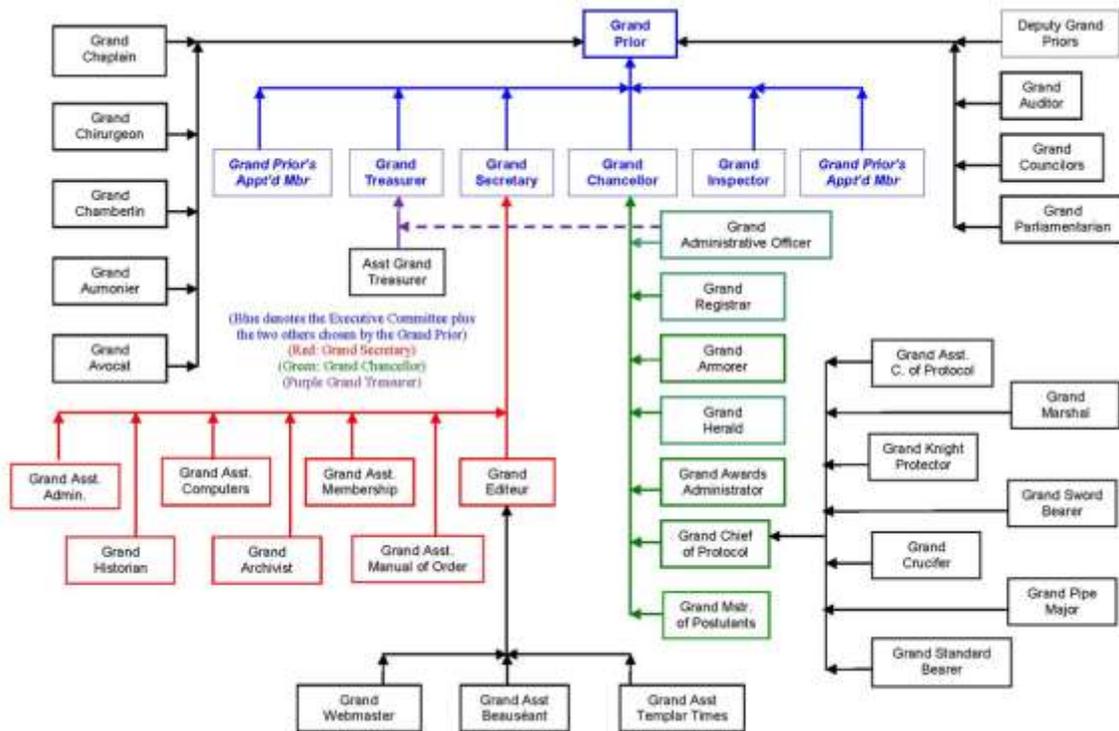
The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, Incorporated (**SMOTJ**, Inc.) is an autonomous non-profit corporation first incorporated in the State of New Jersey in 1962. All activity under the name of the Order must be conducted in accordance with its Grand Statutes (SMOTJ, Inc. corporate bylaws) through the Grand Priory by order and direction of the Grand Council. Pories and Commanderies operate by charter from the Grand Priory and function as branches of the corporation. Pories and Commanderies may not separately incorporate, and any Priory or Commandery that has incorporated must promptly notify the Grand Avocat of such separate corporate status and take steps to dissolve such status and operate only as a part of the national corporation.

All Pories and Commanderies must obey federal, state and local laws when carrying out any and all the SMOTJ-related activities in the United States and its possessions. In particular, all Pories and Commanderies are responsible for compliance with local statutes and ordinances whenever conducting events. Scrupulous attention should be paid to laws concerning the serving of alcoholic beverages and the presence of minor-age children at functions.

The Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America (“GPUSA”) of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, Inc. was officially established when the Secretary of State of New Jersey issued the *Proclamation of the Corporate Charter* under the Official Seal of his office on June 29, 1962. The *Certificate of Incorporation* identified certain Grand Priory Officers as principal corporate officers: Grand Prior (President of the corporation); Grand Chancellor (First Vice President); Grand Inspector (Second Vice President); Grand Treasurer (Treasurer); and Grand Secretary (Secretary). It authorized the Order to have a Grand Council and such other officers as may be necessary and identified the charter corporate location as the City of Newark, New Jersey—but authorized activities in other States or Federal Districts in the United States.

Under this *Charter* and the *Grand Statutes*, Pories are a branch of the corporation, subordinate to the Grand Priory, and have no other legal status. Commanderies, which are viewed as smaller, temporary organizations, which are established as a preliminary step in developing new Pories. Commanderies are subordinated to either a parent Priory or to the Grand Priory.

In addition to being the President of the Corporation, the Grand Prior is the supreme leader chosen by the Grand Council to guide the activities of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem and the Grand Priory in the United States. The duties of the Grand Prior and those of several Grand Officers were approved by the Grand Council in October 1997.



Since the founding of the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America, the following individuals have served as Grand Prior for the terms indicated:

- I Crolian William Edelen 1962 - 1965
- II William Young Pryor 1965 - 1968
- III John Welchel Finger 1968 - 1972
- IV Gordon Malvern Fair Stick 1972 - 1976
- V Daniel LeVert Coleman 1976 - 1980
- VI Charles Edgar Hires 1981 - 1984
- VII Robert Francis Dyer, Jr., M.D. 1985 - 1991
- VIII Donald Robert Weber 1991 - 1993
- IX Donald Roderick Perkins 1994 - 1996
- X James Joseph Carey 1996 - 1998
- XI Stewart Boone McCarty 1998 - 2000
- XII Andrew Patrick O'Rourke 2000 - 2002
- XIII Patrick Edward Rea 2002 - 2004
- XIV David Nels Appleby 2004 - 2006
- XV Robert C.G. Disney 2006 - 2008
- XVI Wayne J. McGrath 2008 - 2010
- XVII Keith H. Larson 2010 - 2012
- XVIII Thomas P. Curtis II 2012 - 2014
- XIX Buren Riley Shields III 2014 - 2016
- XX Patrick M. Carney 2016 - 2018
- XXI Clayton M. Kemmerer 2018 - 2020
- XXII Jeffrey Peter Agnes 2020 - present



The Grand Priory of the United States of America is divided into eight (8) regions to facilitate the growth and development of Pories and Commanderies and to provide readily available direct involvement of senior experienced leaders in the mentoring and development of Priors and Commanders.

Region 1: North Atlantic NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, & ME

Region 2: Mid Atlantic PA, MD, DE, DC, VA, & WV

Region 3: South Atlantic NC, SC, GA, Southern AL (includes Birmingham), & FL

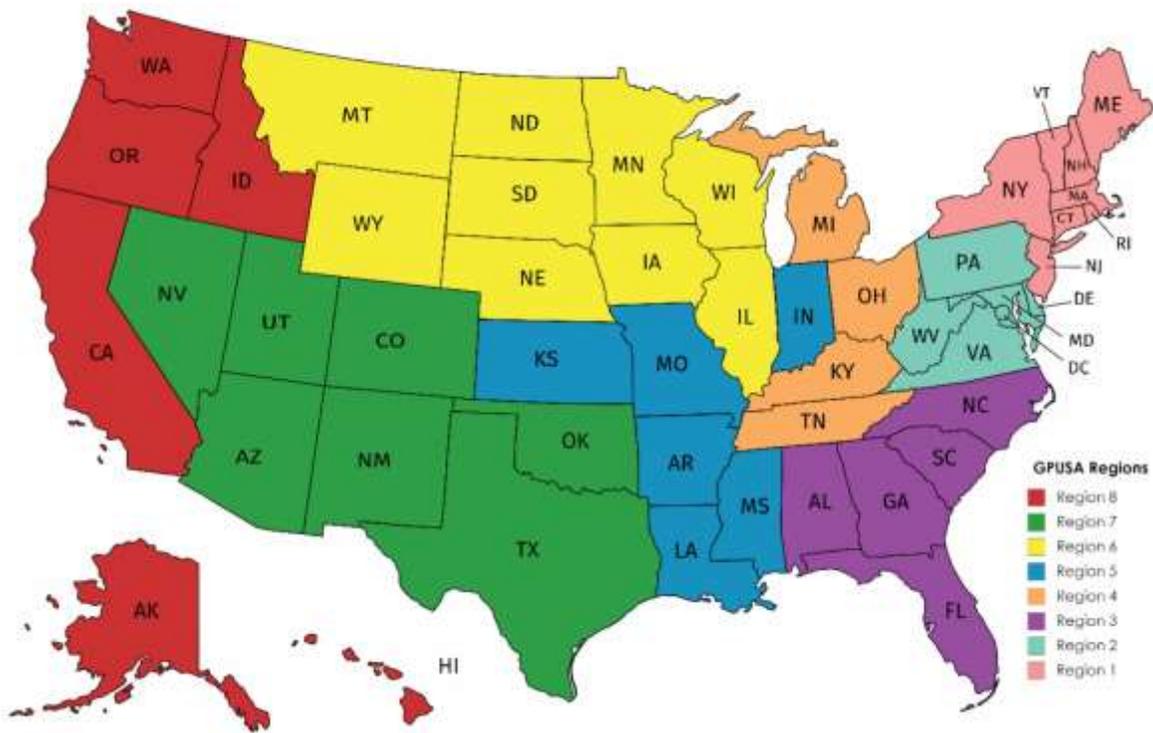
Region 4: Mid Central Northern AL, MI, OH, TN, & KY

Region 5: South Central KS, MO, LA, IL, IN, AK, MS, & Puerto Rico

Region 6: North Central WI, MN, Northern IL, ND, SD, MT, WY, NE & IA

Region 7: South West UT, CO, AZ, NM, NV, OK, & TX

Region 8: Pacific AK, WA, OR, CA, ID, HI, & Guam



Each region is administered by a Deputy Grand Prior nominated by the Grand Prior and confirmed by the Grand Council. To be appointed, a member must have served a successful term as Prior, preferably in a Priory located within the region where he/she is appointed to serve.

The Deputy Grand Prior's primary job is to nurture and develop sitting priors by providing guidance, education and advice on how to best perform their assigned duties. However, a Deputy Grand Prior must not limit or restrict in any way the ability of an individual Prior to consult directly with the Grand Prior or any other Grand Officer.

Convents and Priors

The original Knights Templar were established c. 1119 and given papal recognition in 1129. The order was led by the Grand Master who stood at the top of a pyramid of power. Convents were grouped into geographical regions known as priories. In troubled zones like the Levant, many convents were in castles while elsewhere they were established to control areas of land the order owned. Each convent was managed by a 'preceptor' or 'commander' and reported to the head of the priory in which his convent was situated. Letters, documents and news reports went back and forth between convents, all carrying the seal of the order - most commonly two knights on a single horse - in order to foster some unity between distant branches. Convents typically sent one-third of their revenue to the order's headquarters. The Grand Master resided in the headquarters at Jerusalem, and then Acre from 1191, and Cyprus after 1291. There he was assisted by other high-ranking officials such as the Grand Commander and Marshal along with lesser officials in charge of specific supplies such as clothing. There were occasional meetings or chapters of representatives from across the order and chapters at provincial level, too, but there seems to have been a great deal of autonomy in local convents, and only episodes of gross misconduct were ever sanctioned.

Priories. While the Priory is the essential organizational element within the Grand Priory of the United States, this is not always the case with the other Grand Priors of the OSMTH. The Priory is the basic sustaining organization at the local level. The Prior is the leader of the Priory. A Prior is elected by the Priory Council, subject to the approval of the Grand Prior, who guides the activities of a Priory of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem. The Prior in turn is assisted by several officers.

Commanderies are established for the purpose of expanding the Order, as an initial step toward the goal of establishing new Priors. They are established at the call of the Grand Prior for the good of the Order, usually under the protective umbrella and direct administration of an existing Priory. From time to time, an independent Commandery may be established under the Grand Priory, where no existing Priory is in sufficient physical proximity, or for other reasons deemed appropriate by the Grand Prior. Commanderies should have the goal of achieving Priory status within 18 to 24 months of their establishment.

The Commander of a Commandery, and its Chancellor, Secretary, and Treasurer are nominated by the Prior of the sponsoring Priory, in consultation with the prospective members of the Commandery, and are approved and appointed by the Grand Prior.

Preceptories. In 2005, Grand Prior XIV issued a proclamation permitting the establishment of Preceptories. Preceptories are a structure of convenience under an existing Priory. Their purpose is to facilitate more frequent local group activities of Priory members in areas where a Priory's membership is geographically dispersed.

All participants in a Preceptory must have their primary membership in and pay their oblations to the parent Priory. Preceptories are "transparent" to the Grand Priory in that they do not fall within the administrative or financial chains of command. The Priory is responsible for overseeing and reporting the activities of its Preceptories, which are accountable only as Priory activities in the Annual Report.

Preceptories can be formed following the written request of a Prior and approval of the Grand Prior when there are a minimum of 10 active members of a Priory who agree to form the Preceptory.

A comparison of Priors, Commanderies, and Preceptories is provided on the next page.

Preceptory	Commandery	Priory
The purpose of the Preceptory is to facilitate more frequent local group activities of Priory members in areas where the membership is geographically dispersed.	Commanderies are established for the purpose of expanding the Order. The goal of a Commandery should be to achieve Priory status in 18-24 months.	The Priory is the basic sustaining organization at the local level. Each Priory has responsibilities to the Grand Priory, to its members and to all members of the Order.
Membership (minimum) 10 active members	Membership (minimum) 15 active members	Membership (minimum) 25 active members
Administration Auspices of parent Priory	Administration Auspices of parent Priory	Administration Auspices of GPUSA
Authority Meetings & charitable activities	Authority Meetings & charitable activities Convents	Authority Meetings & charitable activities Convents & Investitures
Officer (appointed by Grand Prior after consideration of recommendation of Prior) Preceptor	Officers (appointed by Grand Prior after consideration of recommendation of Prior) Commander Chancellor Secretary Treasurer	Officers (elected by Active Priory members) Prior Chancellor Inspector Treasurer Secretary Registrar Aumonier Armorer Avocat Chaplain Chief of Protocol Knight Protector Master of Postulants Marshall Sword Bearer
Term of Office 2 years	Term of Office 2 years	Term of Office 2 years
Reporting No annual report required	Reporting Commandery Annual Report	Reporting Priory Annual Report

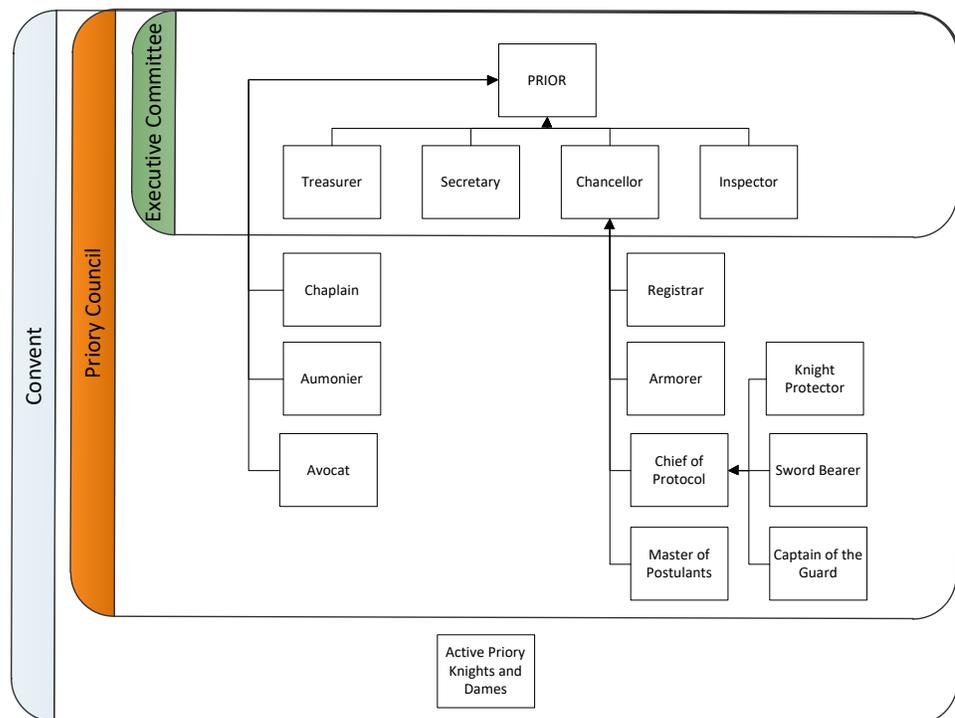
Councils and Committees

The business of the Priory is conducted by the Officers through the Priory Council, Executive Committee and Convent

The Priory Council is composed of the Priory Officers. It has the right to pass all new admissions to the Order subject to the confirmation by the Prior. The Council conducts the business of the Priory.

The Executive Committee is composed of the Prior, Chancellor, Inspector, Secretary, and Treasurer. It has the authority to act between meetings of the Council.

The Convent is a meeting of all active Knights and Dames over which the Prior presides to discuss affairs placed on the agenda by the Prior, either upon the request by the Grand Prior or on their own, or by the Priory Council, or by three Knights or Dames giving the Prior at least 10 days' notice.



CONVENT derives via Old French from Latin *conventus*, perfect participle of the verb *convenio*, meaning to convene, to come together. The original reference was to the gathering of mendicants who spent much of their time travelling.

Standing and Special Committees

Committees are a way to formally draw together people of relevant expertise from different parts of the Order who otherwise would not have a good way to share information and coordinate actions. Committees have the advantage of widening viewpoints and sharing responsibilities. Greater involvement generally results in greater commitment and participation. The Prior and Priory Council may also create “ad hoc” committees as may be appropriate. All committees include assigned Officers and should include additional active Knights and Dames.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Charitable Activities Committee coordinates the charitable activities of the Priory. Priory Officers assigned include the Aumonier (chair), Chancellor, Treasurer, and Avocat.

Budget Committee prepares an annual budget for approval of the Prior by June 30 of each year. Officers assigned to the committee include the Treasurer (chair), Chancellor, Aumonier, Secretary, Armorer, Knight Protector, and Sword Bearer.

Membership Committee considers the applications for membership of postulants who have been invited to join the Order; and it serves as a forum for discussion of any appropriate membership concerns. The committee consists of no less than five members, of whom at least two shall be dames. Officers assigned to the committee include the Chancellor (chair), Secretary, Registrar, and Avocat.

Installation Committee plans and arranges all installations and investitures of the Priory. Officers include the Chief of Protocol (chair), Chancellor, Inspector, Secretary, Master of Postulants, Knight Protector, Sword Bearer, and Marshall.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Nominating Committee presents nominations to the Priory Council for the election of Priory Officers. The membership consists of all past Priors. An eligible past Prior shall be appointed by the Prior to chair the committee. In Priorities with insufficient numbers of past Priors, a minimum of three Priory Council Officers form the Nominating Committee.

Promotion Board identifies Knights and Dames worthy of promotion and provides a list of promotion recommendations to the Prior. Membership includes the Chancellor (chair) and all current Priory Officers.

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