



AMERICAN DELEGATION OF SAVOY ORDERS

THE 2011 CAPITOLO GENERALE

AND

“THE ROAD OF THE DUKES OF SAVOY” TOUR IN SAVOY, FRANCE

May 27 – May 30, 2011

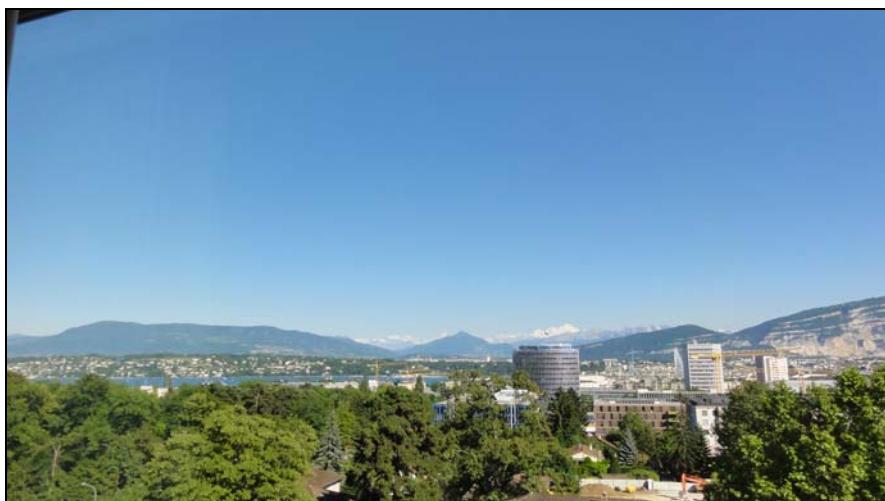
By Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser

Geneva

The 2011 Chapter General (*Capitolo Generale*) of the Dynastic Orders of the Royal House of Savoy in Geneva and at the Abbey of Saint Maurice d’Agaune (May 28 – May 29) was a memorable occasion for new members of the American Delegation, members promoted in grade, and for those participating for the first time in the traditional ceremonies under the Grand Mastership of HRH Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy. The American Delegation consisted of Cav. Gr. Cr. Avv. Carl J. Morelli, the Delegate; Comm. The Very Rev. John P. McGuire, OP, Delegation Chaplain; Cav. Dott. Igor Alexandroff; Uff. Anthony Cipriano; Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich; Comm. L’On. Joseph Golia, Dama Rosalie Grecco Golia, Dama Dott.ssa. Catherine Stevenson; Uff. Peter Wirth; Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser, and Uff. Cyril Woods. Our Delegation contingent was joined by friends and family members. The Chapter General 2011 was particularly momentous being in the year celebrating the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy under His Majesty King Victor Emmanuel II, the great great-grandfather of H.R.H. Prince Victor Emmanuel.



Hotel Intercontinental



Panoramic views of the city of Geneva, Switzerland from the Hotel Intercontinental

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On May 30, following the official ceremonies and gala benefit ball, the American Delegation also organized a tour of two castles of historical importance in the Savoy region of France. The 2011 tour could not have been possible without meticulous planning and coordination of the arrangements for the guided tour by our *confrere*, Comm. Prof. Eric Ierardi [who regrettably was unable to attend this year].

Some members arrived on Friday morning before the *Capitolo* and explored the beautiful cosmopolitan city of Geneva, visiting the Old Town, the most historic district with its quaint, steep streets, fountains and squares, and a fascinating mix of Gothic, Renaissance and 18th Century architecture. Framed by the Alps, Jura Mountains and Lake Geneva, Geneva was once the nexus of political power of the early Counts and Dukes of Savoy, who had controlled both shores of Lake Geneva. The historical connection with the Savoy dynasty makes the city an ideal setting for members of the Savoy Orders from all over the world to congregate and reaffirm in the 21st century their millennial traditions and chivalric ideals.



Views of Geneva

Delegate's Meeting

The weekend's events commenced on Friday afternoon, May 27, 2011, when the leaders of the Savoy Delegations around the world, invited by the Grand Chancellor Cav. di Gr. Cr. Johannes Niederhauser, attended the Delegates' Meeting at the Intercontinental Hotel. During the plenary meeting, the Delegates shared reports of the Delegations and exchanged ideas. Presiding at the meeting was His Royal Highness, Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, our Grand Master.

Mr. Morelli reported on activities of the American Delegation and the American Foundation of Savoy Orders and provided reports about the busy calendar of events and programs of the past year which included: the informal social gathering at the home of Uff. George C. White, co-hosted by Uff. Avv. Roy De Barbieri, the *Savoy History Lecture*, the *Ballo di Savoia*, the *Festa della Primavera*, the *St. Lazarus Mass and Dinner* and the addition of two new regional representatives in Buffalo, New York and in Palm Beach, Florida, and the newly established *Savoy Orders Pigott Scholarship* endowment. Mr. Morelli presented to the Delegates copies of the 2010 *Ballo Journal* and the recently published *Royalty and Remembrance* book, commemorating the Prince and Princess's visit to New York City for the *Ballo di Savoia* weekend.

Welcome Dinner

On Friday evening, the members of the American Delegation and their guests had a enjoyable dinner at one Geneva's oldest and typical brasseries, *Café du Centre*, established in 1871. With an art nouveau ambience that showcases wooden furnishings and mirror accents, the café specializes in seafood and is located at the entrance to the Old Town.



(l to r) Comm. L'On. Joseph Golia, Dama Rosalie Grecco Golia, Uff. Anthony Cipriano, Delegate Carl Morelli (both partially obscured),
Uff. Cyril Woods, Mrs. Lorna Woods, Dr. Olga Belostotsky, Cav. Dott. Igor Alexandrov, Mr. James Vallas
and Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich at the *Café du Centre*.

On Sunday evening, members of the American Delegation treated themselves to a wonderful dinner at one of the premier four star restaurants in Geneva. *La Perle du Lac* is a world renowned restaurant that has for a number of years always reserved its best tables for the American Delegation and their guests during the *Capitolo* weekend. The fabulous food and lively conversation complimented by fine local Swiss wines were leisurely enjoyed on the shores of the lake with the sun setting on Mont Blanc in the distance as the unhurried dusk faded into a star filled night.

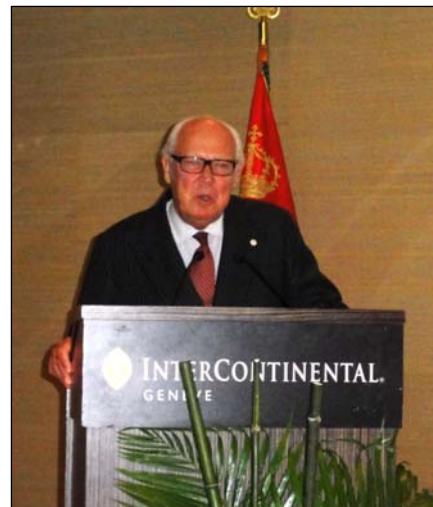


Dining at sunset at *La Perle du Lac* Restaurant in Geneva with a view of Mont Blanc

Order of Merit of Savoy Installation



At 10:30 am on Saturday morning May 28, the formal installation ceremony for the investiture of candidates and promotions in the *Order of Merit of Savoy* began. The Grand Master of the Savoy Orders, H.R.H. Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy presided, assisted by the Grand Chancellor Johannes Niederhauser. Observing the ceremony was an honored guest, Cav. di Gr. Cr. His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem since 2008 and Grand Prior of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem is the diocesan bishop of Latin Catholics of the *Archdiocese of Jerusalem* and has jurisdiction for all Latin Rite Catholics in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian territories, Jordan and Cyprus.



*Salutations of the Head of the Royal House of Savoy, H.R.H Prince Victor Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, Prince of Naples
XVII Grand Master of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus and VI Grand Master of the Order of Merit of Savoy*



*Candidates, members, family and friends awaiting the arrival of the Grand Master and Grand Chancellor
at the Order of Merit Installation Ceremony*



Cav. Gr. Cr. His Beatitude Fouad Twal addresses the assembly of candidates and members of the Order of Merit of Savoy



The Grand Chancellor and the Prince view the video film on the work of the Latin Patriarchate in the Holy Land

First, the Patriarch gave an impassioned speech in Italian, stressing the importance of the noble ideals and duties of knights and dames of the Dynastic Orders of the Royal House of Savoy, which are to give service to human society through charitable endeavors and assistance to those in need rather than just to wear the decoration as an honor. He also made a plea for support for the Palestinian Christians experiencing many challenges in the Holy Land and the need to provide support to the diminishing Christian communities of all denominations in that region. A video film was presented demonstrating the many social services and educational programs that the Latin Patriarchate provides for all Christian communities in the Holy Land.

After this presentation, the formal installation ceremony began as each honoree was called forward to receive a diploma and insignia presented by His Royal Highness in the filled to capacity room.



Dama Larissa Van Duser promoted to Dama di Commenda, Order of Merit of Savoy



Rosalie Grecco Golia admitted Dama, Order of Sts. Maurice and Lazarus



The Hon. Joseph Golia admitted Commendatore Order of Sts. Maurice and Lazarus

Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus Installation

The Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus investiture was held in the late afternoon, again with His Royal Highness presiding, with the Grand Chancellor assisting and in the presence of Cav. di Gr. Cr. His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Due to the large number of attendees, the Chancellery has had to schedule separate investitures for the individual Orders. His Royal Highness personally congratulated each recipient and mingled with honorees and guests after the investiture.

Congratulations to the honorees from the American Delegation of Savoy Orders, including: Dama Larissa Van Duser, promoted to *Dama di Commenda*, Order of Merit of Savoy; Cav. Cyril Woods, promoted to *Ufficiale*, Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus; L'On Joseph Golia, admitted as *Commendatore*, Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus; Rosalie Grecco Golia, admitted as *Dama*, Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, Dr. Catherine Stevenson, admitted as *Dama*, Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus.

Reception and Charity Ball

The day's events were crowned by a glittering Reception, Ball and Dinner with over 400 guests in formal attire, many wearing orders and decorations, in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Intercontinental. The Grand Master and Grand Chancellor offered remarks to the attendees and thanked all members for their commitment to the centuries old tradition of charity and good works. His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem delivered the Benediction. His Royal Highness was joined by his wife H.R.H. Princess Marina, his son the Hereditary Crown Prince Emmanuel Philibert and his sister H.R.H. Princess Maria Beatrice of Savoy. All members of the Royal Family spent time greeting the members of the American party.



American Delegation Members and guests at the Cocktail Reception

(l to r) Delegate Carl Morelli; Dama Dott.ssa. Catherine Stevenson; Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser; Delegation Chaplain Comm. Very Rev. John P. McGuire,OP; Uff. Cyril Woods, Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich; Mrs. Lorna Woods; Comm. L'On. Joseph Golia, Mr. James Vallas; Ms. Dalia Maziar; John Van Duser, Esq.; and Dama Rosalie Grecco Golia



(l to r) Delegation Chaplain Comm. Very Rev. John P. McGuire, Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich and Uff. Anthony Cipriano



Prince Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy greeting guests



(l to r) Dr. Olga Belostotsky, Ms. Dalia Maziar, Mrs. Horacio Humberto Savoia, Cav. Dott. Igor Alexandrov and Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser



Highlights of the Charity Ball





Mass and Capitolo Generale at the Abbey of St. Maurice d'Agaune



Abbey of Saint Maurice d'Agaune

On a glorious, sunny Sunday morning, the American Delegation, with other international Savoy Orders members, departed from the Intercontinental on board a bus provided by the Chancellery for the journey to the 1000 year old Abbey of Saint Maurice in the Swiss village of Saint Maurice d'Agaune, to participate in the annual Procession and Solemn Mass. This is the site where Saint Maurice and his companions, all Christian Roman soldiers, were martyred when they refused to renounce their faith. Saint Maurice is the Patron Saint of Savoy and of many Swiss, French and Savoyard villages as well as the Patron Saint and Protector of the Italian Royal House.

Passing through some of the most beautiful landscape in southwestern Switzerland – Lausanne and Montreux – and by the ancient Savoy Castle of Chillon and dozens of small vineyards and villages – the American Delegation arrived at about 11:00 am at the historic abbey.



The Delegation about to depart for the Abbey



View of Montreux from the Chancellery Bus

According to Vatican Protocol, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem led the procession, followed by His Excellency the Bishop Abbot of Saint Maurice d'Agaune, and concelebrated the Mass with numerous priests and chaplains of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus. The ceremony was held in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses Princes Victor Emmanuel, Emmanuel Philibert, Princesses Marina and Maria Beatrice of Savoy and approximately 200 robed members of the Savoy Orders, who processed with the Grand Master. The sacred relics of Saint Maurice, encased in an ornate gold reliquary, rarely displayed, were on view during the annual Mass, as tradition dictates. The powerful and extraordinary choir and soloists enhanced the majesty of the ancient religious ceremony.

Procession and Solemn Mass at the Abbey of St. Maurice d'Agaune with Members of the Savoy Orders and the Royal Family, May 29, 2011





Following the Solemn High Mass, during which the Abbot Bishop of St. Maurice d'Agaune and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem blessed new members' church robes (*abiti da chiesa*), the new members of the Savoy Orders and the many consoeurs, confreres and guests, a luncheon for the benefit of *Hospitaller Works of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus* followed in the Abbey precinct with the Royal Family and dignitaries.



The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem graciously joins the American Delegation for a photograph inside the Abbey Church of St. Maurice d'Agaune after the Solemn Mass



Members of the American Delegation on the grounds of the Abbey of St. Maurice D'Agaune



The American Delegation in a medieval courtyard of the Abbey



The Abbot Bishop carrying the Reliquary of Saint Maurice to safekeeping in the Abbey after the Solemn Mass



(l to r) Fr. Emil Salyta, President of the Latin Ecclesiastical Court of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem; Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser; The Most Reverend Cav. Gr. Cr. Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem; Ms. Dalia Maziar; and Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich after the Benefit Luncheon at the close of the 2011 Capitolo Generale

After luncheon, the American Delegation with members of other delegations from all over the world returned to Geneva by motor coach as the 2011 *Capitolo* weekend drew to a close.

Tour of the Castles in Savoy, France



Tour Bus and Mme. Chantal George, our Tour Guide

Annecy

On May 30, the extraordinary sunny and warm weather continued to favor the early Monday morning departure of the American Delegation tour from the Intercontinental, en route to the ancient Château de Menthon in the Haute Savoie region in France. Passing bucolic villages and alpine passes and accompanied once again by our superb English speaking tour guide, Mme. Chantal George, we crossed the border with Gallic style from Switzerland into Savoy, France. This was once a greatly coveted frontier region, and for centuries a nation in her own right, powerful and independent, with her own history and tradition.

In the late 4th century, the region appeared under the old Roman name of *Sabaudia* after the settlement of the *Burgondes*. Then it was called *Saboia* under the Carolingians, before its governance was entrusted by Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II to the first Count of Savoy, Humbert I of the White Hands around the year 1000. Originally from Burgundy, he was the first Count of Savoy to be installed in the Maurienne region. From the 13th to the 15th century, as it formed alliances and fought to maintain its political hegemony, the House of Savoy was to grow politically and territorially: to its original possessions (Savoy, Bugey, Maurienne, Chablais, Val d'Aosta, valley of Susa, lordships of the Viennois) were added the Faucigny, the Genevois, the Pays de Vaud, the Bresse, the County of Nice and the lands of Piedmont. In 1416, Amadeus VIII of Savoy, the count of Savoy became the family's first Duke of Savoy, a title which was to legitimize at European level the geostrategic role of Savoy and which was to earn its rulers the appellation of "Gatekeepers of the Alps," since they controlled key western crossings from Northern Europe into the Italian peninsula. With the gradual unification of the Italian regions by the House of Savoy, the Savoy region was ceded to France on June 14, 1860, the last province to become part of the French nation.



Participants of the Savoy Castles Tour pose for an official group photo before walking though the town of Annecy

Our bus followed the route to Annecy where we paused to walk through the picturesque town, taking photographs of the “Palais de l’Isle,” also called the “old Prison” built in the twelfth century. It is the symbol of the town and is among the most photographed monuments in all of France, taking up most of the island in a canal. The famous Genevan philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who fled from Geneva to Annecy, called the town “the small Venice of Savoy.”



Strolling through picturesque ancient streets of Annecy

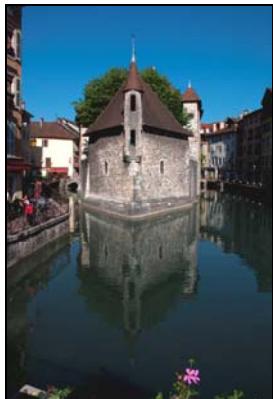


Viewing Balustrade of gold and Bust of Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Annecy is located between Geneva and the old Savoy capital of Chambéry. Thus its history was strongly influenced by these two towns between the 10th and the 19th century. Starting as the capital of the county of Geneva, after the demise of the last of the counts of Geneva, it became integrated into the House of Savoy’s possessions in 1401. In 1444, the town was designated by the Princes of Savoy as the capital of a region covering the possessions of the Genevois, Faucigny and Beaufortain. With the advance of Calvinism in 1535, it became a center for the Counter-Reformation and the bishop’s see of Geneva was transferred here. Saint Francis of Sales who was bishop of Annecy, was born at the nearby castle of Sales in 1567.



Posing in front of the Palais de l’Isle, on the Annecy Canal



Château de Menthon



First view of the Castle of Menthon rising above the horizon



Castle walls of Menthon

After Annecy, we were treated to a private tour of the Castle of Menthon which is one of the architectural jewels of Savoy. Over the centuries, its 105 rooms have always served as a residence. The castle stands on a high rock that looks over Annecy Lake. It began as a primitive lookout tower in the 10th century and evolved into its present state through expansions and improvements made over the years. The high location is strategic because it provided a natural defense and allowed a clear view of the nearby land and lake routes. The first fortress was erected in the 10th century, around 923. The present buildings were constructed between the 13th and 19th centuries. Bernard of Menthon (St. Bernard), the patron saint of skiers, was born in the castle in the 11th century (1008). He later founded the hospice at the Great St. Bernard Pass and abbeys in the high Alps that separate Switzerland and Italy.



Strolling through the grounds of the Castle of Menthon





The group on the terrace of the Castle of Menthon

Like the rest of the castle, its chapel was built in stages, the oldest part dating from 1262. The rear was constructed in the 19th century in homage to Saint Bernard. It has a large painting that depicts him with his foot over the devil's head, representing the triumph of good over evil.



Panoramic views of the countryside from the Castle



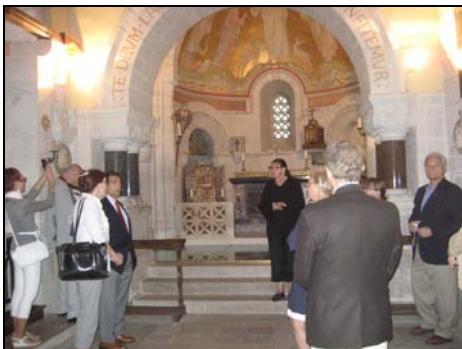
Entering Castle interior

The kitchen was built in the 19th century and was considered very modern at the time because the design is functional and clever. We thought in some ways it was modern even by today's standards. For example, since there was no electricity, a large part of the ceiling is made of glass to allow for illumination by natural light. In one corner there is a small tunnel built to transport food from the kitchen to the dining room with a system of tracks and pulleys and the ashes left over from the cooking were conserved and used to wash laundry.

The library inside the Château is filled with 12,000 volumes of leather books, some dating from the early 16th century. The oldest ones are over a thousand years old, but for insurance purposes they are not permitted to be kept inside the castle.



Interior Courtyard



Chapel



Kitchen



Grand Salon



Ancestral portraits with OSSML insignia



Magnificent library of Château de Menthon

Lunch at the Auberge de Savières in Chanaz, France

After working up an appetite touring all morning, the group was treated to a 4 course lunch honoring local culinary traditions in a charming provincial restaurant, *L'Auberge de Savières*, in the village of Chanaz.



The Chanaz Canal



Lunching "Al Fresco" or "En Plein Air" at L'Auberge de Savières



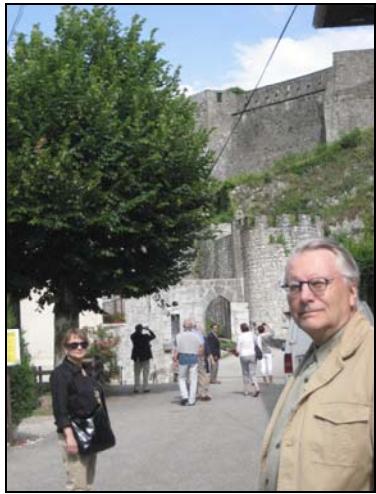
Exploring the Village of Chanaz

Château of Miolans



Château of Miolans poised on a rocky cliff overlooking the Combe de Savoie

After lunch, the tour continued with a visit to the notorious Château of Miolans, a former fortress prison perched on a 550m-long rocky ridge 200m above the forest and vineyards of the *Combe de Savoie*, in a remote area of Savoy that was formerly between Italy and France. The site, which has been occupied since the fourth century A.D., strategically controlled an important trade route across the junction of the Isere and Arc rivers. The fortress was converted into a prison by the Counts of Savoy in the mid-16th century. Its notoriety led it to be compared to the Bastille in Paris and was called the “Bastille of the Alps” or the “Bastille of Savoy.” Among the notable persons imprisoned at Miolans in 1722 was the infamous Marquis de Sade. The Guiter family, owners of the monument since 1869, has maintained the castle and opened it to the public.



Entrance to the grounds of the Castle Miolans

Entrance to the interior of the Castle

Exploring one of the dungeon rooms

The approach is from the tiny hamlet of Miolans, part of the small town of St-Pierre Albigny, up a steep narrow road with a series of hair-pin curves. The historic castle, now largely in ruins, is not inhabited but can be visited, while the former stables and servants' quarters were remodeled as a family residence that we were invited to view by the owner of the castle.



Château de Miolans from a distance

The castle's dungeon rooms were particularly inhospitable with the graffiti of prisoners still hauntingly visible as a reminder of the desperation of 192 souls who were imprisoned there. Legend states also that an unfaithful lady of the castle was walled into a small room at the lowest level and emerged insane upon finally being liberated from her ordeal.



Fortress walls of Château de Miolans



View from the prison



Dungeon corridors

The visit to the castle's dungeons ended with a walk through the gardens and a climb up the guard towers. We could see the miles of vineyards stretching in either direction along the foot of the mountain. Mont Blanc towers on the horizon on a clear day.



The Guard Tower offers a view of Mont Blanc





The private quarters and grounds of the Castle



Delegation members and guests leaving the Château and exploring the tiny village of Miolans

At the end of the day, several of the Delegation members dined at the venerable *Les Armures*, one of the oldest dining establishments in the city in the heart of the ancient hill top section of the medieval walled city of Geneva. The restaurant, known as one of the oldest in the city, has become a must as a dining establishment. Over the years, it has become one of Geneva's favorite restaurants.



Restaurant Les Armures in the Old City of Geneva

*Photography: Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich, Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser, Ms. Dalia Maziar
Additional Photos contributed by Cav. Dott. Igor Alexandrov*