

Foreword

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The *Sancti Lazari Ordinis Academia Internationalis* held its second academic meeting in conjunction with the International Pilgrimage of the Military & Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem held in June 2017 in the Cathedral of Monreale in Sicily. During the meeting, the statutes of the Academy were formally accepted opening the way forward towards the legalization of the Academy.



canonization was proclaimed at Orvieto in 1297 by Boniface VIII.

St. Louis led an exemplary life, bearing constantly in mind his mother's words: *"I would rather see you dead at my feet than guilty of a mortal sin"*. He spent long hours in prayer, fasting, and penance, and was

The Cathedral in Monreale is particularly important to the Order of Saint Lazarus since it houses the remains of King Saint Louis who was a past patron of the Order. King of France, son of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile, born at Poissy, 25 April 1215; died while on Crusade near Tunis, 25 August 1270. St Louis's



Hair shirt and scourge of Louis IX kept in the Treasury of Notre-Dame de Paris.

renowned for his charity believing that “the peace and blessings of the realm come to us through the poor”. He founded many hospitals and houses including the House of the Felles-Dieu for reformed prostitutes; the Quinze-Vingt for 300 blind men, and hospitals at Pontoise, Vernon, Compiègne. He fed the poor from his table and ministered to the wants of the lepers washing their feet. On one occasion he admonished the Seneschal of Champagne, John of Joinville for preferring being in a state of sin rather than suffer from leprosy. *“Next I ask you,”* said he, *“Which would you rather: Be a leper, or have committed a deadly sin?”* And I, who never lied to him, replied: that I would rather have committed thirty deadly sins than be a leper. And when the friars were gone, he called me all alone, and made me sit at his feet, and said to me: *“What was that you said to me yesterday?”* And I replied: that I still said the same. *“You talk like a hasty rattle pate,”* said he, *“For there is no leprosy so foul as deadly sin, seeing that a soul in deadly sin is in the image of the Devil. And truly when a man dies, he is healed of the leprosy of the body, but when a man dies that has committed deadly sin, great fear must he needs have lest such leprosy should endure so long as God shall be in Heaven.”*¹



Louis IX washing lepers' feet

¹ John of Joinville. *Memoirs of John of Joinville. Supplement 20* | 6. ms. in Bibliothèque Royale dated c.1305 [English translation by E. Wedgewood. *The Memoirs of the Lord of Joinville. A New English Version*, pp.277-279].

Louis IX led two crusades: the Seventh Crusade in 1248-1254 and the Eight Crusade in 1270 when he met his death. The Seventh Crusade was initially directed towards capturing Egypt starting with the capture of the port of Damietta. However, the rising of the Nile and the summer heat made the advance to Cairo difficult. During the Battle of Al Mansurah on 11 February 1250, the Crusader army was defeated and Louis IX was captured by the Egyptians. His release was eventually negotiated in return for a ransom and the surrender of the city of Damietta. The knights of the Order of Saint Lazarus also participated in this campaign. Matthew Paris reports that "*Louis, King of France, was taken prisoner, and his whole army dispersed and routed, and many nobles of his kingdom were taken with him, and a large body belonging to the Temple, to the Hospital, to the Teutonic Order and that of Saint Lazarus.*"² He further adds "*...There were captured, killed and scattered the convents of the Temple, Hospital, St Mary Teutonics, and St Lazarus, twice.....The Saracens triumphed many times as they wished: the general army of the Christians, viz. of the French, with the King present, of Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonics, brothers of St Lazarus and inhabitants of the Holy Land, was conquered, captured, slaughtered, alas!*"³ Following his release from Egyptian captivity, Louis IX spent four years in the Latin kingdoms of Acre, Caesarea, and Jaffa, using his wealth to assist the Crusaders in rebuilding their defences including the extension of the fortifications of Acre that incorporated the House of the Knights of St Lazarus in the Montmusard region within the city walls.

² M. Paris. *Flores historiarum*. 1307 [English translation by G.D. Yonge. *Flowers of history, especially such as relate to the affairs of Britain from the beginning of the world to the year 1307 collected by Matthew of Westminster*. Vol. II from A.D. 1066 to A.D. 1307. H.G. Bohn, London, 1853, p.313].

³ M. Paris. *Monaci Sancti Albani, Historia Anglorum, sive, ut vulgo dicitur Historia Minor. Item, ejusdem abbreviatio Chronicorum Angliae*. 1307 [as edited by Frederic Madden, Vol.III AD 1246-1253. Longmans, London, 1869, pp.90,95].

After his release, King Louis IX mounted a campaign in Syria [1250-1254] where he was also accompanied by a detachment of the Order of Saint Lazarus. On one occasion, a razzia undertaken by this detachment nearly came to grief. In his memoirs, John of Joinville recorded that *“Whilst the King was encamped by Jaffa, the Master of St Lazar had got wind at Ramah, three good leagues from the camp, of some cattle and other things, where he thought he might make a fine haul. He kept no discipline in the camp, but did just as he liked, so he went off to the place without telling the King. When he had collected his booty, the Saracens fell upon him, and routed him so utterly, that of all the men whom he had in his troop with him, only four escaped. Directly he entered the camp, he began to call to arms. I went to arm myself, and begged the King to allow me to go to the place, and he gave me leave, and ordered me to take with me the Temple and the Hospital. When we reached the place, we found that some other fresh Saracens had come down into the valley where the Master of St Lazar had suffered his disaster. While these new Saracens were examining the dead bodies, the Master of the King's cross-bowmen attacked them, and before we could come up, our people had routed them, and slain several. A serjeant of the King's, and a serjeant of the Saracens bore one another to earth with their lances. One of the King's serjeants, seeing this, took the two horses, and led them off, meaning to steal them; and, to avoid being seen, he went in between the walls of the town of Ramah. As he was leading them along, an old cistern over which he passed gave way beneath him, and the three horses and he himself went to the bottom. I was told of it, and went to see, and found the cistern still crumbling in beneath them, so that in a very little while they would have been completely covered over. So we came back without any losses, except what the Master of St Lazar had lost there”.*⁴ The leader of the Order of St Lazarus leading the attack was recorded as

⁴ John of Joinville, *op. cit.*

Frère Nicolas ⁵ – Rainaldus de Floriaco, then Master of the Order of St Lazarus, is recorded as having died in Egypt in 1258 possibly in captivity.

All the personnel losses by the Order during these campaigns constrained the brethren to appeal to Pope Innocent IV in 1253 to allow them elect as master “*any healthy knight from among the others of the house*”. Following his return to France in 1254, Louis IX donated land holdings in the fief of La Pierre-au-Lait to the Order of St Lazarus.

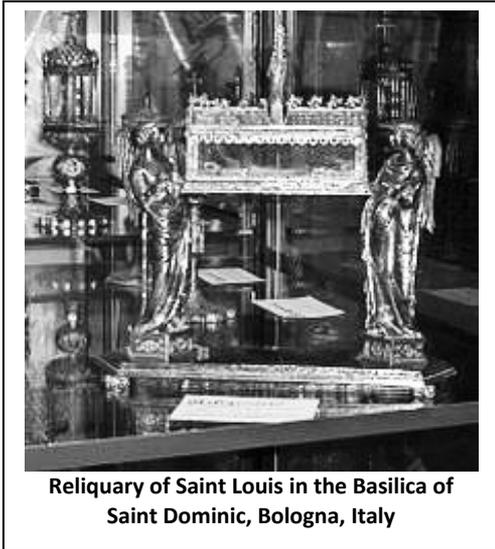


Remains of Saint Louis in the Cathedral at Monreale, Sicily

Louis IX met his death on 25 August 1270 at Tunis from disease, probably dysentery, during the Eighth Crusade in Tunisia. His body was boiled to remove the bones from the body for their transportation back to France for burial. His entrails were buried directly on the spot in Tunisia, marked by the Tomb of Saint-Louis; whereas his heart and other parts of his entrails were sealed in an urn and placed in the Basilica of Monreale, Palermo. Some remains were left at the Basilica of Saint Dominic in Bologna; while most of the remains were buried at the Cathedral of Saint-Denis in Paris. The remains at Saint-Denis were occasionally distributed to deserving

⁵ De Villeneuve-Trans. *Histoire de Saint Louis, Roi de France*. Paulin, Paris, 1839, p.402.

individuals by subsequent kings. In 1392, Charles VI of France was seen to distribute ribs of King Saint Louis on the occasion of a solemn feast. Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly and the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy each received an entire rib, while the other prelates received one bone to divide between themselves.⁶ This practice may have been the source of the rib belonging to King Saint Louis held at the co-Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Malta.⁷ A reliquary is also held by the City of Saint Louis in Missouri, U.S.A.



The Saint-Denis tomb was desecrated during the French Revolution and only one finger remains at this site.

⁶ Vide J. Huizinga. *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Anchor Books, U.S.A., 1954, p.167.

⁷ A. Ferres. *Descrizione storica delle chiese di Malta e Gozo*. Malta, 1866 [facsimile edition: Midsea Books, Malta, 1985], p.140.