



Dear Brother Knight

As you will be aware, Knights Templar have a long and distinguished history of supporting the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) and are the largest external continuous donor to the Group itself for more than a century. Despite its youth the Province of London has become an important part of this support, not least through [London Support](#) and our previous Swift appeal to mark our 25th anniversary as a Province. There is now an opportunity for us to go further and provide cornerstone support to a project that has links between our Province and the Muristan Garden of Peace in the Old City of Jerusalem.

This project, which the Eye Hospital Group has wanted to put in place for many years, is the creation of a visitors' café in the Garden in Muristan. This would provide an attractive and sympathetic space in the heart of the Old City where pilgrims and tourists could learn a little about the work of SJEHG whilst enjoying the tranquil surroundings. The Muristan Clinic is one of three SJEHG clinical facilities (alongside the main Hospital, and the Kufr Aqab Centre) located within the Jerusalem Municipal boundaries. The site is of great historical importance, being the location of the ancient and original Hospitaller complex and is close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The stone commemorating this (shown with some London Knights) is visible to all who are passing. While the Clinic provides established and valued eye care services to the surrounding neighbourhood, the adjacent Hospital Garden deserves to be better known and more frequently visited.

The focal point of the Garden is the bronze Tree of Hope where the canopy of the olive tree is made not out of leaves, but one hundred and fifty swifts. The sculpture is a tree full of life and a symbol of hope, with resting swifts alongside the donor boards that record the generosity of many KT Provinces, Preceptories and individuals.



I feel that the provision of hospitality and respite is in keeping with the original aims of the Knights Hospitallers. SJEHG’s intention is that, once established, the café will be self-supporting, covering its costs and generating a significant additional income stream that the Hospital can reinvest into its charitable services. We estimate the start-up costs will be in the region of £68,000 but thereafter the café could generate enough profit each year to fund as many as 25 cataract operations or a nurse’s salary for 18 months. SJEHG’s detailed project proposal with income projections is available for anyone who wishes to peruse it.

At our Provincial Priory meeting on 29 September, I will be announcing **an appeal for us to raise £14,000 before our Provincial Malta meeting on 29 January 2027**. This will allow us to kickstart the overall SJEHG appeal by equipping the coffee shop within the Garden of Peace.

I am asking every Preceptory to endeavour to contribute £500 towards the Appeal and to transfer the funds to the Provincial Relief Chest by not later than 28 January 2027; all donations will be credited to individual Preceptories as well as to the Province.

The Province will make up any shortfall on the target of £14,000 as well as making a significant donation but I am confident that you will all rise to the challenge and so, if we exceed our target, the balance will be allocated to the overall Muristan project. Some preceptories may be in a position to contribute more to the appeal and this will be most gratefully received. The Province will also allocate its alms from the Provincial meetings in 2027 to the cause.

There are a number of Preceptories that will not meet between the two dates, and I would ask you to consider placing a resolution on the Summons for your early September meeting to authorise the payment of £500, or as much as you are able to provide, from your relief chest or benevolent fund.



Thank you for your support.

Rt. E. Kt. David James Thompson
Provincial Prior for the Province of London