



SOVEREIGN ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM
KNIGHTS OF MALTA
FEDERATION OF THE AUTONOMOUS PRIORIES

Ministry of Health and Hospitaller Affairs

To: Knights and Dames of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem

Date: Friday, 27th March 2020

Dear Knights and Dames,

I would like to solicit your help in disseminating some ideas based on the experience of the new COVID-19 epidemic virus. We are all worried about this and it is indeed a world war against the microbe. In fact, nature may be telling us something here – that notwithstanding all the advances we make, it always finds a way through which it continues to evolve. Certainly, there will be more to come, and many are aware that we need to learn from this experience.

Solidarity is the main force against such a virus, but how solidarity is understood may vary. We have seen that the best way is to stop the virus from spreading, and in this regard, as early as possible. Given this circumstance, we all have our part to play, especially those with ministerial-level contacts. Countries took too long to react appropriately and there was a lot of disagreement, mainly as the guidelines to lock-downs were not in place.

After discussing with the Grand Master and other Ministers we propose the followings:

1. Countries should cooperate to shut down immediately states and countries effected by an unknown virus as soon as its lethality is seen. This should come from within the state itself, with the knowledge that the rest of the world will help economically and with the knowledge in turn that it has prevented its spread.
2. Within large groups of states, such as Europe, the United States, and Africa, the same can be done at state level.
3. We encourage international bodies on clear criteria for when Countries affected they should order partial-lockdowns and/or complete lockdown.
4. Insurance travel should cover hotel costs as soon as the epidemic and disaster situations approach, or if countries are shut down due to an unknown virus. This should be obligatory to cover the costs of the additional stay. States must be able to help as well. In any case, their hotels will be empty soon after the virus has been exposed. People should not be allowed to travel until it is safe. This ought to become a risk for the trip and in view of the recognition that travel has increased considerably over the past ten to twenty years by low-cost travel. Moreover, people are used to go on holiday more than once a year and often outside their continent. This has contributed to the global spread of such viruses.