

Ordre Chevaleresque et Religieux  
*de la Couronne d'Epines*

(The Knightly and Religious Order  
of the Crown of Thorns)



HISTORY AND REGULATIONS

- 1922 -



France 1239, 1308

Antioch 1880

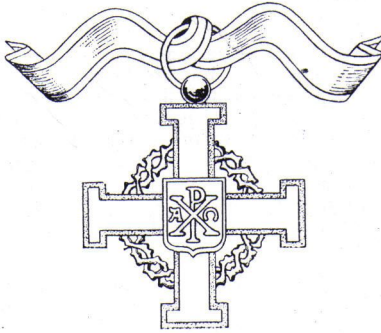
America 1892

Vice Chancelier:

J.M. Bush de Quesnel  
c/o Miss<sup>rs</sup> Edwards & Sons  
Finsbury Court  
Finsbury Pavement  
London. E.C.

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# Ordre Chevaleresque et Religieux *de la Couronne d'Epines*



## CHAPTER I. History of the Order.

Saint Paulinus of Nola (409) mentions "the thorns with which our Lord was crowned" as being in Jerusalem at that time. They were removed to Byzantium about 1063. In 1238 Baldwin II., the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, anxious to obtain support for his tottering empire, offered the Crown of Thorns to Saint Louis, King of France. It was then actually in the hands of the Venetians as security for a heavy loan, but it was redeemed and brought to France early in August, 1239.

The King Saint Louis, accompanied by his mother, Queen Blanche of Castille, his wife, Queen Marguerite of Provence, his three brothers, the Counts of Artois, Poitiers and Anjou, and all the ecclesiastical dignitaries and aristocracy of the time, went to meet the Holy Relic at Villeneuve l'Archêveque, five leagues from Sens.

It was the tenth of August, 1239. The king first venerated the Holy Relic, and after him the queens, princes, knights, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, soldiers, common people—a nation melting into tears, and hardly daring to raise its head to look upon that branch of cruel thorns which the miscreants had twisted into a crown of derision for their Divine Victim.

Louis IX. carried it himself, barefooted, to Paris, and for its final reception built the Sainte Chapelle (completed in 1248) in accordance with the plans of Pierre de Montereau; it is the most perfect pure Gothic monument in Europe.

We find no trace in old documents of the king having founded then an Order of Knighthood in honor of the Holy Crown of Thorns, but it is known that he wished to preserve the memory of this great event near his court by giving to his barons a souvenir or a representation of the famous Relic.

What we believe, and moreover what tradition has preserved for us in spite of all changes and political revolution, is that Philippe-le-Bel, grandson of Saint Louis, laid the first foundations of this Order in direct opposition to the Order of Templars, which he destroyed, either under the pretext of its crying abuses, or in order to confiscate the immense possessions of the Order, the power of which had given him deep concern.

A tradition of our Order says that this occurred about 1308, during the sitting of the States-General which had been called in session by the king, and that Philippe-le-Bel was the first Grand Master of the new Order.

In later years (the exact period is not clearly determined) we lose trace of all formal organization; but in 1880 the present regulations were prepared and submitted for approval to the Patriarch of Antioch by the learned Doctor Fercken, professor of Oriental languages. His Holiness Maran Mar Ignatius Peter III. sanctioned the re-establishment of the formal organization of the Order, and declared it to be his will that the Order of the Crown of Thorns should be, for all those who should be judged worthy of it, a bodyguard of honor for the defense of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the Orient and in the Occident.

This act by itself gives to our Order of the Crown of Thorns a dignity, which might even enable it to waive all question of antiquity and yet hold such rank as would challenge comparison with any knightly or religious Order whatever, past or present.

In 1892 Patriarch Ignatius Peter III., the successor of St. Peter, sent for Mar Timotheus I., who had been consecrated metropolitan archbishop for work amongst the Orthodox Catholics in America by Julius I., Archbishop of the Syrian Church in Ceylon, in accordance with the Bulls issued by the Patriarch, and conferred upon him the Grand Mastership of the Order of the Crown of Thorns, and intrusted to him the regulations of the Order. In America, as at Antioch, the standard of the Order is a banner of silk, half white with the fleurs de lys, half red bearing the Crown of Thorns with the monogram of Christ in the center.

Meanwhile history tells us how the Abbey of San Luigi was founded on St. Louis' Day (August 25th) 1883 on the frontier land of Tripoli-Fezzan, in Northern Africa, in the region known as the Touaregs-Azgar Country. The Colony by its constitution was independent, and was known as the Principality of San Luigi, the Rev. Father Henrice Pacomez being elected in August, 1883, as the first Prince. He died February 10th, 1884, and was succeeded by Dom Jose Piantini, who was killed on August 2nd, 1884 during a massacre of the inhabitants by the Touaregs. The only ones

who escaped were Dom Jose Mendoza, Severo Arrighi, Luis Ferratera, Antonio Valuppi and Marco Asvedo, who traveled through Northern Africa and Egypt to the Ounyoro Kingdom, on the shores of Lake Albert-Nyanza. (March 15th, 1885). By permission of Kabrega I., king of that country, they founded a new Abbey of San Luigi under the direction of Dom Jose Mendoza, who received from the king the title of Makongos or Prince-Governor. In 1888 the Abbey was closed by Dom Jose Mendosa, the only survivor of an epidemic of tropical fever. The Order of the Crown of Thorns was organized by decree of the Rev. Father Henrico Pacomez, first Prince of San Luigi, on October 15th, 1883. Dom Jose Mendoza on his return to Europe appointed as his successor to the Grand Mastership Louis Francois de Girardot. This appointment, witnessed by two citizens, was made on August 25th, 1896 to become effective on May 5th, 1897. This act was further legalized before the Mayor of Neuilly, Seine, France. In 1899 this Branch of the Order submitted absolutely, after recognizing the priority and legitimacy of the Order under His Excellency the Grand Master Mar Timotheus I. So there is only one Knightly and Religious Order of the Holy Crown of Thorns in the world today, with a history extending back some seven hundred years.

## CHAPTER II.

### Aim of the Order—Pro Christo et Ecclesia.

The aim of the Knightly and Religious Order of the Crown of Thorns is:—

1st. To defend the Deity of Jesus Christ and to adore Him in His Holy Passion.

2nd. To reward those who have distinguished themselves in the service of Jesus Christ, of Humanity, of the Order and of its Apostolic and Philanthropic work, and whose lives are exemplified by Charity.

## CHAPTER III.

### Dignities.

Article 1. The Order is divided into seven classes:

1st. The Grand Master of the Order.

2nd. The Grand Chancellor General, who will hold the dignity of Archimandrite and be of the Princes of the Order.

3rd. The Princes of the Crown of Thorns are the Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Archimandrites, Kings, Queens, Heads of States, Princes, Princesses, Generals or persons having held, or holding still, a high command.

4th. The Religious Priests connected with the Apostolic work.

5th. The Commanders, including the Monsignors.

6th. The Officers, including the Canons.

7th. The Knights.

Article 2. Ladies are received into the Order with the Title of "Lady of Honor and Devotion," while gentlemen are accorded the Title of "Doctor Christianissimus" with its appropriate hood.

Article 3. In close association with the Order of the Crown of Thorns is Le Grand Prix Humanitaire. While the Order is confined to those who accept the Deity of Christ, Le Grand Prix Humanitaire of the Crown of Thorns is to reward those who relieve the poor in distress, who help the widow and the fatherless, to encourage virtue, frugality, the arts, industry and patriotism, without distinction as to nationality or creed.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### Rights, Privileges, Titles, Honors, Regalia.

Article 1. The Grand Master governs the Order as well as its works, watching over the maintenance and strict observance of the regulations, development and prosperity of the entire Order.

Article 2. The Grand Chancellor General is delegated by the Grand Master to have charge of all that concerns the administration, the accounts, the good order, precedence and ceremonies, the holding of chapters, the keeping of records and all documents relating to the Order. He may add on his own responsibility as many Vice Chancellors as are necessary, with the titles of secretary, archive-keeper, librarian, master of ceremonies, etc.

Article 3. In accordance with the custom of all Knightly Orders each class has the right to use the distinctive letters of the class—apart from the ecclesiastical titles already mentioned, and the regalia assigned to each class. (1) G. M. C. E., (2) G. C. C. E., (3) P. C. E., (4) R. C. E., (5) C. C. E., (6) O. C. E., (7) K. C. E.

Article 4. The Grand Master has the title of Excellence, the other grades the title of their rank.

Article 5. The decoration of the Order is a Cross of Jerusalem in white enamel surrounded by a Crown of Thorns in gold. In the center of the Cross is the Monogram of Christ in gold applique on a shield of blue enamel. The ribbon is watered red with narrow white edges.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### Conditions of Admission.

Article 1. Persons of either sex, of all nationalities and Christian creeds, who are of good reputation, who have rendered noteworthy services to the Christian cause, to the Order or to the works of which it may be Patron, may be admitted into the Order.

Article 2. Each postulant shall address to the Grand Master his request for admission, together with any useful personal information, and his photograph. The biographical note shall include full name, place and date of birth, residence, profession, honors received (both academic and otherwise), services rendered, etc., and shall further include a distinct profession of Faith in the Deity of Jesus Christ and His birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Article 3. By the Grand Master, or in accordance with his orders, an inquiry is made into the legitimacy of the request. If the postulant is admitted notice is sent to him to that effect by the Grand Chancellor.

Article 4. The diplomas, crosses, rosettes, ribbons and insignia may be obtained through the Grand Chancellor's office.

CHAPTER VI.  
Obligations and Duties.

**Article 1.** Every member of the Knightly and Religious Order of the Crown of Thorns promises obedience to the Grand Master in whatever concerns the Statutes of the Order, and employs as far as it lies in his power, and so far as it agrees with his obligations, his intelligence, his influence and advice to the development and prosperity of the Order and its works. He is to set an example everywhere by conforming to the commands and counsels of the Gospel, and by conformity to the Aim of the Order.

**Article 2.** The Monks of the Order have special laws under the direction of the Grand Master. Likewise other Works founded or sustained by the Order have special laws to the carrying out of which all the members of the Order will give their assistance or obedience according to the degree to which these laws concern them.

**Article 3.** Every member of the Order will remain in constant relation with the Grand Master, if possible, by giving notice of any change of residence, or by communications relating to the interests of the Order.

**Article 4.** All declared public infamy, notorious evil doing or grave fault towards the Order is followed by the erasure from the Rolls of the offender's name, which sentence, after inquiry and defense, is pronounced without appeal by the Grand Master, or if he chooses by the Chapter General.

**Article 5.** The Order aiming only to advance religion and philanthropy forbids all political discussion. Each member honors and supports the government of the country in which he lives, or to which he belongs.

**Article 6.** Dues paid in by the members of the Order, and all gifts and legacies, will be used to meet the expenses of the Order, to sustain its philanthropic works, or to aid those in distress.

**PATRONS OF THE ORDER.**

His Holiness Maran Mar Ignatius III., Patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch.

His Beatitude Mar Julius I., Exarch of Goa and Ceyon.

His Eminence Joseph Dionysius, Metropolitan of Malabar.

The Rt. Rev. Mar Athanasius, Bishop of Kottayam.

The Rt. Rev. Mar Gregorius, Bishop of Niranam.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Uramchabank Kibarian, Eglise Armenian, Paris.

The Rt. Rev. Vladimir, D. D., Russian Orthodox Bishop.

The late Most Rev. Prince Khorene de Lusignan, Armenian Archbishop of Constantinople.

The late Rt. Rev. J. Theo. Holly, Bishop of Hayti.

H. R. H. Prince Guy de Lusignan, Prince Royal de Jerusalem de Chypre et d'Armenie.

Baron Louis de Girardo.

General Valerius Douyon.

Dr. Lisboa Pinto, F. E. A., L. M., Fellow of the R. G. S. of Lisbon.

Monsieur Jean de Bromont, Chevalier de l'Ordre du Lion et de la Croix Noire.  
 Prince Aguiles de Arancanid, Grand Cordon de la Constellation du Sud.  
 Dr. Louis Turmel de la Helandiere.  
 Madame Vve T. Wirth, Officer d'Academie Paris.  
 Dr. H. F. Brodeur.  
 Louis Druel, D. C., President-Fondateur du Grand Prix Humanitaire de France et des Colonies.  
 The Hon. J. S. Henderson, M. C.  
 The Rev. Pierre E. Jones, D. C.  
 Signor Giuseppe Scorgia fu Leopoldo.  
 The Rev. Charles E. Benedict.  
 Sir Minas Tcheras, M. R. A. S., Prof. of Armenian at King's College, London.

This list is followed by 148 Ecclesiastics and 420 Members of varying qualifications, all faithful to the Kingdom of God.

**FORM OF DONATION.**

I hereby give to the **Chivalrous and Religious Order of The Crown of Thorns** the sum of.....  
 to be appropriated and used for religious, charitable, missionary or educational purposes.

Dated at.....State of.....  
 on the.....day of.....A. D. 19...

(Signature) .....

Forms of Application for membership may be had from the Grand Chancellor General.