

MICHAEL ANDREW FOSTER JUDE KERR
13th Marquis of Lothian, Baron Kerr of Monteviot, PC, GCLJ, GCMLJ, KC, DL
7th July 1945 - 1st October 2024

When, in 2013, Michael Andrew Foster Jude Kerr, 13th Marquis of Lothian, agreed to become the Grand Prior of England & Wales in The Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, there was much rejoicing that so distinguished a nobleman had consented to lead our Grand Priory. As the then Grand Master, H.E. Don Carlos Gereda de Borbón, Marques de Almazán, wrote in a letter to Lord Lothian: "It is a singular honour for us all." He continued: "I understand that you find the ecumenical nature of our Order a particular recommendation and this gives me considerable pleasure because I cherish it as an unique charism among Orders of Chivalry."

Accordingly, Michael was duly installed as Head of Jurisdiction by the Grand Master at a special ceremony in The Church of All Hallows by the Tower, City of London, on 29th October 2013, followed by luncheon at The Tallow Chandlers' Hall. We did not know then quite how lucky we were, for Michael, like his illustrious predecessor, Robert Washington Shirley, 13th Earl Ferrers, was not content to be a mere figurehead but became very much a "hands on" Grand Prior. This did not mean he interfered in the running of the Grand Priory; on the contrary, although he attended meetings of the Executive Council whenever he could he remained largely silent during proceedings but, when invited to comment, would invariably offer perceptive and sound advice based on his considerable experience. He felt it his duty to preside at every National Investiture of the Grand Priory, even when not in the best of health. He also personally represented the jurisdiction at the international Chapter-General in New Orleans in 2015, called to approve the new constitution of the Order. Lord Lothian was re-appointed Grand Prior in 2016, by Grand Magistral Decree. His exemplary leadership of the Grand Priory was recognised by the Grand Magistral Council in 2022 with the award of admission to the Companiate of Merit in the rank of Knight Grand Cross of Merit, the then Grand Commander of the Order, H.E. the Chevalier Ted White GCLJ, coming in person to our National Investiture in October 2022 at Lancaster to invest him. Due to retire this year, Michael had already begun discussing arrangements for securing a suitable successor with the present Bailiff, Dr David Woolf KCLJ.

His devotion to the characteristics of Christian spirituality and Hospitaller work which define our Order was paramount for him. Prayer was fundamental for Michael. He considered it a privilege to be asked to write the foreword to The St Lazarus Prayer Book which he calls "...a powerful engine for prayer ... ideal for the lazy praying person such as myself" creating "... the structure by means of which we can begin and end our day in prayer, thus enhancing the values by which we lead our lives." These values were expressed by him in, among other things, his commitment to the Order of St Lazarus, which played an important part in his life. A shining example of this was his enthusiastic support for, and leadership of, the Grand Priory Pilgrimage to the Shrines of Our Lady of Walsingham in May. Indeed, one of the defining moments of his period of office must be his benevolent guidance of this act of devotion and the memories we have of his presence at Walsingham will long be cherished.

At the recent national Chapter-General in Cardiff the Bailiff in his report outlined a strategy for the Grand Priory based on three core values: (i) the Christian ecumenical ethos of the Order, (ii) the hospitaller work undertaken to support the alleviation of leprosy, and (iii) our local charitable work. Michael was instrumental in formulating these core values and our commitment to them will be his legacy and a lasting memorial to a dedicated and inspirational Grand Prior.

H.E. the Chevalier Gareth Vaughan GCLJ
Secretary-General

20th October, 2024



Lord Lothian, pictured informally with pilgrims at the Slipper Chapel in Walsingham after early mass
National Pilgrimage & Investiture of the Grand Priory of England & Wales - May, 2024