



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Continental Meetings of Lieutenants and Magisterial Delegates 2021



"Our Order is not for people who want to be *seen* as generous or to flaunt their generosity."

Since the pandemic has not yet ended, the meeting of the European Lieutenants on November 24 and that of the Latin American Lieutenants the following day, chaired by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master, were again held by videoconference from the Palazzo della Rovere in Rome. Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, Governor General, directed the works in the presence of the Lieutenant General Agostino Borromeo, the Vice-Governors Jean-Pierre de Glutz Ruchti and Enric Mas, the Chancellor Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli, the Treasurer Saverio Petrillo, the President of the Juridical Commission Flavio Rondinini and two other eminent members of the Grand Magisterium, Monsignor Fortunato Frezza - Master of Ceremonies and President of the Spirituality Commission - and Prince Marian Hugo Windisch-Graetz.

An in-depth catechetical and biblical study

The Grand Master took the floor to open the meetings, mentioning his recent travels for some investiture ceremonies. "Personally, I was able to travel to the United States, where I had the pleasure of conferring investiture on the first Religious-Dame, co-founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, who for years have been involved in the 'Holy Child Program' project in Bethlehem in favor

of children with difficulties; we, as the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, are not insensitive to those who for years have shown attention to the Holy Land; indeed, we know that we often rely on their collaboration for the educational, social and pastoral activities of the Latin Patriarchate that we support. Last October I conferred the honor of Knight of the Collar on the Prince of Monaco, Albert II, and I invested two new Knights and a Dame of the Principality. I have presided over some investitures in Italy and Malta; others are scheduled in the coming weeks," he said, then announced the 2022 pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Cardinal Filoni commented on the wide diffusion of his book on the spirituality of the Order in the main European languages: "I appreciated the response that was given to the diffusion of the booklet on spirituality. I must say that it has also been appreciated outside the Order. The pope often reminds us that the Church is not a humanitarian organization, but the living community born from the mystery of Christ's Resurrection. This means that we too are part of a Body, with a spirit, that of the Risen One. Hence the need for each of our Knights and Dames to cultivate his or her inner life for the personal good and for the service we render to the Church itself and to the Holy Land.

Of the text on spirituality, in addition to the five known translations, a Portuguese translation has also been prepared and others are being prepared in Europe."

Shifting the focus to some of the resistance manifested towards the new Ritual, the Grand Master pointed out that the use of a sword has not been abolished, but is placed among the symbols of the Prayer Vigil, along with the fundamental knightly symbols such as the spurs and the jar of oils: "Several times on our websites we have explained the different meanings of the updating and highlighted the rich semiological and spiritual heritage that accompanies our Institution. Here I would like to recall the exhortation of Pope St. John Paul II, who, speaking to the members participating in the Jubilee of 2000, affirmed that, for us too, "an accurate catechetical and biblical deepening is required," and, at the same time, he hoped for a "renewal without losing the spirit of the Order. Such has been the intention.

Our Order, in fact, is the only Order in the Church that has as its Grand Master a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and its authority comes from the Bishop of Rome; the use of the sword by a cardinal, or a bishop, whose authority is symbolized by the crosier and the cross, is not the greatest of aspirations, even more so in a solemn moment such as that of an investiture."

Cardinal Filoni therefore confirmed that the decision to use the pastoral staff or the processional cross for the episcopal gesture of investiture was made together with the Order's highest consultative offices, based on a biblical-ecclesiological redefinition and in light of Christ's words to the apostle Peter: "Put your sword back in its scabbard" (John 18:11).

"Let it not happen that the membership of Knights and Dames who have sworn love and fidelity to the Order be diminished by misunderstandings, by fatigue, by an inadequate evaluation of their investiture. After all, there is a fundamental evaluation against which all behavior must be measured: our love for Christ and concretely for the Land of Jesus," noted the cardinal, arguing that "Our Order is also not merely an honorary Order, but a truly contributory and active one, as clearly shown in the Pontifical Yearbook for this year. In this sense, as a Central Body of the Church, we participate in the solicitude of the Pope," he continued, citing the new statute: "The Order, with its structure and its activities, participates directly in the solicitude of the Roman Pontiff in what concerns the Catholic Places and Institutions in the Holy Land. Its aims derive from the pontifical teachings and are placed within the general framework of the Catholic Church's goals of charity, apostolate and service to the dignity of the human being".

Facing future challenges without renouncing noble traditions

In his introductory address to the two meetings, the Governor General welcomed the new Lieutenants, in particular the Lieutenant of the Netherlands Johannes Krapels, the Magistral Delegate of Norway Huan Nguyen, the Lieutenant of Slovenia Mihael Vrhunec and the Lieutenant for Central Italy Anna Maria Munzi Iacoboni. During the meeting of the Latin American Lieutenants, he also thanked the Lieutenants of Western Spain, Eastern Spain, and Portugal, who came to bring their experience to the common reflection.

The Governor explained that after the approval of the new Constitution, a Commission meets every Thursday morning under the presidency of the Cardinal Grand Master and gradually draws up a draft of the General Regulations. "This is a complex and delicate work that requires a careful study that can only take a long time. From many quarters the willingness to contribute to this work has been evoked. Certainly, the text will be subjected to a collective examination before entering into force definitively: in fact, it is the intention of the Cardinal Grand Master to provide for an initial period of a couple of years *ad experimentum* during which comments and suggestions can be made," Visconti di Modrone responded to specific questions received.

The Governor General expressed relief on everyone's part regarding the University of Madaba, since the Latin Patriarchate has managed to close the painful chapter of debts (thanks to the help of various leaders of the Order). He continued, highlighting the current renewal of the Order, in line with that of the Church under the impetus of Pope Francis: "Renewal also means rereading the meaning of the symbols of our Order, which represent a reference that commits us, in the name of the mystery of the Resurrection, to a life of solicitude for a very specific purpose of the Church." The Governor explained that the desire to accentuate the spiritual and charitable aspect of the commitment of the Knights and Dames (Article 4 of the Statute) is accompanied by the desire to modernize the management and administration of the institution: the Order is "ready to face future challenges, without obviously renouncing its noble traditions".

"Our budgets are certified, our administration faithfully complies with all the latest regulations, including those on anti-money laundering, in the most absolute transparency. In recent days we have approved a budget for 2022 rather bold, which provides for an amount of expenditure of over 14 million euros. [...] Our projects for the current year, agreed with the Latin Patriarchate, have been enthusiastically received and almost all of them have been subscribed, and every benefactor can follow on the website where the proceeds of their donations go. A new list is being developed by the Latin Patriarchate for 2022 for a total amount of \$1,397,000," added Ambassador Visconti di Modrone. He also recalled that the appeal launched by the Cardinal Grand Master for the Covid emergency has raised more than three million dollars, but that on the other hand the Order has seen its ordinary income decrease due to the decline in contributions, thus having to resort to statutory reserves to rebalance the budget.

The Governor reassured the Lieutenants regarding the renovation of the Palazzo della Rovere, as "the entire operation will be implemented without any particular burden on the Order, the work being primarily the responsibility of the new tenant, as well as a reserve accumulated in past years for this purpose." Another aspect that the Ambassador emphasized is the effort to expand the Order in Europe, in the East, in South America and in Africa, dwelling finally on the need to continue to maintain a constant dialogue between the Grand Magisterium and the Lieutenants: this channel of communication will soon be strengthened, when visits to the various Lieutenancies for the Investiture ceremonies will be intensified.

A decrease in contributions due to the economic recession

During the two meetings, Sami El-Yousef, administrative director of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, spoke, thanking the Order of the Holy Sepulchre whose help is essential, especially for the support provided by the Grand Magisterium (over \$750,000 per month allocated to the daily life of the Patriarchate: schools, institutional expenses, seminary training, etc.). In 2021, the Lieutenancies adopted twenty projects, mainly at the investment level, for a total of almost one million dollars. Humanitarian and pastoral projects benefited from a considerable increase in funds. Sami El-Yousef emphasized the importance of the school network in the Holy Land, actively supported by the Knights and Dames.

The spokespersons of the linguistic and geographic groups of the European Lieutenants, as well as the Latin American Lieutenants, spoke in turn, asking a variety of practical questions (recruitment of young people, training of candidates, information on projects, etc.) and pointing out the objective difficulties of the members in these times of economic crisis, especially in the countries of Eastern Europe or Latin America, where social problems make fundraising very difficult in this second year of Covid-19.

"Apart from the generosity shown in response to the appeal of the Grand Master for an extraordinary donation to the Emergency Fund, we have noted a decrease in contributions due to the economic recession," commented the Governor General, returning to the lack of means of the Grand Magisterium - which had to draw on the statutory reserves - and inviting the Lieutenants to consider more direct payments, in order to cover the ordinary expenses related to the regular and "invisible" - but very demanding - aid sent monthly to the Latin Patriarchate.

Interesting Proposals to Consider

The Governor General raised the issue of the recruitment of young people, a theme very dear to the Grand Master, pointing out that the reflections gathered during the speeches at these meetings will be particularly useful for future arrangements, although ample room for decision will be left to the Lieutenancies, in consideration of the different local customs and traditions.

The interesting topic of the "Friends of the Order" - or those who, though not members, wish to contribute to philanthropic initiatives - attracted considerable attention: in this regard, the Ambassador recalled that "for non-members of the Order who in some way deserve recognition of merit there is the possibility of conferring the Cross of Merit, in various degrees [...] The issue of non-active members is equally important and the role that each Lieutenancy must play in trying to maintain contact, in recalling those who leave, but also in investigating and understanding the reasons for their departure, in applying a certain flexibility in demanding the payment of dues to those who are going through a difficult time, was rightly underlined. Equally delicate is the attitude to be taken toward family situations that do not conform to the dictates of the Church. The evaluation can only be case by case, with rigor but also with understanding," added the Governor General.

The proposal to create a body of reference texts for the Lieutenant - from statutory rules to liturgical and administrative ones - was listened to with interest, as was the recommendation of certain Lieutenancies to always respect fundamental ethical principles, such as the protection of children, the correspondence of fair wages, the safeguarding of the environment and administrative transparency. The suggestion to organize the coordination of volunteer activities in the Holy Land will be considered and studied further.

Finally, the Governor indicated that the next *Consulta* (International General Assembly of the Order) will take place in 2023: "in consideration of the year lost to Covid, the Cardinal Grand Master has decided, informing the Secretariat of State, to derogate from the provision of the Constitution which provides for the *Consulta* to be held every four years, extending the period to five years. This will allow for better preparation."

The fruit of a common generosity inspired by the Gospel

In his conclusion, the Grand Master - attentive to the economic difficulties faced by many people in this period of pandemic - wished to reiterate that the Order is not an institution of rich people. "The Knights and Dames are people who, through their work, wish to contribute to supporting the Holy Land. This action of theirs is a continuation of the attention we give to the "Mystery" of the Body of Christ present today through the Church we love and want to care for. In doing so, we follow up on what the families around Jesus and the first communities did: think of Martha, Mary and so many other men and women who made their resources and time available.

They were not powerful people. They were not the king of Judea or the Roman governor. They were people drawn to Jesus. That's how it is for us today, too," he strongly emphasized, also turning to the Patriarchate representative to redefine the context and meaning of the help offered.

"Therefore, let us not be discouraged, on the contrary. It is good to see that, alongside people who can give more at this time, there are also those who cannot, but this does not make them less 'members' of the Order. Generosity involves both parties but the situations of need that our Knights and Dames sometimes experience can be different. This prompts me to say that the projects carried out are always the result of a common generosity," Cardinal Filoni said, citing Jesus' look at a poor widow who had put only two coins (Mark 12:38-44) into the temple treasury in Jerusalem. "Jesus teaches us - she gave more than all others because of her generosity, taking not from the superfluous but from the necessities she had to live. [...] Ours is not an Order for people who want to appear and show off their munificence."

François Vayne

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