



## AMERICAN DELEGATION OF SAVOY ORDERS

THE 2012 CAPITOLO GENERALE

AND

TOUR OF CASTLES OF CHILLON AND RIPAILLE ON LAKE GENEVA

May 18 – May 21, 2012

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### Geneva

The 2012 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 19 – May 20) was a memorable occasion for members of the American Delegation who participated in the weekend's traditional ceremonies presided over by the Grand Master, H.R.H. Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy. Geneva was once the center 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.



(l to r) Cav. Gr. Cr. Nob. Dott. Carlo Buffa dei Conti di Perrero, Cav. Gr. Cr. Grand Chancellor Johannes Niederhauser, the Grand Master H.R.H. Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy and H.R.H. Prince Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy

The Prince, together with H.R.H. the Crown Prince Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, presented the diplomas and insignia and welcomed new members of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus and the Order of Merit of Savoy. The Grand Chancellor Cav. Gr. Cr. Johannes Niederhauser; the Grand Treasurer Cav. Gr. Cr. Dott. Robert Matossian; and the Master of Ceremonies Cav. Gr. Cr. Nob. Dott. Carlo Buffa dei Conti di Perrero also participated in the ceremonies. The American Delegation consisted of Cav. Gr. Cr. Avv. Carl J. Morelli, the Delegate; Uff. Dott. Igor Alexandroff; Uff. Anthony Cipriano; Dama di Comm. Gaetana Enders. Our Delegation contingent was joined by friends and family members.

## **Installation Ceremonies for the Order of Merit of Savoy and Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus**

At 10:30 am on Saturday morning May 19, the formal installation ceremony for the investiture of candidates and promotions in the Order of Merit of Savoy commenced. 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.



*H.R.H. Prince Leka II of Albania becoming Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, motu proprio, conferred by H.R.H. Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, Grand Master of the Order, during the Chapter General in Geneva.*

The Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus investiture was held in the late afternoon, again with Their Royal Highnesses presiding, with the Grand Chancellor assisting. Among the honorees who received the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus was H.R.H. Prince Leka Anwar Zog II, heir to the Throne of Albania, now a senior official of the Albanian Ministry of Interior, the grandson of His Late Majesty Zog I, King of Albania. His admission into the Order symbolizes the continuity of the ties between Albania and Italy, which, despite all the vicissitudes and tragedies of history, have continued to strengthen in the best interest of the two countries. King Zog I, grandfather of Prince Leka II, received the insignia of Knight Grand Cross of the Order in 1926.



*HRH Prince Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, President of the Council of the Dynastic Orders of the Royal House of Savoy, addresses the assembly of Knights and Dames of the Savoy Orders about the charitable works of the Association Internationale des Chevaliers des Ordres Dynastique de la Maison Royale de Savoie (AICODS)*

On May 21, following the official ceremonies and gala benefit ball, the American Delegation also toured two castles of historical importance on Lake Geneva (Lac Leman) in Switzerland and France, the famous Château Chillon and Château de Ripaille. The 2012 tour included the Delegate, Uff. Dott. Igor Alexandroff and Dr. Olga Belostotsky-Alexandroff, and Uff. Anthony Cipriano.

### **Delegates' Meeting**

The weekend's events commenced on Friday afternoon, May 18, 2012, when the leaders of the Savoy Orders, invited by the Grand Chancellor Cav. 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 H.R.H. 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 Savoy History Lecture, the Ballo di Savoia, the Ballo Weekend Masses and Installation Ceremony, the Festa della Primavera, the St. Lazarus Mass and Dinner, the All Orders Mass and the addition of a new regional representative for Los Angeles, California. Mr. Morelli presented to the Delegates copies of the 2011 Ballo Journal. In addition, the Delegate was very pleased to screen the first preliminary video documentary on the activities and purposes of the American Delegation of Savoy Orders and the American Foundation of Savoy Orders with a short history of both the Savoy Royal Family and the Dynastic Orders of Knighthood and Merit of the Royal House of Savoy. The Prince and Grand Chancellor together with the other Delegates were greatly pleased with this audio-visual presentation, which was conceived and produced by Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich and Mr. Steven Ojeda, videographer at MZI Global. Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser provided historical research, material and photographs and edited the video under the overall guidance of the Delegate.

### **Welcome Dinner**

On Friday evening, the members of the American Delegation and their guests had a enjoyable dinner at one Geneva's famous restaurants overlooking the south shore line of Lake Geneva, Restaurant Hotel du Parc des Eaux-Vives, a traditional gathering of American Delegation members before the official ceremonies and events of the weekend.



*Restaurant Hotel du Parc des Eaux-Vives*

By a special invitation from Their Royal Highnesses Prince Victor Emmanuel and Princess Marina of Savoy, on Monday evening after the Savoy castles tour, members of the American Delegation enjoyed cocktails with them and the Grand Chancellor at the Royal Couple's home on the south shore of Lake Geneva. The Prince graciously provided a tour of his extensive private collection of Savoy dynasty artifacts and memorabilia which are displayed in his home.

## Highlights of the Reception and Charity Ball

The Saturday events were crowned by a glittering Reception, Ball and Dinner with guests in formal attire, 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 Royal Highness was joined by his wife H.R.H. Princess Marina, his son H.R.H. the Hereditary Crown Prince Emmanuel Philibert and H.R.H. Princess Clotilde of Savoy. All members of the Royal Family greeted the members of the American party. The evening also celebrated the 650th anniversary of the founding of the Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunciation. To commemorate the historic occasion, Their Royal Highnesses cut a special cake which the ball guests enjoyed.



*The Royal Family Celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunziata with the Guests at the Geneva Ball*



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



*Abbey of Saint Maurice d'Agaune and Historic Reliquaries*

On a partly sunny Sunday morning, the American Delegation, with other international Savoy Orders members, departed from the Intercontinental Hotel on board a private 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 Chapter General, Procession and Solemn Mass. This is the site at the eastern end of Lake Geneva where Saint Maurice and his companions, all Christian Roman soldiers, were said to have been 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 landscapes 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. His Excellency Bishop Abbot Joseph Roduit of Saint Maurice d'Agaune led the procession into the historic Abbey, and concelebrated the Mass. The ceremony was held in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses Princes Victor Emmanuel and Emmanuel Philibert, Princesses Marina and Coltilde of Savoy and dozens of 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.



*Procession and Solemn Mass at the Abbey of St. Maurice d'Agaune with Members of the Savoy Orders and the Royal Family, May 20, 2012*



Following the Solemn High Mass, during which the Abbot Bishop of St. Maurice d’Agaune blessed new members’ church robes (*abiti da chiesa*), the new members of the Savoy Orders and the many consoeurs, confreres and guests, a buffet 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.

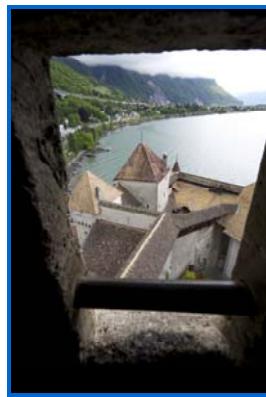


*Members of the American, Portuguese and Alto Adige and South Tyrol Delegations  
on the grounds of the Abbey of St. Maurice D'Agaune*

After luncheon, the American Delegation with confreres 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 of Chillon and Ripaille on Lake Geneva**

On the morning of May 21, a tour group of four - the Delegate Cav. Gr. Cr. Avv. Carl J. Morelli, Uff. Dott. Igor Alexandroff, his wife Dr. Olga Belostotsky and Uff. Anthony Cipriano - set out from the Intercontinental by car on a day long trip to visit the ancient Château de Chillon in Montreux, on the edge of Lake Geneva in southwestern Switzerland, and Château de Ripaille, on the southern shore of Lake Geneva in France. The weather was partly cloudy and pleasantly temperate, as they passed, en route, bucolic villages and landscaped vineyards.



*Chillon Castle*

The Delegation group explored the fairytale, picturesque, oval shaped Chillon Castle that is located on a small, rocky outcrop on Lake Geneva. It was the fortress of the Savoys used to secure the Western European passage over the Alps to Italy through the Grand St. Bernard pass, from about 1150 until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which the Savoy family controlled from their seat of government at Chambéry.

In the afternoon, after a pleasant lunch at La Brasserie of the Fairmont Le Montreux Palace Hotel, the group headed to the southern shores of Lake Geneva in France to the Castle of Ripaille located between Thonon-les-Bains and Evian on the banks of the French side of Lake Geneva (Lac Léman). Inhabited since ancient times, Ripaille was claimed as a hunting area by the Counts of Savoy in the 13th century. It became their preferred residence in the 14th century. Construction of the great manor house began in 1371 under the supervision of Bonne de Bourbon the Countess of Savoy and wife of Amadeus VI of Savoy, known as the Green Count for the color of the livery he wore at tournaments. Ripaille was the first residence constructed by the Counts of Savoy for comfort, not for defense; it was located with an eye to the beauty of the site, rather than to its military importance. It has been constantly renovated, including additions in the early fifteenth century made for housing the first Duke of Savoy, Amadeus VIII, when he made Ripaille his spiritual retreat with his knight companions of the Order of Saint Maurice.



*Ripaille Castle*

After the tour, the group accepted the gracious invitation of Her Royal Highness Princess Marina of Savoy to visit the Royal Couple's private residence on the southern shore of Lake Geneva for cocktails. This was the highlight of the weekend for the American Delegation whose members were warmly greeted and treated to a tour of the Royal Couple's home with its extraordinary Savoy dynasty artifacts and artworks and spent a very pleasant two hours with Their Royal Highnesses and the Grand Chancellor Cav. Gr. Cr. Johnannes Niederhauser.

At the end of the day, Delegation members and members of the Portuguese Delegation dined at the venerable *Les Armures*, one of the oldest and favorite dining restaurants in the city in the heart of the ancient hill top section of the medieval walled city of Geneva.

*By Dama di Comm. Larissa Van Duser*

*Principal Photography: Uff. Dott. Igor Alexandroff*