

The Constitutional Charter

for

*The Sovereign Military
Hospitalier Knights of the
Imperial Orders*



CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER

THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER KNIGHTS OF THE IMPERIAL ORDERS

HISTORICAL PRELUDE

TO

THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER

FOR

*THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER
KNIGHTS OF THE IMPERIAL ORDERS*

The history of the Pèpin Family and the Holy See, as well as, the Roman Catholic Church is very long and very strong. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia on-line; the history between the family of Pèpin starts with St Arnulf, the Bishop of Metz, around 600 AD. It was the work between St. Arnulf and Pèpin of Landen, which started to build the strong ties between the Roman Catholic Church and the Franks.

Pope Zachary sanctioned the deposing of the Merovingian King by Pèpin the Short and had Saint Boniface crown Pèpin the Short as King of the Franks at Soissons in 752. There is considerable correspondence between Pope Zachary and Saint Boniface, the apostle of Germany, showing how great the influence of this Pope was on events in France and Germany. This influence created strong ties between the Pèpin family and the Holy See.

On 6 January 754, Pope Stephen II re-consecrated Pèpin as king at Saint-Denis in a memorable ceremony that was recalled in coronation rites of French kings until the end of the ancien regime in 1789. In return, Pèpin assumed the role of ordained protector of the Church. Roman Catholic tradition asserts that then and there Pepin executed in writing a promise to give to the Church certain territories, which would be referred to later as the Papal States, known as the Donation of Pèpin. The Donation of Pèpin, the first in 754, and second in 756, provided a legal basis for the formal organizing of the Papal States, which inaugurated papal temporal rule over civil authorities. The Donations were bestowed by Pepin the Short only three years after he became the first civil ruler appointed by a Pope, at Soissons in 752.

The Pèpin Family became the first family of kings appointed by a Pope and ordained by God and started the succession of the throne by family bloodline. Furthermore, the Pèpin Family was the first to give the Papacy temporal rule over civil authorities, the Papal States, the foundation for the creation of the City-State now known as the Vatican.

Shortly after Pope Adrian I's accession, the Papal States were sieged and the Pope lost lands and was in grave danger. He sent word to Charlemagne. Charlemagne's title, "Patricius Romanus", which carried with it a special obligation to protect the temporal rights of the Holy See, brought Charlemagne and the whole army of the Franks to the defense of the Holy See. Charlemagne's career led to his acknowledgment by the Holy See as its chief protector and coadjutor in temporal. History recorded the vivid eloquence of the first visit of Charlemagne to the Eternal City. There everything was done to give his entry as much as possible the air of a triumph in ancient Rome. The judges met him thirty miles from the city; the militia laid at the feet of their great patrician the banner of Rome and hailed him as their *imperator*. Charlemagne prostrated himself to kiss the threshold of the Apostles, and then spent seven days in conference with the successor of Peter. It was then that he undoubtedly formed many great designs for the glory of God and the exaltation of Holy Church. His coronation as the successor of Constantine did not take place until twenty-six years later, but his consecration as first champion of the Catholic Church took place at Easter, 774.

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Charlemagne, assuming the crown of Lombardy, renewed to Pope Adrian I the donation of territory made by Pepin the Short after his defeat of Aistulph. Pope Adrian I celebrated the occasion by striking the earliest papal coin, and in a mark of the direction the mediaeval papacy was to take, no longer dated his documents by the Emperor in the East, but by the reign of Charlemagne, king of the Franks.

History enumerates fifty-three distinct campaigns of Charlemagne; of these it is possible to point to only twelve or fourteen which were not undertaken principally or entirely in execution of his mission as the soldier and protector of the Church.

Pope Leo III, the immediate successor of Pope Adrian I, notified Charlemagne of his election (26 December, 795) to the Holy See, sending him the keys of Saint Peter's tomb and the banner of Rome. The king sent in return rich presents by Abbot Angilbert, whom he commissioned to deal with the pope in all manners pertaining to the royal office of Roman Patrician. While this letter is respectful and even affectionate; Charlemagne's concept of the coordination of the spiritual and temporal powers are clearly demonstrated and he does not hesitate to remind the Pope of his grave spiritual obligations.

Pope Leo III, on the 25th April, 799, was waylaid, and left unconscious. After escaping to St. Peter's, he was rescued by two of the king's envoys, who came with a considerable force. The Duke of Spoleto sheltered the fugitive pope, who went later to Paderborn, where the king's camp was. Charlemagne received the Vicar of Christ with all due reverence. Pope Leo III was sent back to Rome escorted by a royal envoy; the insurgents, thoroughly frightened and unable to convince Charlemagne of the Pope's iniquity, surrendered, and the envoy sent Paschalis and Campulus, nephews of Adrian I and ringleaders against Pope Leo III, to the king, to be dealt with at the royal pleasure.

Pope Leo III was exonerated of the allegations against his character on December 23, 800 and he forgave the nephews of Adrian I and spared their lives but sent them into exile.

Two days later (Christmas Day, 800) took place the principal event in the life of Charlemagne. During the pontifical Mass celebrated by the pope, as the king knelt in prayer before the high altar beneath which lay the bodies of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Pope approached him, placed upon his head the imperial crown, did him formal reverence after the ancient manner, saluted him as Emperor and Augustus and anointed him, while the Romans present burst out with the acclamation, thrice repeated: "To Carolus Augustus crowned by God, mighty and pacific emperor, be life and victory" (*Carolo, piissimo Augusto a Deo coronato, magno et pacificio Imperatori, vita et victoria*).

Charlemagne owed his elevation not to the conquest of Rome, nor to any act of the Roman Senate, much less to the local citizenship of Rome, but to the Pope, who exercised in a supreme juncture the moral supremacy in Western Christendom, which the age widely recognized in him, and to which, indeed, Charlemagne even then owed the title that the Popes had transferred to his father, Pèpin. **It is certain that Charlemagne constantly attributed his imperial dignity to an act of God, made known of course through the agency of the Vicar of Christ** (*divino nutu coronatus, a Deo coronatus*, in "Capitularia", ed. Baluze, I, 247, 341, 345); also on that same day the Pope anointed (as King of the Franks) the Pèpin of Italy, son of the emperor and at that time probably destined to succeed in the imperial dignity.

The Roman Empire (*Imperium Romanum*), since 476 practically extinguished in the West, save for a brief interval in the sixth century, was restored by this papal act, which became the historical basis of the future relations between the Popes and the successors of Charlemagne.

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Since the Donation of Pepin (752); the Pope was formally sovereign of the duchy of Rome and the Exarchate. Suffice it to add here that while the imperial consecration made Charlemagne in theory, what he was already in fact, the principal ruler of the West, and impropriated, as it were, in the Carolingian line the majesty of ancient Rome, it also lifted Charlemagne, at once, to the dignity of supreme temporal protector of Western Christendom and in particular of its head, the Roman Church. Nor did this mean only the local welfare of the papacy, the good order and peace of the Patrimony of Peter. It meant also, in face of the yet vast pagan world (*barbarae nationes*) of the North and the Southeast, a religious responsibility, encouragement and protection of missions, advancement of Christian culture, organization of dioceses, enforcement of a Christian discipline of life, improvement of the clergy, in a word, all the forms of governmental cooperation with the Church that we meet with in the life and the legislation of Charlemagne.

Long before this event Pope Adrian I had conferred (774) on Charlemagne's father's dignity of *Patricius Romanus*, which implied primarily the protection of the Roman Church in all its rights and privileges, above all in the temporal authority which it had gradually acquired by just titles in the course of the two preceding centuries.

Charlemagne, it is true, after his imperial consecration exercised, practically at Rome, his authority as *Patricius*, or protector of the Roman Church. He did this with all due recognition of the papal sovereignty and principally to prevent the quasi-anarchy which local intrigues and passions, family interests and ambitions, and adverse Byzantine agencies were promoting. It would be unhistorical to maintain that as emperor he ignored at once the civil sovereignty of the Pope in the Patrimony of Peter. The Duchy of Rome and the Exarchate, he significantly omitted from the partition of the Frankish State made at the Diet of Thionville, in 806. It is to be noted that in this public division of his estate; he made no provision for the imperial title, also that he committed to all three sons "the defense and protection of the Roman Church".

In 817 Louis the Pious, by a famous charter whose substantial authenticity there is no good reason to doubt, confirmed to Pope Paschal and his successors forever, "the city of Rome with its duchy and dependencies, as the same have been held to this day by your predecessors, under their authority and jurisdiction", adding that he did not pretend to any jurisdiction in said territory, except when solicited thereto by the Pope. It may be noted here that the chroniclers of the ninth century treat as "restitution" to St. Peter the various cessions and grants of cities and territory made at this period by the Carolingian rulers within the limits of the Patrimony of Peter. The Charter of Louis the Pious was afterwards confirmed by Emperor Otto I in 962 and Henry II in 1020. These imperial documents make it clear that the acts of authority exercised by the new emperor in the Patrimony of Peter were only such as were called for by his office of Defender of the Roman Church.

In reality, Charlemagne's dignity of *Patricius Romanorum* was equivalent to immediate and sole sovereign authority at Rome, and in law and in fact, excluded any papal sovereignty. The sovereignty of the civil authority of the Pope was granted by Pèpin and Charlemagne, as well as, their descendants, to the Pope as a gift, under their authority as the protectors of the church and the chosen of God.

The personal devotion of Charlemagne to the Apostolic See is well known. While in the preface to his Capitularies; he calls himself the "devoted defender and humble helper of Holy Church", he was especially fond of the basilica of St. Peter at Rome to which he made very rich gifts. He promulgated a special law on the respect due this See of Peter (*Capitulare de honoranda sede Apostolica*, ed. Baluze I, 255).

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The letters of the Popes to Charlemagne, his father, and grandfather, were collected by Charlemagne's order in the famous "Codex Carolinus" and Pope Gregory VII tells us (Regest., VII, 23) that Charlemagne placed a part of the conquered Saxon territory under the protection of St. Peter, and sent to Rome a tribute from the same.

Charlemagne received from Pope Adrian I, the Roman canon law in the shape of the "Collectio Dionysia-Hadriana", and also (784-91) the "Gregorian Sacramentary" or liturgical use of Rome, for the guidance of the Frankish Church. He furthered also in the Frankish churches the introduction of the Gregorian chant.

It is of interest to note that just before his coronation at Rome, Charlemagne received three messengers from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, bearing to the King of the Franks the keys of the Holy Sepulchre and the banner of Jerusalem, "a recognition that the holiest place in Christendom was under the protection of the great monarch of the West" (Hodgkin).

Shortly after this event, the Caliph Haroun al Raschid sent an embassy to Charlemagne, who continued to take a deep interest in the Holy Sepulchre, and built Latin monasteries at Jerusalem, also a hospital for pilgrims and he founded *Schola Francorum* near St. Peter's Basilica, a refuge and hospital (with cemetery attached) for Frankish pilgrims to Rome, now represented by the Campo Santo de' Tedeschi near the Vatican.

This was the beginning of our history together, family and Church, specifically, the Holy See. Since then, we have established more than thirteen hundred years of history between the Pèpin (Pippin) Family, the *First Champions of Rome*, and the Holy See. The family has not only given our support from the crown but we have included our numbers among the ecclesiastic. There have been more than fifty (50) members of the family who have held the title of Bishop, Archbishop, or Cardinal and we have been blessed with fifteen Saints within the family blood line. A history few others could claim.

We are still strong defenders of the faith.

It is only logical for us to maintain this strong bond between the Family and the Church, by continuing our partnership in Christ, through the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Knights of the Imperial Orders by establishing diplomatic relations and aiding us in International acceptance. With this Constitutional Charter in place, we start the next chapter between us and for the glory of God.

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TITLE I - THE ORDER AND ITS NATURE

ARTICLE 1 - *Origin and Nature of the Order*

Par. 1 — The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Knights of the Imperial Orders is a sovereign mendicant religious and military order of knighthood. As a Religious Lay Order, it contains both lay and vowed members and the Order has combined the six most important dynastic sovereign chivalric orders associated with the Holy Roman Empire, which had been previously disbanded due to the loss of the Imperial throne, along with a new order associated with healing and designed to augment the older established Orders, into a single Order of Knighthood. Originally, two of the Orders arose from a group of Knights who had been called upon by circumstances to augment their original military service for the defense of pilgrims to the Holy Land and of Christian civilization to the East with charitable enterprises associated with Hospitallers. The remaining four Orders were related directly to nobility, the monarchy and military, as well as, Hospitaller functions. Since the six Orders, along with the newly created order associated with the ministry of healing, are being combined into a single sovereign order; the original date of founding would be 800 AD, which is associated with the oldest of the seven Orders. However, it should be noted the youngest previously established Order dates from 1693.

The sovereignty resides in the Divine Right of Blood and, the fact, the current Sovereign's blood line has never been deposed or abdicated the rights of inheritance. The founding Grand Master, His Imperial and Most Eminent Highness, Prince Fra' Dr. Donald Lee Pippin or D. Lee Pippin (preferred), who is reforming the Orders into a single active unit, is a direct heir, through more than twelve lines of descent, to the founder and first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Emperor Charlemagne, who was crowned by Pope Leo III. Papal decree at the time of the coronation of Charlemagne declared the family to be chosen by God and given absolute sovereignty over the land. It was based on this decree, monarchies and empires became inherited positions associated with the will of God. Since the Church has continued to honor and protect these sovereign rights for cousins, with lesser blood lines, and helped to place these cousins on modern thrones; it is expected the Church will honor this newly formed but historical Order and recognize the absolute sovereign rights of the Grand Master. The six original orders were The Order of the Paladin Knights, the Order of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, the Order of St. Michael, The Order of Knights of the Holy Spirit, The Order of the Dráco, and The Royal and Military Order of St. Louis. The seventh order is the Order of St. Raphael. Under the single banner of The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Knights of the Imperial Orders, the new Order will inclusively combine the traditions, medals and codes of the original six orders with a tradition of military, chivalrous and nobiliary to the greater glory of God, and will follow these examples in the establishment of the seventh order.

Par. 2 — In nations where it exercises its activity in virtue of its rights or of international conventions, the Order's structure comprises: Grand Priories, Priories, Sub-priories and National Associations.

Par. 3 — In this Constitution and in the Code, the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Knights of the Imperial Orders is also referred to as "the Knights of the Imperial Order" or simply as "the Order".

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Par. 4 — In the rules which follow, the Grand Priories and the National Associations are also referred to as Priories and Associations. The term Code refers to the Code of the Order.

ARTICLE 2 - *Purpose*

Par. 1 — The purpose of the Order is the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, service to the faith and to the Holy Father, and assistance to one's neighbor, in accordance with its ancient traditions.

Par. 2 — True to the divine precepts and to the admonitions of our Lord Jesus Christ, guided by the teachings of the Church, the Order affirms and propagates the Christian virtues of charity and brotherhood. The Order carries out its charitable works for the sick, the poor, the needy and refugees without distinction of religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, origin and/or age. The Order fulfills its institutional tasks especially by carrying out Hospitaller works, including social, community and health assistance, as well as, aiding victims of exceptional disasters and of war, all the while attending to their spiritual well-being and the strengthening of their faith in God.

Par. 3 — In order to be able to perform their institutional tasks, the Priories and Associations may, according to the regulations of the Code, establish dependent organizations in accordance with national laws and international conventions and agreements made with States.

ARTICLE 3 – *Sovereignty*

Par. 1 — The Order are a subject of international law and exercises sovereign functions. It takes its sovereign right from both history and the blood line of the Grand Master.

Par. 2 — Legislative, executive and judicial functions are reserved to the competent bodies of the Order according to the provisions of the Constitution and Code.

ARTICLE 4 - *Relations with the Apostolic See*

Par. 1 — The Order is a legal entity recognized by the Holy See and dating from Papal Decrees from Pope Stephen II on Jan. 06, 754 AD and Pope Leo III on December 25, 800 AD.

Par. 2 — Religious members through their vows, as well as, members of the Second Class through the Promise of Obedience, are only subject to their appropriate Superiors in the Order. In accordance with the Code of Canon Law, the churches and conventual institutions of the Order are exempt from the jurisdiction of the dioceses and are directly subject to the Holy See.

Par. 3 — In the conduct of relations with the Apostolic See, the acquired rights, customs and privileges granted to the Order by the Supreme Pontiffs are in force unless expressly abrogated.

Par. 4 — The Supreme Pontiff appoints as his representative to the Order a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church on whom are conferred the title of *Cardinalis Patronus* and special faculties. The *Cardinalis Patronus* has the task of promoting the spiritual interests of the Order and its members and relations between the Holy See and the Order.

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Par. 5 — The Order has diplomatic representation to the Holy See, according to the norms of international law.

Par. 6 — The Grand Master is at the same time head of a sovereign State and head of a religious Order. In this second capacity, the Holy Roman Church would traditionally give him the rank of Cardinal. However, at this time, the Grand Master is an Archbishop and is the acting *Cardinalis Patronus* to the Order. He was established as the Archbishop of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Knights of the Imperial Orders, with an edict to reestablish the Order and build upon its membership.

Par. 7 — It is acknowledged, under historic relations between the Holy See and the Imperial Family; the Grand Master and the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Knights of the Imperial Orders are an independent organization and only subject to the Holy See for religious direction. However, the Order and the Prince Grand Master, due to their independence and ancient history, may take positions which differ from the mainstream church, as well as, the Holy See but never in discord with the Holy Scriptures. This unusual ability is based on the historical standing that God, through the Office of the Holy See, chose the family of Pippin as his secular voice and authority. Therefore, the Prince Grand Master is answerable only to God. Thus, allowing the Order an opportunity to reach many of the unchurched throughout the world, similar to the times of Charlemagne. Notwithstanding, The Holy See is bound and, freely, gives full acknowledgment of the Sovereignty of the Order, will assist with the creation of Diplomatic Relations for the Order, acknowledges the profession of the divine right of the Sovereign Prince Grand Master and will provide full support for the international recognition of the Sovereignty of the Order.

Par. 8 — The religious nature of the Order does not prejudice the exercise of sovereign prerogatives pertaining to the Order in so far as it is recognized by States as a subject of international law.

ARTICLE 5 - *Sources of the Order's Law*

The sources of the Order's law are:

- 1 – The Absolute Monarch, the Constitution, the Code of the Order and, as an adjunct, canonical legislation;
- 2 – The legislative provisions according to Art. 15, Par. 2, a) of the Constitution;
- 3 – International agreements ratified according to Art. 15, par. 2, h) of the Constitution;
- 4 – Its customs and privileges;
- 5 – The Code of the Order, where not in contradiction to current norms.

ARTICLE 6 - *Flags, Insignia and Armorial Bearings of the Order (Exhibit A)*

Par. 1 — The flag of the Order bears the shields of the Sovereign Grand Master with the Cross of the Holy Spirit, which is the white eight - pointed cross at the periphery, the eight points of the cross are rounded, and between each arm there is a fleur-de-lis, imposed on the center of the cross is a dove all on a blue field. The eight rounded corners represent the Beatitudes, the four fleurs-de-lis represent the Gospels, the twelve petals represent the Apostles, and the dove signifies the Holy Spirit.

Par. 2 — The armorial bearings of the Order display the Collar of the Order of the Holy Spirit surrounding the shield of the Grand Master as heir of the Holy Roman Empire and France, with the

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Cross of the Holy Spirit superimposed over the shields, and displayed under a princely mantle surmounted by a crown.

Par. 3 — The insignia for the Order shall be a blue shield bearing the Cross of the Holy Spirit upon it and a crown above it.

Par. 4 — A special regulation, approved by the Grand Master with the advice of the Sovereign Council, defines the characteristics and the use of the flags, the insignia and the armorial bearings of the Order.

ARTICLE 7 – *Language*

The official languages of the Order are English (Primary) and French (Secondary).

TITLE II - THE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER

ARTICLE 8 - *The Order and Classes*

Par. 1 — The members of the Order are divided into three Classes:

- A) The First Class consists of Knights of Justice, also called Professed, and of Professed Conventual Chaplains, who have made religious vows and can be Roman Catholic, Eastern Catholic, Old Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran or Anglican;
- B) The Second Class consists of members in Obedience, who makes the Promise according to Art. 9, Par. 2, and who are subdivided into three categories and can be of any Christian faith:
 - a) Knights and Dames of Honor and Devotion in Obedience
 - b) Knights and Dames of Grace and Devotion in Obedience
 - c) Magistral Knights and Dames in Obedience;
- C) The Third Class consists of those members who do not make religious vows or make the Promise but who live according to the norms of the Church and are prepared to commit themselves to the Order and the Church. They are divided into six categories and can be of any Christian faith or of the Jewish Tradition, as well as, the Prince Grand Master can make special decree for members of Buddhism, Hinduism or Islamic, if the Prince Grand Master feels they display character and faith which qualifies as Christ like and an account will be made in the official records:
 - a) Knights and Dames of Honor and Devotion
 - b) Conventual Chaplains *ad honorem*
 - c) Knights and Dames of Grace and Devotion
 - d) Magistral Chaplains
 - e) Knights and Dames of Magistral Grace
 - f) Pilgrims (male and female) of Devotion, which is the only sub-class which will accept members from any and all religions, as well as, non-believers, without special account, because all Pilgrims are seekers of Truth. However, Pilgrims do not carry the title of Knight or Dame, or the right to vote. Nevertheless, they may participate in the process and provide counsel.

Par. 3 — The requisites for admission to the various classes and categories of membership are determined by the Code.

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ARTICLE 9 - *Obligations of the Members*

Par. 1 — The Knights and Chaplains belonging to the First Class profess the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in accordance with the Code, thus aspiring to perfection according to the Gospel. They are religious for all purposes of Canon Law and are governed by the particular rules which concern them. They are not obliged to live in community but they can live in community.

Par. 2 — By virtue of the Promise, members of the Second Class obliges themselves to strive for the perfection of Christian life in conformity with the obligation of their state, in the spirit of the Order.

Par. 3 — The members of the Order are to conduct their lives in an exemplary manner in conformity with the teachings and precepts of Christ and to devote themselves to the charitable activities of the Order, according to the provisions of the Code.

Par. 4 — Members of the Second and of the Third Class, with the exception of priests, make a financial contribution through their national organizations to the Grand Master, fixed by the Chapter General.

ARTICLE 10 - *Assignment of Members*

Par. 1 — The Grand Master is the only party who can invite an individual to membership and can authorize their status within the three classes or ranks. The Grand Master bestows title of Peerage and Nobility, as is his right and duty.

Par. 2 — Where only a Priory already exists, all members of the three Classes automatically belong to it.

Par. 3 — Where a Subpriory is established, only the members of the First and Second Class belong to it.

Par. 4 — Where an Association is established, the members of the three Classes belong to it.

Par. 5 — Where a Priory or Subpriory is established in the territory where an Association already exists, all the members of the First and Second Class are also members of the Priory or Subpriory.

Par. 6 — Where neither a Priory nor a Subpriory exists in the territory, the members of the First and Second Class are also aggregated *in gremio religionis* (dependent directly on the Grand Commander).

Par. 7 — Where neither a Priory nor an Association exists in the territory, the members of the Third Class are assigned to an institution of the Order as the Grand Master decides.

Par. 8 — The Grand Master with the advice of the Sovereign Council, having heard the Priors, Regents or Presidents concerned, may transfer a member of the Order, with his consent, to a Priory, Subpriory or Association, according to the above norms.

ARTICLE 11 - *Duties and Offices*

Par. 1 — The duties and offices of the Grand Master are inherited by a direct descendent of the Emperor Charlemagne and through the current Grand Master, His Imperial Highness, Prince Fra' Dr. D. Lee

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Pippin, who is descended from Charlemagne through 12 lines ancestry, as well as, an older lineage associated with four Roman Emperors, three Byzantine Emperors, more than six Sassanid Emperors, including the last, the Grand Prince of Kiev, and two Jewish Exilarch, making him a direct descendent of King David of Israel, as further proof of being chosen by God. The Current Grand Master has inherited the rights to over 178 Titles of Peerage and Nobility. The Grand Master is always considered of the First Class, a Professed Knight in Perpetual Vows.

Par. 2 — The duties and offices of the Grand Commander are conferred upon Professed Knights in Perpetual Vows.

Par. 3 — The office of Prior is entrusted to Professed Knights in Perpetual or Temporary vows.

Par. 4 — The High Offices and the offices of the Sovereign Council, in keeping with Art. 20, Par. 4, and the offices of Chancellor, Receiver and Hospitaller of the Priories and Subpriories, as well as, those of Regent, Lieutenant, Vicar and Procurator, are held preferably by Professed Knights. If Knights in Obedience are elected for their specific qualifications, their election must be confirmed by the Grand Master.

Par. 5 — The positions of High Officers, Priors, Vicars, Lieutenants, Procurators, Regents, Chancellors of Priories, and of at least four of the six Councilors of the Sovereign Council, are reserved to Knights having the requisites for Honor and Devotion or Grace and Devotion.

TITLE III - GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER

ARTICLE 12 - *The Grand Master*

Sovereign prerogatives and honors and the title “His Imperial and Most Eminent Highness” are reserved to the Grand Master, Head of the Order.

ARTICLE 13 - *Requisites for Appointment of Grand Master*

Par. 1 — The Grand Master is an inherited position for life and he must be a blood descendent of Charlemagne. If the reigning Grand Master has male heirs, either biological or legally adopted; the eldest male shall be appointed to the position. If he decides to abdicate his right, it shall be taken by the second eldest and so forth. If any reigning Grand Master dies without heirs; the position will be appointed to the next eldest brother of the current Grand Master, if he is a member of the Professed Knights. If no brothers are available; the position will go to the first nephew, who is a member of the Professed Knights. If no immediate male heirs are available, qualified or willing to take the position; Cousins of the Blood, who are among the Professed Knights, with at least ten years in perpetual vows, if they are younger than fifty years of age; in the case of Professed Knights who are older, but who have been members of the Order for at least ten years, three years in perpetual vows are sufficient, shall be put up by the Council Complete of State from among the Professed Knights and, through election, one will be appointed to the position of Grand Master.

Par. 2 — The Grand Master and the Lieutenant of the Grand Master must have the nobiliary requisites prescribed for the category of Knights of Honor and Devotion.

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Par. 3 — Before the assumption of the office, the appointment of the Grand Master is to be communicated by letter to the Holy Father, by the person appointed.

ARTICLE 14 - *The Grand Master's Oath*

The person appointed to the dignity of Grand Master, having informed the Holy Father of the appointment, takes the following oath in the presence of the Cardinalis Patronus in solemn session of the Council Complete of State:

“By this most Holy Wood of the Cross and by God’s Holy Gospels, I, N.N., do solemnly promise and swear to observe the Constitution, the Code, the Rule and the laudable customs of our Order and to administer the affairs of the Order conscientiously. So help me God, and if I do otherwise, may it be to the risk of my soul.”

On the 25th of December of the year of appointment; the Grand Master’s coronation is held and he is crowned as sovereign emperor of the Knights of the Imperial Orders by either the Holy Father or the Cardinalis Patronus, in the tradition of the family and by right granted from God and declared in Papal Decree.

ARTICLE 15 - *Powers of the Grand Master*

Par. 1 — The Grand Master, assisted by the Sovereign Council, sees to the exercise of his supreme authority, to the conferral of duties and offices, and to the general government of the Order. The Grand Master is an Absolute Monarch.

Par. 2 — It pertains to the Grand Master:

- a) in the process of establishing the Order, the Founding Grand Master, H.I.&M.E.H. Pr. Fra’ Dr. D. Lee Pippin, will decree the first Sovereign Council and will adjust membership requirements and lengths of terms until the Order has established a base membership of one thousand members, with more than two hundred members having membership status greater than five years. This measure is necessary for the establishment of the Order.
- b) to issue legislative measures, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, concerning matters regulated neither by the Constitution nor by the Code;
- c) to promulgate by decree the acts of government;
- d) to admit, with the advice of the Sovereign Council given in secret, members to the Novitiate and to Temporary and Perpetual Vows of the First Class as well as to the year of probation and to the Promise of the Second Class;
- e) to admit, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, members of the First Class to Aspirancy;
- f) to receive members into the Third Class of the Order, with the advice of the Sovereign Council or with a provision given on his authority alone (*motu proprio*);
- g) to administer, with the assistance of the Sovereign Council, the assets of the Common Treasure and to supervise the properties;
- h) to execute the acts of the Holy See, insofar as these relate to the Order, and to inform the Holy See of the state and the needs of the Order;
- i) to ratify international agreements, with the advice of the Sovereign Council;

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- j) to convene an Extraordinary Chapter General which will have the faculty to dissolve the Sovereign Council and elect a new one, in accordance with the norms of the Constitution and Code.
- k) The Grand Master is a Sovereign and answerable only to God because he was chosen by God. This was stated in the Papal Decree of 800 AD with the coronation of the Emperor Charlemagne. Therefore, he has the authority and right to ignore or override the Sovereign Council, the Constitution, the By Laws, and/or the Code at any time, as he feels compelled by God.
- l) As a Sovereign and Emperor, the Grand Master has the right and duty to invest Title of Peerage and Title of Nobiliary.

Par. 3 — The decrees of par. 2 b) are designated magistral or conciliar depending on whether the act of government has been issued directly by the Grand Master or whether there has been prior consideration or prior deliberation by the Sovereign Council. When the advice of the Sovereign Council is required, the Grand Master can issue a decree at variance with that advice and he is not obliged to issue a decree in conformity with it.

ARTICLE 16 - *Resignation from Office by the Grand Master*

The resignation from office by the Grand Master must be accepted by the Sovereign Council and, to be effective, communicated and accepted by the Holy Father.

ARTICLE 17 - *Extraordinary Government*

Par. 1 — In the case of the permanent incapacity, resignation or death of the Grand Master, the Order is governed by a Lieutenant *ad interim* in the person of the Grand Commander who can carry out acts of ordinary administration until the Office ceases to be vacant.

Par. 2 — The permanent incapacity of the Grand Master is declared by the Magistral Court of first instance in closed session on a petition by a two thirds majority of the members of the Sovereign Council, which has been convened and chaired by the Grand Commander or the Grand Chancellor, or has convened itself by an absolute majority. The petition is presented by the Grand Chancellor, or by a member of the Sovereign Council delegated for this purpose. If the petition is affirmed, the Grand Commander assumes the office of Lieutenant *ad interim*.

Par. 3 — In the case of the incapacity of the Grand Master for a period of more than one month, the Grand Commander assumes the ordinary administration of the Order and immediately convenes the Sovereign Council for confirmation.

Par. 4 — In the event of the incapacity of the Grand Commander, the Sovereign Council elects from among its members a Professed Knight in Perpetual Vows as Lieutenant *ad interim*.

Par. 5 — The Lieutenant of the Grand Master is appointed by the Grand Master from among his potential heirs and after they are a Professed Knight. Before taking up his office, the Lieutenant of the Grand Master takes the oath in accordance with Art. 14. The resignation of the Lieutenant of the Grand Master must be accepted by the Sovereign Council and with a resolution, which must be communicated

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to the Holy Father in order to be effective. However, the Grand Master can relieve the Lieutenant Grand Master at his discretion and can convey his decision and his named replacement for Lieutenant Grand Master to the Sovereign Council and notice to the Holy Father.

ARTICLE 18 - *The High Offices*

Par. 1 — The High Offices are The Grand Commander; The Grand Chancellor; The Grand Hospitaller; and The Receiver of the Common Treasure.

Par. 2 — The replacement of persons holding High Offices is regulated by the Code and subject to the Grand Master.

ARTICLE 19 - *The Prelate*

Par. 1 — The Prelate is appointed by the Supreme Pontiff, who chooses from among three candidates presented by the Grand Master with the advice of the Sovereign Council. In the event that none of the three candidates presented meets with the approval of the Holy Father, other candidates will be presented. The Prelate assists the *Cardinalis Patronus* in carrying out his mission to the Order.

Par. 2 — The Prelate is the ecclesiastical superior of the clergy of the Order in sacerdotal functions. He ensures that the religious and priestly life of the Chaplains and their apostolate are conducted according to the discipline and the spirit of the Order.

Par. 3 — The Prelate assists the Grand Master and the Grand Commander in their responsibility for both the spiritual life and religious observances of the members of the Order and in all matters concerning the spiritual nature of the works of the Order.

Par. 4 — At each session of the Ordinary Chapter General the Prelate presents a report on the spiritual state of the Order.

ARTICLE 20 - *The Sovereign Council*

Par. 1 — The Sovereign Council assists the Grand Master in the Government of the Order.

Par. 2 — The following are members of Sovereign Council:

- a) the Grand Master or the Lieutenant, if the Grand Master is unavailable, who presides;
- b) the holders of the four High Offices and six Councilors.

Par. 3 — The members of the Sovereign Council, excluding the Grand Master, the Lieutenant, and the four High Offices, are elected by the Chapter General by a majority of those present.

Par. 4 — The Grand Commander and at least four other members of the Sovereign Council must be Professed Knights in Perpetual or Temporary Vows.

Par. 5 — For the admission of members to the First Class only the members of the Sovereign Council who are Professed Knights in Perpetual or Temporary Vows are entitled to vote.

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Par. 6 — The members of the Sovereign Council remain in office until the next Chapter General and may be re-elected. For a third or further consecutive re-election to the same position a two-thirds majority of votes of those present is required.

Par. 7 — The Grand Master does not vote on matters for which the Sovereign Council must give its advice, notwithstanding Art. 15, Par. 3. In the case of a tie vote among the Councilors, including the High Officers, the decision of the Grand Master prevails. If the Grand Master does not express an opinion, the matter is suspended. However, the Grand Master has the absolute Authority and can decide against the advice of the Sovereign Council, if he feels it is in the best interest of the Order and the greater glorification of God.

ARTICLE 21 - *The Government Council*

Par. 1 — The Government Council is a consultative body for dealing with the political, religious, hospitaller and international policies of the Order or other general aspects of the life of the Order. It may issue recommendations to the holders of the four High Offices and to the Board of Auditors. It meets at least twice each year.

Par. 2 — The Government Council consists of six Councilors from different geographic areas elected by the Chapter General from members of any of the three Classes of the Order.

Par. 3 — At meetings of the Government Council are present:

- a) the Grand Master or the Lieutenant, who convenes it and presides;
- b) the members of the Sovereign Council;
- c) the Prelate of the Order, when there might be questions within his competence.

Par. 4 — The six Councilors remain in office until the next Chapter General and may be re-elected once.

ARTICLE 22 - *The Chapter General*

Par. 1 — The Chapter General is the supreme assembly of the Order and is composed of representatives of the different classes. It is convened once every five years or whenever the Grand Master, having heard the Sovereign Council, may think fit, or on application to the Grand Master by the majority of the Priors, Subpriors and Associations.

Par. 2 — The following are members of the Chapter General:

- a) The Grand Master or the Lieutenant, who presides;
- b) The members of the Sovereign Council;
- c) The Prelate;
- d) The Priors, or in the event of vacancy, their permanent substitutes (Procurators, Vicars, Lieutenants);
- e) The Professed Bailiffs;
- f) Two Professed Knights delegated by each Priory or, in the absence of one of these, a Knight in Obedience;
- g) A Professed Knight and a Knight in Obedience delegated by the Knights in *gremio religionis*;
- h) Five Regents of the Subpriors in accordance with the Code;

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- i) Fifteen representatives of the Associations, in accordance with the Code;
- l) The six members of the Government Council of the Order.

Par. 3 — The Chapter General is convened to elect the members of the Sovereign Council, excluding the high offices, the members of the Government Council, the members of the Board of Auditors; to deal with modifications to the Constitution and the Code; to take cognizance of and deal with the most important problems pertaining to the Order, such as its spiritual and temporal state, the program of its activities and its international relations.

Par. 4 — For the approval of modifications to the Constitution or for the approval of modifications to the Code, an absolute majority is required, with the exception of any Article or Paragraph associated with the Grand Master or the powers of the Grand Master. The Chapter General may make a recommendation associated with the Grand Master and present it to the Grand Master, after a majority vote, for his observation. If the Grand Master agrees with the recommendation; the change will be ratified. If the Grand Master disagrees, the change will be abolished. Furthermore, any modifications which refer exclusively to the First Class, for which it is required that in the absolute majority vote there is also the majority of the Professed Knights having the right to vote.

ARTICLE 23 - *The Council Complete of State*

Par. 1 — The Council Complete of State elects the Grand Master when there is no direct heir or can elect a temporary Lieutenant Grand Master, if undecided.

Par. 2 — The following are entitled to vote:

- a) The current Lieutenant of the Grand Master or the Lieutenant *ad interim*;
- b) The members of the Sovereign Council;
- c) The Prelate;
- d) The Priors or, in the event of vacancy, their permanent substitutes (Procurators, Vicars, Lieutenants);
- e) The Professed Bailiffs;
- f) Two Professed Knights delegated by each Priory;
- g) A Professed Knight and a Knight in Obedience delegated by the Knights in *gremio religionis*;
- h) Five Regents of the Subpriories, in accordance with the Code;
- i) Fifteen representatives of the Associations, in accordance with the Code.

Par. 3 — The Grand Master's election requires a majority plus one of those present entitled to vote.

Par. 4 — The members of the First Class taking part in the Council Complete of State have the right to propose three candidates, who qualify. In the event that such a list is not presented within the first day of the meetings of the Council Complete of State or if a candidate is not elected from among the proposed list within the first three ballots, the members of the Council Complete of State have freedom of choice in successive ballots.

Par. 5 — After the fifth undecided ballot, the Council Complete of State decides, with the same majority, whether to proceed to the election of a Lieutenant of the Grand Master for a maximum period of one year. In the event of a negative result the balloting to elect the Grand Master resumes. In the

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event of a positive result the Lieutenant of the Grand Master is elected by means of a run off ballot between the two candidates who received the largest number of votes in the fifth ballot. The candidate in the run off ballot who receives the larger number of votes prevails. Should there be only one candidate, a majority vote of those present is required.

Par. 6 — If elected, the Lieutenant of the Grand Master must reconvene the Council Complete of State before the end of his mandate.

ARTICLE 24 - *General Norms for Elections*

Par. 1 — The members of the Chapter General, of the Council Complete of State, and those entitled to vote in the election of a Prior, Regent or President of an Association, must act personally and may not appoint any representatives, or delegates or proxies or vote by letter but may attend via electronic means such as teleconferencing.

Par. 2 — Without prejudice to any other provision, the basis of any vote is calculated on those with a right to vote who are present and vote. Where applicable, a two thirds majority applies only for the first three ballots. For successive ballots a majority of those present having the right to vote is sufficient, without prejudice to any other provision.

ARTICLE 25 - *The Juridical Council*

Par. 1 — The Juridical Council is an expert advisory collegial body, which can be consulted about juridical questions and problems of special importance.

Par. 2 — It is composed of: a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary General and four members.

Par. 3 — The members are appointed by the Grand Master with the advice of the Sovereign Council. They are selected from among those who are experts in the juridical sciences, preferably members of the Order particularly versed in the law of the Order, in public and international law and in Canon Law. They remain in office for three years and may be re-appointed.

ARTICLE 26 - *Judicial Regulations*

Par. 1 — Cases falling within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical forum are submitted to the ordinary ecclesiastical Tribunals, in accordance with Canon Law.

Par. 2 — For cases falling within the competence of the lay forum between physical and juridical persons of the Order and against third parties, the juridical function is exercised by the Magistral Courts, in accordance with the Code.

Par. 3 — The Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, appoints the Presidents, the judges, and the clerk of the Magistral Courts.

Par. 4 — The judges of the Magistral Courts are chosen from among members of the Order who are specially versed in law. They hold office for three years and may be re-appointed.

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Par. 5 — The judicial regulations and the procedure to be observed by the Magistral Courts are regulated by the Code.

ARTICLE 27 - *The Board of Auditors*

Par. 1 — The Board of Auditors oversees and controls the income, the expenditures and all the assets of the Order. It is also the consultative body of the Receiver of the Common Treasure.

Par. 2 — It consists of a President, four ordinary Councilors, and two alternates.

Par. 3 — The members of the Board of Auditors are elected by the Chapter General in the first balloting, with a majority of those having the right to vote and with the majority of those present in successive ballots. They are chosen from among the Knights versed in the juridical, economic and financial disciplines. They hold office until the following Chapter General, and may be re-elected for one consecutive term and, with a two-thirds majority, for a third term.

TITLE IV - THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ORDER

ARTICLE 28 - *Establishment of Organizations*

Par. 1 — The establishment of a Grand Priory, Priory, Subpriory or Association, and the approval of their statutes, belong to the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council.

Par. 2 — The title of Grand Priory belongs to some Priors by custom or by virtue of a resolution of the Chapter General. Wherever the Grand Master resides is considered a Grand Priory by custom.

Par. 3 — The Grand Master, with the advice of the competent Priors, Subpriors or Associations and the advice of the Sovereign Council, establishes new organizations and approves their statutes. The establishment of Priors and Subpriors is to be communicated by the Grand Master to the Holy Father.

Par. 4 — The same procedure must be followed for the amalgamation, division or dissolution of Priors, Subpriors or Associations.

Par. 5 — Within each territory, only a Priory or a Subpriory can be established. Relations between a Priory and an Association existing in the same territory are regulated by the Code.

ARTICLE 29 - *Government of Priors*

Par. 1 — At least five Professed Knights are necessary for the establishment of a Priory.

Par. 2 — The members of the three Classes belong to the Assembly.

Par. 3 — The Prior is assisted by a limited Council which is elected by the Chapter according to the statutes of the Priory.

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Par. 4 — The following are members of the Chapter:

- a) The Prior;
- b) The Professed Knights and Chaplains of the Priory ;
- c) The Chancellor, the Receiver and, where no Association exists in the same territory, the Hospitaller;
- d) Two representatives of the Second Class;
- e) Two representatives of the Third Class, where no Association exists.

Par. 5 — The Chancellor and the Receiver are appointed by the Prior from among the Knights of the First and Second Class, having consulted the members of the First Class. The Hospitaller and the representatives of the Second and Third Class are elected by the Assembly.

Par. 6 — The Professed members propose by a majority vote a list of three candidates from which the members of the Priory Chapter elect the Prior.

Par. 7 — The Prior elect may not take up office until he has received the approval of the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, and taken the oath of office.

Par. 8 — The statutes of the Priory establish the other competencies of the Chapter and of the Assembly.

ARTICLE 30 - *Term of Office of Priors*

The Prior and the members of the limited Council remain in office for six years and may be re-elected. Re-election to a third or further six-year term requires a two-thirds majority.

ARTICLE 31 - *Lieutenant of the Prior*

Par. 1 — Whenever expediency and need require, the Prior, after hearing the Chapter, may appoint a Lieutenant to substitute for him for one year, in all or in part, in the exercise of his duties. The appointment is to be approved by the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council.

Par. 2 — In case of necessity, the appointment of the Lieutenant devolves on the Grand Master with the advice of the Sovereign Council, if the Prior has not made provision in accordance with Par. 1.

Par. 3 — The Prior, after hearing the limited Council, can appoint a Lieutenant to substitute for him for a maximum period of three months.

Par. 4 — The Lieutenant must be a Professed Knight or a Knight in Obedience, in accordance with Art. 11, Par. 3.

ARTICLE 32 - *Vicar and Procurator of a Priory*

Par. 1 — For just and grave cause the Grand Master may, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, remove a Prior and appoint a Vicar.

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Par. 2 — Should it not be possible to proceed with the election of a Prior in accordance with Canon Law, the Vicar remains in office until the end of the next Chapter General.

Par. 3 — Should it prove impossible for a Priory to function, or for other just and grave reasons, the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, appoints a Procurator who shall remain in office until the end of the next Chapter General.

Par. 4 — The Vicar and the Procurator must be Professed Knights or Knights in Obedience in accordance with Art. 11, Par. 3.

ARTICLE 33 - *Subpriories and the Appointment of Regents*

Par. 1 — For the establishment of a Subpriory there must be at least nine Knights in Obedience.

Par. 2 — The Subpriory is governed by a Professed Knight or a Knight in Obedience, with the title of Regent, assisted by a Council and the Chapter, in accordance with its own Statutes and the Code.

Par. 3 — The Regent and the Councilors are elected by the Chapter. The Regent takes office after having received the approval of the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, and having taken the oath.

Par. 4 — The Regent and the Councilors hold office for six years and may be re-elected. For a third and successive re-election a two-thirds majority is required.

ARTICLE 34 – *Associations*

Par. 1 — Associations are established by decree of the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council. Their statutes are drafted in accordance with the legislation of the countries in which they are established and are approved by the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council.

Par. 2 — The Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, confirms the appointment of the President and the members of the Board of Directors. The term of office is determined by the statutes and lasts from a minimum of three to a maximum of six years. If provided in the statutes, re-election is possible.

ARTICLE 35 – *Delegations*

Par. 1 — The Pories, the Subpriories and the Associations may form regional Delegations in accordance with the Code.

Par. 2 — The Delegations are composed of all members of the Pories, Subpriories and Associations who reside in the territory. Their rules are established in conformity with the statutes of the respective Pories, Subpriories and Associations and a regulation approved by the Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council.

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Par. 3 — The Delegation is directed by a member of the Order who has the title of Delegate and who is appointed in the first instance by his own Superior with the advice of the respective Council, and subsequently elected by the members of the Delegation and confirmed by the Superior. The Delegation of a Priory or Subpriory, where possible, should be entrusted to a Professed Knight or a Knight in Obedience.

Par. 4 — The Delegate is assisted by a Council consisting of not more than five members and a Chaplain, who has under his care the spiritual life of the members of the Delegation.

ARTICLE 36 - *Text and Official Translations of the Constitution*

Par. 1 — The text of the Constitution is written in the English language. The Grand Master with the advice of the Sovereign Council shall provide for an official translation in French, Italian, German, Spanish and Russian.

Par. 2 — The text in English, bearing the signature of the Head of the Order and the Seal of State, is kept in the Archives of the Grand Magistracy.

Par. 3 — In cases of different interpretations, the official English text prevails.

ARTICLE 37 - *Transitional Regulations*

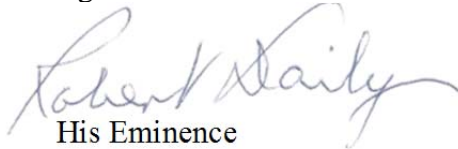
The Grand Master, with the advice of the Sovereign Council, issues transitional norms to regulate matters pending when the Constitution and Code come into effect.

signed:



His Imperial and Most Eminent Highness
Pr. Fra' Dr. Donald Lee Pippin
Grand Master

signed:



His Eminence
Lord Robert Daily
Grand Chancellor

CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER

THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALER KNIGHTS OF THE IMPERIAL ORDERS

Exhibit A

FLAG



ARMORIAL BEARING



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