

FEDERATION OF THE AUTONOMOUS PRIORIES
OF THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF
SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM
KNIGHTS OF MALTA



CONSTITUTIONAL LETTER

Chapter I – INTRODUCTION

Article 1st - For simplification, and for better and faster understanding, the Federation of Autonomous Pories of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta, will be referred hereinafter and to throughout this Constitutional Letter as Federation or by the acronym KMFAP.

Chapter II – NATURE OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Federation is, due to its nature and historical origins, a Hospitaller Order of Chivalry entitled to all rights of Sovereignty as described hereinafter.

Article 2nd - The Federation results from the Association, as a Federated State, of historical and lawful Autonomous Pories and Hereditary Commanderies of the old Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, also said of the Knights of Malta, inheriting in this manner all the historical past, rights and privileges of this Old Order.

a) On the 3rd of August 1962, the Hereditary Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Order of Cyprus, His Excellency Count Michael Paul Pierre De Valitch, pledged allegiance to the then Grand Master of the Federation, H.R. & I.H. Prince Nicholas de Ligny-Luxembourg di Lascaris Ventimiglia, and then on, this hereditary Order is part of the Federation.

Article 3rd - The Federation is a juridical person, subject to International Law, enjoying, in this quality of Sovereignty, the inalienable and inviolable rights, and the consuetudinary prerogatives and privileges granted traditionally to the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, recognized as a Sovereign State by the six great European powers, at the time, by the Treaty of Amiens on the 27th of March, 1802 and later on by several legal court sentences of different countries, as well as by those obtained by its own merits and corroborated by the recognition of several States with which the Federation maintains Diplomatic Relations in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961.

Article 4th - The federative act of the Autonomous Pories of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta, constitutes a Sovereign Order of Knighthood, independent and distinct from any other branches claiming the same common origins but not subjected to this Federation.

Article 5th - The Federation is an elective monarchy, governed by a Grand Master, elected for life, to whom is recognized the rank of Prince, as its supreme head and leader.

Chapter III – PURPOSES AND SCOPE OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The purposes of the Federation, in conformity with the intentions of the founding fathers of the old Order, are, under the patronage of Saint John of Jerusalem, to preserve the Order as a brotherhood composed of those who desire to contribute to its existence by applying in their private, social and public life, nationally and internationally, the principles of Charity, Tolerance and Service to the Mankind, caring and assisting the people who are ill and in need, with the full intention of helping themselves mutually and of helping and assisting the others, in order to achieve a better and more perfect life, both morally and materially.

Article 2nd - The Federation, presently based only on philanthropic principles, is open to all persons of good will who wish and request to become a part of a Sovereign Order, that is supra-national and multi-confessional, without any discrimination whatsoever, and without distinction of social classes or races.

Chapter IV – THE GRAND MASTER

Article 1st - The Grand Master, who historically has always been the Leader and the Sovereign of the Order, is the Supreme Head of the Federation and of its Government.

Article 2nd - The Grand Master holds the title of Prince in virtue of the decisions enacted by Emperor Rudolf II, on the 20th of March 1607, and Ferdinand II on the 16th of July 1620, and also holds the title of Eminence, with equivalence to the rank of Cardinal of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, given by the Consistorial Decree of the 10th of June 1630 of His Holiness the Pope Urban VIII and later confirmed by “ Motu Proprio “ by His Holiness The Pope Leon XIII on the 12th of June 1888.

Article 3rd - The Grand Master is the sole and only of the Knights to have the rank of Knight Grand Collar of the Order.

Chapter V – ON THE USAGE OF THE TITLE OF REGENT

Article 1st - It is admissible the choice of usage of the title of Regent instead of the title of Grand Master, in the sequence of recent examples.

Article 2nd - The use of the title of Regent previewed in Art. 1st of the present Chapter does not imply renouncing, hindering, diminishing or affecting any and all of His rights, obligations, privileges, ranks and prerogatives.

Article 3rd - The present Constitutional Letter contains provisions to perpetuate this possible alternative.

Chapter VI – MAGISTERIAL SEE OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Magisterial See of the Federation, is located and, in the present conditions will remain in the State of New York, of The United States of America.

a) The Magisterial See is the See of the Grand Master. It is also the official See and Head Offices of the Government of the State of The Federation, of the all structure of The Sovereign Order and of the institutions related, belonging or connected to The Federation, however some of these institutions may have other legal or official head offices if considered convenient or better to attaining its objectives.

b) The Grand Master’s Official Household is commonly designated as Magisterial House.

c) Due to the fact that, in the present times, the Federation is a non-territorial State, and considering the geographical dispersion in the World of its structures and of its Dames and Knights, the effective work place of both the Magisterial House or of the Ministries of the Government of the State, may differ from the location of the Magisterial See, however, for all purposes, the Magisterial See is and remains the official address, See and Head Offices of the structures and departments of the Federation.

Chapter VII – POWERS OF THE GRAND MASTER

Article 1st - The supreme representative and governing head of the Federation is the Grand Master, upon who rests the full legal and international representation of the Federation and of its Government.

Article 2nd - The administration of the Federated Autonomous Pories, Hereditary Commanderries, similar Federated Orders or Associations of Knighthood, Grand Pories by “Langué”, National Pories and National Bailiwicks, is the competence of the Grand Master, who, for such task is assisted by the corresponding governmental bodies.

Article 3rd - In all matters concerning the Federation the decisions of the Grand Master are final, irrefutable and irrevocable.

Article 4th - The right and power for all conferment and investitures of knighthood or other honours or appointments within the Federation rests upon the Grand Master. The Grand Master may exercise such right and power directly or by written delegation.

Article 5th - The Grand Master may nominate a temporary Lieutenant to represent Him and to act for Him in acts, cases or moments where His presence is required, but are limitations and obstacles impeding His presence.

Article 6th - If the Grand Master considers it to be beneficial for the well-being of the Federation, it is within His power to nominate a Lieutenant General with full rights of succession of the Grand Master until the election of a new Grand Master.

a) The Lieutenant General is the second dignitary of the Federation, after the Grand Master, and in all ceremonial or official acts must be on His right side.

b) The position of Prime Minister and Vice President of the Ministerial Chamber is inherent to the position of Lieutenant General.

Article 7th - The Grand Master calls to assembly and presides over the different governmental bodies when He deems it to be necessary.

Article 8th - After receiving counselling from the competent governmental bodies, the Grand Master confers by decree or by charter the different governmental dignities and assignments to the government of the Federation and its related institutions or to the structure of the Order and confirms the persons upon whom hereditary rights converge to the corresponding position of any and all of the Autonomous Pories, Hereditary Commanderries, Grand Pories by “Langué”, Pories and National Bailiwicks or similar Associations of Knighthood united under the Federation.

Chapter VIII – SUCCESSION TO THE GRAND MASTER

Article 1st - In case of death or mental incapacity of the Grand Master, if there has been duly nominated and established a Lieutenant General, this will at once convoke a meeting of the Ministerial Chamber and following the proper ceremonial requirements, assume at said meeting of the Ministerial Chamber the duties as Lieutenant General Regent and convokes a meeting of the Magisterial Grand Council for electoral purposes, in a period of less than six months' time after the meeting of the Ministerial Chamber.

Article 2nd - In case of death or mental incapacity of the Grand Master, if there has not yet been duly nominated and established a Lieutenant General, the Ministerial Chamber will elect one of its members as President Pro-Tempore of said Ministerial Chamber. The duties of the President Pro-Tempore will be to attend to the more urgent and pressing matters of the Government of the Federation and to convoke as soon as possible the Magisterial Grand Council for the purpose of electing a new Grand Master to fill the vacancy of the Magisterial See.

The period to convoke the Magisterial Grand Council has to be of less than four months' time, after the election of the President Pro-Tempore.

Article 3rd - The newly elected Grand Master, shall convoke a meeting of the General Chapter and during this meeting He shall publicly, and in the presence of the members of the Ecumenical Council, make the Oath of Loyalty to the Federation and swear to

protect the well-being of the Federation and to pursue the fulfilment of the purposes of the Federation, in conformity with the intentions of the founding fathers of the Order. After this Oath of Loyalty has being pledged, the newly appointed Lieutenant General, Ministers of the Ministerial Chamber, the members of the General Chapter, the members of the structure of the Sovereign Order, the governmental Dignitaries of the Federation, and all Knights and Dames present, will pledge obedience to the newly installed Grand Master.

- a) The first act of the new Grand Master will be that of appointing or reappointing the governmental dignitaries of the Federation and to nominate or reappoint the heads of the structures of the Sovereign Order.
- b) All the ex-officio dignities derived from hereditary rights do not need confirmation and can not be removed.

Article 4th - If during the time of his tenure, the Regent understands that it may be more appropriate and necessary for the Federation to be headed and ruled by a Grand Master, He, making use of his rights and prerogatives, shall convoke a solemn assembly of the General Chapter to adopt officially, during said assembly the title of Grand Master.

Chapter IX – ADMISSION OF KNIGHTLY ENTITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS IN THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The admission within the ranks of the Federation of any Autonomous Priory of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem not previously federated, of any Hereditary Commandery, or of any other Association of Knighthood, as well as the recognition of its respective rights as a branch of the Federation, or the admission of any Cultural, Humanitarian, Charitable or Philanthropic Association, as well as the recognition of its rights as a part of the Federation, will be regulated in accordance and compliance with all the procedural rules and regulations and with all the eventual special conditions that may be stipulated in each case by the Grand Master.

Article 2nd - All the discrepancies of interpretation of this Constitutional Letter or of any other further complementary appendages duly proclaimed and decreed by the Grand Master, or any differences of opinion in matters of discipline that may arise between the Government of the Federation and an Autonomous Priory or Hereditary Commandery or any other similar Association of Knighthood subject to the Federation, or of any other Cultural, Humanitarian, Charitable or Philanthropic Association member of the Federation will be taken before the Ministerial Chamber of the Federation for its resolution. The decisions taken on such matters by the Ministerial Chamber of the Federation, when endorsed with the approval of the Grand Master, will be final.

Chapter X – ADMISSION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Federation is composed of Knights and Dames from all the Autonomous Priors or Hereditary Commanderies subject to the Federation, or their descendants, and of new Knights or Dames, or their descendants, when duly and properly admitted within the ranks of the Federation.

Article 2nd - Regardless of the Grand Priory, Priory or National Bailiwick of origin, or even of hereditary rights, any new member must request admission within the Federation in writing by filing an official Application for Admission Questionnaire-Curricula with inclusion of three photographs and the proposal – endorsement - of one active Knight or Dame of the Federation in good standing.

- a) Said written request and all additional documentation shall always be submitted to an Admission Board.

Since the Candidates have to be endorsed and proposed by an existing Knight or Dame in good standing, and in order to preserve the rights of no discrimination of any kind, having in mind that in many countries there are minorities of several kinds but also to avoid any sort of political, social, sexual, racial and religious discrimination, the local structures of the Order, such as Grand Priories, Priories and Bailiwicks, will only be consulted for a non-binding opinion if and when the Admission Board so deems convenient or appropriate.

This Admission Board will forward the Application for Admission with all respective documents together with its advice to the consideration of the Grand Master, who may approve or refuse such petition “de Motu Proprio” or refuse the petition based on the advice expressed by the Admission Board.

b) After the approval of the Application for Admission the Candidate must fulfil other stipulated administrative procedures in order to be considered as Postulant to Knighthood. These procedures include the payment of an Administrative Fee of Admission in an amount to be defined by Magisterial Decree intended to cover the costs of the procedures of Admission as well as the costs of the respective Knighthood Ceremony and related events, however the payment of the Administrative Fee of Admission will only be valid if paid by bank transfer or deposit exclusively in the State Accounts of the Federation, in the banks and accounts indicated by the services of the Magisterial House, and no other person, Knight or non-Knight, or entity whoever, is authorized to receive any moneys or funds for this purpose or for any other purposes whatsoever, including donations, on behalf or in the name of our Sovereign Order or of our State. Moneys transferred, handed over, or given to third parties, to other persons or entities than the aforementioned State Accounts will be considered for all purposes and for all effects as non-received by the Federation and the persons or entities who received them can be considered as swindlers or scammers and incur in legal penalties.

c) The Grand Master defines the composition of the Admission Board by a Magisterial Charter, either “de Motu Proprio” or by proposal of the Lieut. General.

Article 3rd - To be accepted as a Knight or Dame of The Federation the candidate must have a good professional, social and moral conduct and standing, must present the certificate of his/her criminal record or pending criminal cases in Courts of Law if any.

a) In a wide spirit of respect, tolerance and complying with the Universal Declaration of The Human Rights of the United Nations, the Federation will not exclude from admission those worthy and philanthropic individuals who may wish to serve as Knights or Dames in the assistance of the less fortunate fellow human beings, but that by reasons of birth, tradition, cultural background or deep and honest conviction in their religious beliefs are non-Christian.

Article 4th - Given the fact that in our Bailiwicks, Priories and Grand Priories there are foreigners to those countries living as residents, in case the admission of those is proposed by a local Knight or Dame, if the candidate so wishes and requests to the Grand Master he can integrate the structure of the country or of the langue where he resides. The same applies in case of change of country of residence of an existing Knight or Dame in good standing.

a) The exception to the natural rule of territoriality of the new Knights and Dames are the candidates proposed by the Knights or Dames of the federated Order of Cyprus or of the federated Grand Priory of Villedieu due to their historical rights.

Article 5th - Any Knight or Dame of the Federation wishing to have a beloved departed family member included in the “Officium Defunctorum” of the Chaplains and Spiritual Guides of the Federation and in the religious services offered for the commemoration and on behalf of the souls of the faithful departed Knights and Dames of the Federation, shall present a formal petition to the Magisterial House, requesting the inscription in charity of his beloved departed in the Cartulary of Knights and Dames of the Federation. Such petition shall include full name, date and place of birth, date and place of death, and Grade to be recorded.

Chapter XI – STRUCTURAL BODIES OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Federation is composed of the following structural bodies:

- a) The Grand Master who also presides to the Government
- b) The Magisterial Grand Council
- c) The Lieutenant General who “ex-officio” is also the Prime Minister and Vice-President of the Government
- d) The Ministerial Chamber
- e) The historical and national structures of the Order divided by Grand Pories, Pories and Bailiwicks
- f) The Magisterial State Guard
- g) The Femeraid International, that is the entity created to conduce and implement the Medical Aid of the Federation
- h) Pro Deo State University, that is the entity in charge of the Education, Culture and Research of the Federation
- i) The Grand Master, “de Motu Proprio” or by proposal presented by the Prime Minister or by any Minister of the Government of the State of the Federation, can create and regulate other structural bodies regarded as necessary, such as Foundations, Chambers of Commerce, Academies of Arts or Sciences, Boards and Councils of several types and kinds.

Article 2nd - The Federation has the following advisory bodies to assist the Grand Master whenever required:

- a) The Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism
- b) The Magisterial State Council
- c) The General Chapter of Knights
- d) The Magisterial Board of Admissions
- e) The Magisterial Heraldic Council, headed by the King of Arms

Chapter XII – DIGNITARIES OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - All the nominations and appointments for office within the Federation are made by the Grand Master and are of His free will and choice.

Chapter XIII – THE MAGISTERIAL GRAND COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Magisterial Grand Council is composed of the following dignitaries of the Federation:

- a) The Grand Master
- b) The Lieutenant General
- c) The Dean of the Professed Knights
- d) All the Hereditary Knights
- e) All the Grand Priors, Pories and National Bailiffs of the Order

Article 2nd - The Magisterial Grand Council has two main functions, one is the advisory function and the other is the electoral function, as follows:

- a) The advisory function: This Council has the mission of giving opinion, support and advice to the Grand Master in vital matters for the life of The Federation. The Council can also propose to the Grand Master, for His approval, projects of legislation or other types of projects and initiatives.
- b) The electoral function: When, due death or mental incapacity of the Grand Master, and after dully convoked, this Council has the duty of electing a new Grand Master. The necessary quorum for this purpose is of sixty percent of its members and the new Grand Master is elected with the simple majority of fifty percent of the votes plus one.

Chapter XIV – THE MINISTERIAL CHAMBER OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Ministerial Chamber has the purpose of assisting the Grand Master in the Government of the Federation.

Article 2nd - The composition of the Ministerial Chamber of the Federation varies in accordance with the needs of the State and a restricted number of distinguished Knights or Dames, will be called by the Grand Master to serve as Members of the Ministerial Chamber, and they shall be Ministers of the State of the Federation.

a) All Knights and Dames of the Federation may have equal access to any governmental responsibility, except the leading members of the structure of the Order, namely the Grand Priors, Priors, Commanderies and Bailiwicks, who, due to their high positions and to avoid any conflict of interests, can not partake either in the Government or in the Diplomatic Corps, however they can be appointed as Special Envoys to specific and temporary Diplomatic assignments.

b) The three qualifications considered in appointing a Knight or Dame for a specific governmental duty are:

- 1- Personal disposition and availability.
- 2- Adequacy of professional expertise for the assignment.
- 3- Seniority of membership within the Federation.

Article 3rd - Besides the Ministers the Ministerial Chamber may have Vice Ministers or Secretaries of State, depending on its structure and composition.

Article 4th - The Ministerial Chamber will act as a college on their deliberations. Resolutions adopted by the Ministerial Chamber will be taken by a relative majority of votes of the present ministers and of those voting by proxy, but in all cases said resolutions have to be subjected to the approval and ratification by the Grand Master.

Article 5th - In accordance with the individual expertise, a Minister may be assigned for specific duties, and with a specific degree of authority to act in behalf of the Ministerial Chamber.

Article 6th - Any Knights or Dames can be invited to be present at a meeting of the Ministerial Chamber, or for the duration of a part of it, in consideration of their professional expertise or for any other specific reason that may render advisable their participation.

Article 7th - In special circumstances, the Grand Master may authorize and conduct deliberations of the Ministerial Chamber by correspondence, tele-conference or any other suitable electronic means.

Deliberations and resolutions taken in this fashion by a relative majority of votes from the participants, when approved and ratified by the Grand Master, will be of equal value as those taken and adopted during a meeting convoked in the traditional and regular manner.

Article 8th - To the Ministers of the Ministerial Chamber, according to their seniority in the Council, shall always be accorded a preeminent position in all State functions and ceremonies at the left side of the Grand Master.

Chapter XV – THE MAGISTERIAL COURT OF PEACE OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Magisterial Court of Peace is a tribunal for all the domestic affairs of The Federation and an entity of mediation of conflicts both for internal and external affairs. It is also for all purposes an arbitrary tribunal.

Article 2nd - The President of the Magisterial Court of Peace has to be an eminent jurist of international reputation and has the rank of Minister of the Ministerial Chamber.

Article 3rd - Any claim or accusation against a Knight or Dame of the Federation brought up before this Court will be judged by its President. The Knight or Dame against whom the claim or accusation is being presented shall have the right to choose and appoint a fellow Knight or Dame to act in his/her defence.

Article 4th - Against the eventual sentence delivered by the Magisterial Court of Peace, an Appeal of Grace can be made to the Grand Master, whose decisions will be final and irrevocable.

Article 5th - The disciplinary sanctions, depending on the gravity of the fault or infraction, which the Grand Master or the Magisterial Court of Peace may adopt are as follows:

- a) Admonition
- b) Reduction of Grade
- c) Suspension of Functions
- d) Obliteration or Expulsion

Article 6th - The Oath and pledge of loyalty to the Federation and its Constitutional Letter, made at the moment of the Ceremony of Investiture, gives to every Knight and Dame the special qualification of Citizens of a Sovereign State, without renouncing, hindering or affecting their nationality of origin, or their present nationality.

- a) In the quality of citizen of the State of the Federation, any Knight or Dame having any grievance or claim against a fellow Knight or Dame or the Federation for reasons pertaining exclusively to the Federation affairs shall take such grievance or claim before the Magisterial Court of Peace of the Federation.
- b) An attempt on the part of a Knight or Dame to take matters of the Federation before the jurisdiction of foreign courts or any other tribunal than the Magisterial Court of Peace of the Federation will cause automatic expulsion from the ranks of the Federation without recourse or appeal, and will impede his/her readmission for the term of his/her natural life.

Article 7th - When requested, the Magisterial Court of Peace of the Federation can act in the mediation of international conflicts or as an Arbitrary Court.

Article 8th - The Magisterial Court of Peace has to provide other services to the State of the Federation such as:

- a) All Notary services.
- b) Legal advice to the Magisterial House and to the Government of the State.
- c) Registration services for all official acts and minutes of the Federation, for companies and institutions under the State of The Federation.
- d) Roster of Knights and Dames and respective official acts.

Chapter XVI - THE MAGISTERIAL STATE GUARD

Article 1st - The Magisterial State Guard, is part of the Magisterial House under the direct dependence of the Grand Master and of the Lieutenant General.

Article 2nd - The Magisterial State Guard has the special duty of ensuring the security of the Federation, its structures, Embassies and representations abroad, of granting escort, protection and security to the Grand Master, and, whenever necessary, to the members of the Government and to important foreign guests, as well as ceremonial guard of honour services.

Article 3rd - The members of the Magisterial State Guard are selected for their conspicuous virtues, specific training, skills, value and dedication, among the Knights

and Dames of the Federation, both Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and, specifically, Knights of the federated Sovereign Order of Cyprus – Knights of Sword and Silence.

Article 4th - The structure of the Magisterial State Guard is tailored in the army fashion.

Article 5th - The Magisterial State Guard is divided into two Brigades: one specialized in Ceremonial Guard and the other specialized in Security and Protection.

a) The appointments of the Commanding Officers of the State Guard, and respective ranks are given by Magisterial Decree and the appointments of the members of the Guard and respective ranks are given by Magisterial Charter, both in accordance with Article 4 of the Chapter VII and Article 1 of the Chapter XII of the present Constitutional Letter.

b) Other structures and brigades can in the future be created by Magisterial Decree, with no need of further amendments or changes to the present Constitutional Letter.

Article 6th - In all State functions and ceremonial acts the members of the Magisterial State Guard, wearing uniform and insignia, shall take place by the Grand Master and in accordance with the State Protocol or the Ceremonial Protocol and must also undertake the tasks of carrying the flags, symbols and the ceremonial sword.

Chapter XVII – THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The General Chapter is the assembly of all members of the Federation, independently of their rank, grade or position.

Article 2nd - During the meetings of the General Chapter all members will be informed about the work of the Federation and the projects, actions and plans in course, relevant news, facts and acts, as well as of the financial accounts and budgets of the Government.

Article 3rd - The General Chapter of the Federation is convoked when necessary by the Grand Master and must meet at least once every year.

Article 4th - All members present to the meeting of the General Chapter have the right to speak and to express freely their opinion and suggestions

Chapter XVIII – THE MAGISTERIAL STATE COUNCIL

Article 1st - All the members of this Council have the title of State Counsellors.

a) The duties of the State Counsellors are to assist and to counsel the Grand Master, both as Head of the State and Head of the Order, as well as the Lieutenant General and Prime Minister, in all matters presented to them in regard to affairs either of the Government of the State or of the Order.

Article 2nd - The State Counsellors, by virtue of the highly sensitive nature of their duties, are bound by office with secrecy on all matters pertaining the State Council and the subjects in appreciation.

a) Due to their high responsibilities and to avoid any type or sort of conflict of interests the State Counsellors have no executive functions in the Government of the State or in the structure of the Order. In case they perform duties or hold positions in the Government or in the structure of the Order, when they're promoted to the position of State Counsellors, they automatically cease their functions.

b) In case the State Counsellors in the moment of their promotion and appointment to the State Council hold positions in the structure of the Order such as Grand Prior, Prior or Bailiff, they have the right to keep the title, but as Honorary.

Article 3rd - For all effects the State Counsellors will have a rank equivalent to the rank of Minister of the Government of the State and to them a preeminent position in all State functions and ceremonial acts on the left side of the Grand Master, with the members of the Ministerial Chamber, shall always be accorded by the State Protocol.

Chapter XIX – THE BOARD OF RELIGIOUS COUNSELLORS AND INTERFAITH PLURALISM

Article 1st - The high principle of deep respect for the religious believes and for the freedom of choice of every human is assured and ensured by the Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism of The Federation.

Article 2nd - The Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism is presided by the Grand Master and is composed of the Dean of the Professed Knights, the representatives of the different Religions, Churches and Creeds and the Clergymen or men of Faith appointed by The Grand Master in His capacity as President of this Board.

Article 3rd - The Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism is an advisory organ of The Federation and of The Grand Master, and their members are considered spiritual guides and counsellors of the Knights and Dames of the respective Religion, Creed or Church.

Article 4th - The members of the Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism may present suggestions to the Grand Master in order to enrich the spirituality and religiosity of the Knights and Dames of the Federation, however their main task is to provide appropriate religious guidance to all members of the Federation, in accordance with their Religion, Creed Faith or Jurisdiction.

Each member of the Board can also take initiatives to promote the spirituality, the religiosity, the interfaith pluralism and dialogue, as well as the necessary provisions to ensure proper services and religious ceremonies of his own Religion, Creed, Jurisdiction or Faith for the respective Knights and Dames present within the ranks of the Federation.

Article 5th - The members of the Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism are free to create Ecumenical Councils among the members of the same Faith but belonging to different Churches, Jurisdictions, Obedience or Creeds, in view of promoting the inter-church or inter-faith dialogue and co-operation.

a) To guarantee equal rights to all members belonging to different Churches, Jurisdictions, Obedience or Creeds of the same Faith or Religion, the aforementioned Ecumenical Councils, as spaces of dialogue, will not have a structure or a leader and are only spaces of dialogue and fraternity.

Article 6th - The members of the Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism have the right to the title of “Magisterial Religious Counsellor“, and they are considered as a High Dignitary in the ranks of the Federation and to them shall be accorded a prominent position, at the right hand side of the Grand Master, in all State functions and ceremonial acts.

Chapter XX – STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Federation is composed by the union and the association of Autonomous Historical Grand Priories, by Grand Priories by “langue“, by national Priories and Bailiwicks. The internal structure of the Federation is as follows:

- a) For structural purposes, each Grand Priory by “langue” may be subdivided in regional Priors and/or regional Bailiwicks when deemed necessary.
- b) For structural purposes, the members of a Grand Priory, national Priory or Bailiwick will be under the jurisdiction of the National structure of their place of permanent residence.
- c) Each National Priory may be subdivided into several Bailiwicks.
- d) Each Bailiwick may be subdivided into several Commanderies.

Chapter XXI – THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIORIES, BAILIWICKS AND COMMANDERIES

Article 1st - Each Grand Prior, Prior, Bailiff or Commander shall preside and be assisted by a Council composed of members nominated by him, with a sufficient number of Counsellors to attend the needs and exigencies of his own administration. The composition and activities of these Councils shall be communicated to the immediate direct superior.

Article 2nd - The Councils referred in Article 1st of the present Chapter must meet at least once a year, or when their president deems it to be necessary.

Article 3rd - The leader of a Grand Priory by “langue“ of the Federation is member and presides ex-officio his assisting Council.

Article 4th - A Prior of a National Priory is member and presides ex-officio his assisting Council.

Article 5th - A Bailiff is member and presides ex-officio his assisting Council.

Article 6th - A Commander is member and presides ex-officio his assisting Council.

Article 7th - The Prior of a Grand Priory of a “langue”, the Prior of a National Priory, the Bailiff of a Bailiwick and the Commander of a Commandery shall preside ex-officio its own corresponding General Chapter, which shall be convened at least once every year, or when its president deems it to be necessary.

Article 8th - Any Knight or Dame of the Federation can be appointed for the positions of leadership the Grand Priors, Priors, Commanderies and Bailiwicks of the Order, except the acting members of Government or of the Diplomatic Corps, being the appointments done by the Grand Master in accordance with the Article 1st of the Chapter XII of the present Constitutional Letter.

Chapter XXII – THE ARMS OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The official arms of the Federation are one octagonal white cross superposed on an oval shield with the field half argent, half red, surrounded by the Grand Collar of the Federation and over an imperial mantle crowned by the Imperial crown of Byzantium surmounted by a Malta Cross, as granted to the Federation by H.R. & I.H. Prince Nicolas the Ligny-Luxembourg, Grand Master of the Federation.

- a) These arms are for the exclusive use of the Grand Magisterial House.
- b) If the Grand Master so decides and in case he has his own family Coat of Arms he can use it, surrounded by the Grand Collar of the Federation and over an imperial mantle crowned by the Imperial crown of Byzantium surmounted by a Cross of Malta.

Article 2nd - The Coat of Arms for the use of the Government of the State of the Federation is one octagonal white cross of Malta crowned by the crown described in the previous article and surrounded on the right side by laurel leaves and on the left side by olive tree leaves, representing Glory and Peace respectively and, emerging from underneath this, two red flags bended on each side bearing the octagonal white Malta Cross.

a) All documents of the Government of the Federation, namely International Protocols, Treaties, Conventions and Concordats, diplomatic papers and those issued by the Ministerial Chamber, the Grand Magisterial Court of Peace or of the Diplomatic Corps will bear said Coat of Arms.

b) Knights and Dames can also use this Coat of Arms in their stationary paper or cards, or in case they receive from the Grand Master a Shield of Arms they can use it in their stationary.

c) The Grand Master can confer to Knights and Dames in good standing the right to use a Shield of Arms. For this purpose, the Grand Master is assisted by a Magisterial Heraldic Council headed by the King of Arms of the Federation.

Article 3rd - It is also admissible for a transitory period an ordinary blazon used only for purposes such as stationery paper for Knights and Dames, etc., composed of an octagonal white cross of Malta superposed in the centre on a round shield with the field party per bent of gules and argent, the shield is surmounted by a royal crown.

Article 4th - All Autonomous Priors and Hereditary Commanders may use their original arms, providing that they are previously submitted and accepted by the Grand Master.

a) The Grand Priors by "langue", National Priors and National Bailiwicks can apply to the Grand Master for the use of their own blazons based on the Arms of The Federation and national symbols combined.

Chapter XXIII – THE FLAG OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Flag of the Federation has a rectangular horizontal shape divided in transverse angle, from right to left having the red on the lower left and the white on the upper right, bearing in the centre, without the outline of the shield, an octagonal white cross of Malta surmounted by a royal crown.

Chapter XXIV – THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF ALL THE KNIGHTS AND DAMES OF THE FEDERATION

All Knights, Dames, Squires and Damsels of the Federation are equal before the law, and have the same rights and obligations enshrined in this Constitutional Letter.

I. – ON EQUALITY

Article 1st - All the Knights and Dames of the Federation, regardless of their ranks in the Order, have the same social dignity and are equal before the law.

Article 2nd - No one can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right, or be exempted of any obligations in view of his or her ancestry, sex, race, language, place of birth, religion, political and ideological beliefs, level of schooling or education, economical power, social level or sexual preferences.

a) In the previous paragraph, all sorts and kinds of fundamentalisms and extremisms are expressly excluded.

b) In case of doubt about who or what can be considered extremism or fundamentalism, the Grand Master or the Regent will decide.

II. – ON PROTECTION

Single Article - Considering that the State of the Federation is a Sovereign State without territory, its Knights and Dames, as citizens, independently where they live or work, enjoy the protection of the State of the Federation having in view the exercise of their rights and obligations inside the Federation, but are subjected to duties that arise from the laws of the countries where they reside or work.

III. – ON THE SCOPE OF THE RIGHTS OF KNIGHTS AND DAMES

Article 1st - The rights and obligations enshrined in the present Constitutional Letter do not exclude other prescribed by the international law.

Article 2nd - The State of the Federation (KMFAP) adopts the fundamental principle of the inviolability of the Human Life and of the Human Rights, therefore all legislation regarding the Human Rights contained in the present Constitutional Letter must be regarded and understood in accordance with the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights of the United Nations.

Article 3rd - The State of the Federation is against the existence of Death Penalty and of all forms of torture and violence.

Article 4th - The rights to a personal identity, to the individual personality development, to a good name and reputation, likeness, free speech, privacy in personal and family life and the protection against any sort or kind of discrimination shall be recognized for all Knights and Dames of the Federation (KMFAP).

Article 5th - The freedom of Conscience, of Religion, of cult and of worship are inviolable and nobody can be persecuted or deprived of his Rights nor exempt of his Obligations because of his convictions and options.

Article 6th - All forms of Fundamentalism Extremism or intolerance of all forms and kinds are excluded from the above Paragraphs and are unacceptable by the Federation, due to the fact that these are primarily against the Human Rights.

Article 7th - All Knights and Dames, with no exception whatsoever, have the right to an active participation in the life of the Federation and of its Structures, Institutions and Organizations and the right to be elected or appointed to special public assignments in equal terms and conditions.

Article 8th - In case a Knight or a Dame wishes to take part in another Order of Chivalry, he or she must inform the Grand Master of this fact indicating the name of the other Order.

In this case, the Knight or Dame can not and shall not be Knighted again, instead he or she must be Decorated with the Insignia of the other Order, since a Knight or a Dame can only be knighted once in his or her life.

IV. – ON THE OBLIGATIONS OF OUR KNIGHTS AND DAMES

Article 1st - All Knights and Dames have the obligation to respect, comply and enforce the legislation of their home countries and of the countries where they live or work, the legislation of the Federation, including the present Constitutional Letter, and also the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights of the United Nations.

Article 2nd - All Knights and Dames have the obligation to respect the rights and beliefs of others, to help the needy - in accordance with their possibilities -, to protect the weak, the elder, the children, mainly the Orphans, and all of those who need or seek for protection.

Article 3rd - The Oath and pledge of loyalty to the Federation and to its Constitutional Letter, made in the moment of the Ceremony of Investiture, gives to every Knight and Dame the obligation of defending at all times the Federation, its interests, its good name and reputation.

Article 4th - A Knight or a Dame who holds a position in the Government of the State of the Federation or in the structure of the Sovereign Order, can not and shall not hold positions in the structure of any other Order, unless specifically designated for this task by the Grand Master, to represent the Federation and its interests in the other Order.

Article 5th - The only economic obligation and commitment of all Knights and Dames, regardless of their rank, position in the structure or in the Government or of their assignment to specific missions, is the payment of an Annual Fee in an amount to be defined by Magisterial Decree whenever considered advisable to be revised.

a) In special cases a Knight or of a Dame, due to his or her temporary economic or financial problems, in the sequence of a written petition stating the motives or reasons, the Grand Master may waive for one year the obligation of the payment of the Annual Fee with no consequences for the standing of the petitioner.

b) The payment of the Annual Fee will be done by bank transfer or deposit exclusively in the State Accounts of the Federation, in the banks and accounts indicated by the services of the Magisterial House, and no other person, Knight or non-Knight, or entity whoever, is authorized to receive any moneys or funds for this purpose or for any other purposes whatsoever, including donations, on behalf or in the name of our Sovereign Order or of our State. Moneys transferred, handed over, or given to other persons or entities than the aforementioned State Accounts will be considered for all purposes and for all effects as non-received by the Federation and the persons or entities who received them can be considered as swindlers or scammers and incur in legal penalties

V. – ON THE SUSPENSION OF EXERCISING RIGHTS

Article 1st - Only the Grand Master, or the Regent, if that is the case, and the Magisterial Court of Peace can, jointly or separately, suspend a Knight or a Dame from exercising their rights enshrined in the present Constitutional Letter, as a result of a punishment provided for in it or by other existing legislation.

a) No punishment to be eventually applied to a Knight or a Dame, can, in any circumstance, affect hinder or harm the rights to life, to personal and physical integrity, to moral integrity, to personal identity, to personal dignity and to freedom of conscience or religion.

- b) To all cases applies the principle of non-retroactivity of the law.
- c) No punishment to be eventually applied to a Knight or a Dame can be based on political or religious motives, with the exception of the cases of fundamentalism, extremism or intolerance of any sort or kind.
- b) The decision of suspension of a Knight or Dame from exercising their rights issued by the Magisterial Court of Peace needs in all cases to be ratified by the Grand Master or the Regent.

Article 2nd - The only case of automatic suspension of a Knight or Dame from exercising their rights provided by the present Constitutional Letter is the lack of payment of the Annual Fees which are foreseen in the Article 5th of the Clause IV of the present Chapter of this Constitutional Letter.

- a) The Knights and Dames who do not fulfil the obligation of payment of the Annual Fee are considered as “Dormant“ until they totally fulfil all pending obligations and submit to the Grand Master a written request to return to “Good Standing“ status.
- b) While “Dormant“ the Knights and Dames are suspended from all their activities, assignments and rights, including the right to use the insignia of The Federation.

Article 3rd - Since the State of the Federation (KMFAP) is, for the time being, a non-territorial State, no one can be in whole or in part deprived of freedom as result of decision of the Grand Master or the Magisterial Court of Law.

Chapter XXV – RANKS AND INSIGNIA OF THE FEDERATION

Article 1st - The Knights and Dames of the Federation are divided by the following categories:

- a) Regular Knights and Dames - composed of all except the mentioned in Paragraph *b)* of the present Article.
- b) Professed Knights and Dames - composed of the Friars and Sisters with religious vows, made before the Grand Master and the members of Board of Religious Counsellors and Interfaith Pluralism of The Federation, by their free will and choice in accordance with their own Religion.
- c) The Professed Knights are entitled to the title of “Fra” and the Professed Dames are entitled to the title of “Sister“ to be used after the title of “Sir“ or “Lady“.

Article 2nd - The Category of Regular Knights and Dames is divided into three classes:

- a) Class of Knights and Dames of Justice – This class is restricted to those Knights and Dames of Honour and Devotion that receive from the Grand Master the rights of Heritability, and become Hereditary Knights and Dames.
- b) Class of Knights and Dames of Honour and Devotion – This class is restricted to Knights and Dames of Noble Ancestry, holders of nobility titles dully recognized by The Magisterial House of The Federation. This recognition will be made based on documents to be presented, including previous recognition from accredited foreigner Royal Houses if any.

c) Knights and Dames of Magisterial Grace – This class is destined to all Knights and Dames not comprehended and mentioned in the Paragraphs a) and b) of the present Article.

d) All the Regular Knights and Dames, with the exception of the Professed Knights and Dames can, due to temporary professional or personal impediments, or in case of eventual conflict of interest with political or professional assignments, can apply to the Grand Master, to be considered temporarily as "Dormant Knights or Dames". This application must be done by registered mail explaining the reasons of such request and the foreseeable period of duration.

In this case, the Dormant Knights or Dames will not lose any of their rights, titles, honours or privileges and they will be reinstated as Regular Knights or Dames, as soon as they inform the Grand Master that the temporary impediments have ceased. In accordance with Article 3rd of the Chapter VII of the present Constitutional Letter, the Grand Master can refuse the concession of the Dormant Status to a Knight or Dame in case He considers that the reasons and motives invoked by the applicant are not strong enough or do not justify for the concession of the said status.

Article 3rd - Each of the precedent classes mentioned in the Paragraphs a), b) and c) of the Article 2nd of the present Chapter, have five grades and wear the following insignia:

a) Knight Grand Cross

In swallow-tailed coat or Gala Uniform his Insignia is:

Chest Band (Sash) slung across the shoulder from right to left and pending from a large red knot a big golden Crown, hereinafter designated by "Crown" and big white octagonal Cross, hereinafter designated by "Cross", surmounted both by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle.

A large badge in shape of a Golden Star superposed by a Cross and a Crown, on the left side of the chest.

In tuxedo or Parade Uniform his Insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red ribbon and chest badge as described above.

In street clothes or regular uniform his Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left lapel of a jacket

b) Dame Grand Cross

In Gala wear her Insignia is:

The same as the Knight Grand Cross

In formal wear her insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red knot and chest badge as described above

In street clothes or uniform his Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on the left side of the dress.

c) Knight Grand Officer

In swallow-tailed coat or Gala Uniform his Insignia is:

Large red neck ribbon and hanging from it a large Cross and Crown surmounted by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle.

A small badge in shape of a Silver Star superposed by a Cross and a Crown, on the left side of the chest.

In tuxedo or Parade Uniform his Insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red ribbon

Chest badge as described above

In street clothes his Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left lapel of a jacket

d) Dame Grand Officer

In Gala wear her Insignia is:

Large knot red ribbon and hanging from it a large Cross and Crown surmounted by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle.

A small badge in shape of a Silver Star superposed by a white Cross and Crown, on the left side of the chest over the heart.

In formal wear her insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red knot and chest badge as described above.

In street clothes her Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the dress.

e) Knight Commander

In swallow-tailed coat or Gala Uniform his Insignia is:

Large red neck ribbon and hanging from it a large Cross and Crown surmounted by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle.

In tuxedo or Parade Uniform his Insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red ribbon.

In street clothes her Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the coat.

f) Dame Commander

In Gala wear her Insignia is:

Large knot red ribbon and hanging from it a large Cross and Crown surmounted by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle

In formal wear her insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red knot.

In street clothes her Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the dress.

g) Officer

In swallow-tailed coat or Gala Uniform his Insignia is:

Thin red neck ribbon and hanging from it a small Cross and Crown surmounted by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle.

In tuxedo or Parade Uniform his Insignia is:

Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red ribbon.

In street clothes her Insignia is:

Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the coat.

h) Dame Officer

In Gala wear her Insignia is:

Thin knot red ribbon and hanging from it a small Cross and Crown surmounted by a metal lace with a small shield in the middle.

In formal wear her insignia is:
Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red knot.

In street clothes her Insignia is:
Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the dress.

i) Knight

In swallow-tailed coat or Gala Uniform his Insignia is:
Thin red neck ribbon and small Cross and Crown

In tuxedo or Parade Uniform his Insignia is:
Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red ribbon

In street clothes her Insignia is:
Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the coat.

j) Dame

In Gala wear her Insignia is:
Thin knot red ribbon and hanging from it a small Cross and Crown

In formal wear her insignia is:
Miniature of the Decoration pending from a small red knot.

In street clothes her Insignia is:
Miniature Plate "Boutonnière" type worn only on left side of the dress.

Article 4th – The classes of Knights and Dames of Justice and of Knights and Dames of Honour and Devotion, referred in the Article 2, Paragraphs a) and b) wear the Cross pending from a Trophy of Arms, composed of a metal crest with feathers, instead of the metal lace with a small shield in the middle

Article 5th - The grades for Diplomatic Officers of the Federation are as follows:

- a) Ambassadors: Grade of Knight or Dame Grand Cross
- b) Counsellors and Consuls: Grade of Knight or Dame Grand Officer
- c) Secretaries of Embassy: Grade of Knight or Dame Commander
- d) The rest of the diplomatic staff of all Embassies and Consulates shall be granted Knighthood, including the local employees, after three years of working for the Embassy or the Consulate. However, if any Knight or Dame of the Diplomatic Corps has, for personal merits, achieved a higher grade than the one granted for his diplomatic position, shall continue using the higher grade.

Article 6th - The Grand Collar of the Federation is exclusively granted to the Grand Master or Regent.

- a) The Grand Collar can be granted as a Decoration of The Federation, but only to Heads of State and ruling Sovereigns – Kings, Queens, Princes and Princesses.
- b) To the Lieutenant General of The Federation is granted the Grand Collar of The Order of Cyprus, one of the federated members of The Federation.

Article 7th - In all State functions and official ceremonial acts all Knights and Dames shall wear a red mantel with white collar and border and a white octagonal Cross of Malta of 28 cm. of diameter on the left side at the height of the heart without any distinction of grade.

- a) The Mantel of the Grand Master has inverse colours since the white colour is the symbol of Purity.

Chapter XXVI – MEDALS OF THE FEDERATION

The following are the Medals of The Federation to be granted by the Grand Master, either “de Motu Proprio” or by proposal of the Lieutenant General and Prime Minister, Ministers or leaders of the national structures of The Federation.

Article 1st - Cross of Honour of the Federation – To be granted to persons or institutions, both members and non-members of The Federation, who have rendered relevant services or given relevant support to the Federation or to our Humanitarian Work.

a) This medal has the following grades:

- 1-Bronze
- 2-Silver
- 3-Gold
- 4-Gold “cum Laurea”
- 5-Gold with Diamonds

b) The design and regulations of this decoration will be approved by a Magisterial Charter

Article 2nd - Medal of Honour for Humanitarian Work – To be granted to persons or institutions, both members and non-members of The Federation, as recognition of outstanding services to Mankind in general.

a) Due to the specific and sensitive nature of this medal grades will not be establish for this Decoration.

b) The design and regulations of this award will be approved by a Magisterial Charter

Article 3rd - Cross of Merit and Distinction - To be granted exclusively to Knights and Dames as recognition for relevant services to The Federation.

a) This Cross has the following grades:

- 1-Bronze
- 2-Silver
- 3-Gold
- 4-Gold “cum Laurea”
- 5-Gold with Diamonds

b) Depending on the years of active membership, committed work and support to the Federation, the Knights and Dames are entitled to receive the Cross of Merit and Distinction in the following grades:

- 1-Bronze, for five years of active membership, committed work and support,
- 2-Silver for seven years of active membership, committed work and support,
- 3-Gold for 10 years of active membership, committed work and support,
- 4-Gold “cum Laurea” for fifteen years of active membership, committed work and support,
- 5-Gold with Diamonds for twenty years of active membership, committed work and support.

c) The design and regulations of this Decoration will be approved by a Magisterial Charter.

Article 4th – Besides the abovementioned State Medals, the different Structures of the Federation can create and confer their own specific Medals and Honours to recognize, encourage and reward the merit of Knights and non-Knights who have given a remarkable contribution to the service of Mankind.

Chapter XXVII – NATIONAL FEAST OF THE FEDERATION

Single Article - The Federation is under the patronage of Saint John; therefore the 24th of June, the Feast of the Commemoration of Saint John, is the National Feast of the Federation.

Chapter XXVIII – OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE FEDERATION

Single Article - The English Language is the only official language of the Federation.

Chapter XXIX – AMENDMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERATION

Single Article - The Grand Master, after a previous consultation to the corresponding governmental bodies, has the faculty of introducing modifications and to append any interpretation or provision not contained in the present Constitutional Letter by the means of a Magisterial Constitutional Decree. Such decrees shall be communicated immediately to all Dignitaries of the Federation for them to comply and to enforce the new legislation.

The present Constitutional Letter was originally given at Grand Magisterial See on the Twenty Fourth of the month of June, of the year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred Ninety-Four, and signed by HMEH +Dom Lorenzo, O.S.B., Regent, H.E. Prof. Jose Cosmelli, Minister, and H.E. Dr. Martin Karon General Secretary-Chancellor and was later modified by the Magisterial Constitutional Decrees 01/2007 and 02/2007, 01/2008, 01/2009, 02/2009, 01/2010, 01/2017 and 01/2019