



THE PRINCE AND GRAND MASTER
SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Rome, 10 October 2026

My dear friends in the Order,

It is with much joy that I write to you on the occasion of the official opening of Philermos House in Southport, South East Queensland. After much dedicated work by all those involved, our latest project in Australia is now open and ready to serve those in need in the local community.

Philermos House is the first facility of its kind in Australia. It will stand as a place of welcome for those experiencing homelessness, hardship and social isolation, offering practical, everyday care and a safe place to rest during the day. Guests will also receive assistance in accessing health, housing and government services, as well as pastoral and spiritual care for all who seek it.

One of my fondest memories of my visit to Australia was walking around the site in Southport and examining the plans for the new centre alongside the North Eastern Hospitaller, Danny Higgins, and Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*, Fr Gerard McMorrow. I was moved by both the enthusiasm and the vision of those involved in bringing this project to life.

Like most things in Australia, I understand the centre has already earned what Aussies call a 'nickname' — its bold colour scheme and size having given rise to the name 'Big Red Shed'. Our patroness, Our Lady of Philermos, would surely look with favour upon this wonderful expression of love and Christian charity now offered to the community of Southport.

I am particularly grateful that the Order has partnered with the local Archdiocese of Brisbane in bringing this centre to life, and I wish to thank the Archbishop of Brisbane, the Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay, as well as the former Chief Chaplain of the Australian Association and Archbishop Emeritus of Brisbane, the Most Rev. Mark Coleridge.

Philermos House stands as a living expression of the Order's ancient mission, *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum* — the defence of the Faith and service to the poor. In tending to body and soul alike, it carries forward a charism that has guided our Order for nearly a thousand years. Wherever our members and volunteers answer this call, whether in the hospitals of our history or in the suburbs of Southport today, they restore dignity to those whom the world too easily overlooks and offer a tangible sign of Christ's presence in those we

serve. Philermos House is this mission made visible— a reminder that our works of charity and our spiritual life are one and the same calling.

Thank you to all members and supporters who have worked tirelessly to make Philermos House a reality. No project of this magnitude comes together without the commitment and hard work of many, and I am deeply grateful to each of you.

With my prayerful best wishes for the continued success of this work, I remain,

Yours confraternally,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "The Philermos House" in a cursive, stylized script.