

## MEDIA KIT

### The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Green Hybrid Buggies

#### **Count Philippe Piccapietra, Grand Chancellor and Delegate for the Holy Land**

Count Piccapietra's family traces its origins to the 15th century in Naples. Living in Switzerland, he has been a member of the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem since 1984, becoming Grand Chancellor in 2005 and Delegate for the Holy Land in 2012.

The Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem is an international community of Christian knights and dames from many different church traditions. It was established in Jerusalem during the 12th century around a monastic hospice which had existed there since the 4th century.

#### **Historic Return to the Holy Land of the Order of Saint Lazarus**

After over 700 years' being based in France, the Order has in our day restored its grand magistral seat (headquarters) to the Holy City of Jerusalem, the place of its birth. Across the ages, the ancient flag of the Saint Lazare hospitaller tradition is the green cross – nowadays symbolic of hope, healthcare and the sustainable use of earth's resources.

#### **Charitable Activities**

The first knights of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem were lepers, forced to leave their society. Derived from this fact, the charitable aims of the Order today may be summarized as: "Bringing healing of body, mind and spirit to those in needs, regardless of political, ethnic or religious boundaries." In this century the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem has extended its particular concerns to include "water – source of life" and other green issues.

**Since its return to the Holy Land, the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem has begun to provide mobility scooters and small electric vehicles to help disabled people around the Old City of Jerusalem, making their spiritual home more accessible to pilgrims and citizens who have reduced mobility. The Order of Saint Lazarus has donated four, four-seater hybrid buggies to the city of Jerusalem as part of a pilot project. Each buggy cost €13,000.**

The objective of the project is to reduce the pollution and vehicular traffic in the Old City – and therefore offer this "gate-to-gate service" for those who cannot access the holy sites on foot. The ultimate aim is to establish a fleet of these hybrid electric "green" buggies within a radius of 700 meters of the Old City and to minimize the amount of vehicular traffic allowed in this area.



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The project is being run on a pilot basis at first. If the pilot is successful, the municipality will purchase another 20 of these buggies for public access to the holy sites.

Further green projects are already in the development pipeline. As Delegate for the Holy Land, Count Piccapietra is looking forward to the prosperous future of Jerusalem. Partnering Green Pilgrim Jerusalem is a natural affiliation since the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem has numerous reasons from its own history to support the modern concept of green pilgrimage.

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