

Vancouver Commandery

The Vancouver Commandery's chosen path to helping the sick and poor is by improving Palliative Care. Our biggest project to date is the \$5.3 million 14 bed St John Hospice located on its own grounds at UBC.

Annually the Commandery provides substantial support for the operations of the B.C. Hospice and Palliative Care Association, one-time grants for trial projects by individual hospices and equipment to enhance the care at the St John Hospice. Many years also see support for a variety of special projects.

In addition to the Investiture Service, the Commandery has a Christmas lunch, an Annual General Meeting and special events. The active work of organisation, service and fund-raising is done by committees. Members are expected to participate on at least one committee, usually after their first year.

The Vancouver Commandery has 150 Members from a variety of backgrounds who wish to support our work with time, talent or treasure. All had a record of supporting charitable work before being invited to join the Sovereign Order.

Contact us

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Grand Priory of the Americas Organization

Priory of Canada

Vancouver - www.sosjvancouver.org
Victoria – www.sosj_victoria.ca
Okanagan
Ontario

Priory of Eastern US
www.sosjeastus.org

Cleveland
Nicaragua
The Palm Beaches
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www.sosjwestusa.org

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San Francisco
St. Joseph (San Jose)
Sierras



The Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller

Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum

For Faith, For Service to Humanity

Introduction to the Sovereign Order Vancouver Commandery Priory of Canada

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Who We Are

The Sovereign Order of St John is an ecumenical Christian organisation with 900 years of history. The Sovereign Order is directly descended from the close collaboration of crusader knights with the Hospitaller activities of the hospital founded by Brother Gerard in the late 11th century and subsequently formalized by the merchants of Amalfi for pilgrims in Jerusalem.

The Sovereign Order appeals particularly to those with an interest in tradition and helping the sick and the poor.

There are 850 members across Europe and North America. We have 13 Commanderies (locations) and 525 members in the United States and Canada. Membership is by invitation.



History of the Sovereign Order

The Sovereign Order roots go back to the late 1000's in Jerusalem where Brother Gerard operated a hospital for pilgrims. His belief in ventilation, separate beds and personal dishes improved survival rates of the sick.

After it was formally created in 1113, it also became a military order in the long wars of the Crusades but also continued their groups operating hospitals and ministering to spiritual needs.

The Knights were driven from Jerusalem and, later, Rhodes by the Arabs and Turks respectively. They were given the island of Malta by the Holy Roman Emperor for the annual price of a falcon. Hence the Humphrey Bogart film "The Maltese Falcon".

Five hundred Knights and 6000 men at arms withstood 40,000 Ottoman Turks in the 1565 Siege of Malta. The defense was led by the Grand Master of the Order, Jean de Vallette, after whom the new capital Valetta was named. The defeat of the Turks, along with their 1572 naval defeat at Lepanto, permanently stopped Turkish expansion in the Mediterranean.

Napoleon expelled the Order in 1798 leading to exile across Europe. The Sovereign Order went to Russia and after the Revolution, came under the sponsorship of the related Yugoslav royal family and moved to Western Europe and the Americas.

What We Do

The Sovereign Order today is a blend of traditional, social and charitable activities. The Investiture Service is our inauguration ceremony for new Knights and Dames. It is the main event for each Commandery. The ceremony is rich in the tradition, colour and formality that make joining the Order so memorable.

Social events are organized by each Commandery to suit their preferences.

Helping the sick and poor is our main activity and is an absolute requirement. Each Commandery selects its charitable purposes and supports them according to their resources.

The largest project has been the 2013 building of the \$5.3 million St John Hospice (shown below). Another Commandery has provided \$2.6 million over 10 years for a wide variety of activities including supporting children with cancer and to varied addiction facilities. Others have provided libraries to low income schools and there are so many other gifts. Many members also volunteer their time to help charities.

