Waiting for the seeds to spring forth: the establishment of the Magistral Delegation for New Zealand

In 1994 the **Franciscan Father Anthony Malone** was appointed the New Zealand Commissioner of the Holy Land. The same year, during his visit to the Holy Land, he came into contact with other Franciscans and lay people who belonged to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Through these encounters an idea came to Father Malone, the **idea of founding a group in New Zealand connected to the Order**. The then Archbishop of Wellington, Cardinal Williams, positively welcomed the intuition of the priest, and encouraged him to continue.

However, when Father Malone was elected in 1998 to be the Superior of the Franciscans in New Zealand, the initiative of laying the foundations for the Order in New Zealand suffered a temporary setback, but Providence continued to act.

In early 2010, the **British Knight James Bickford** moved to New Zealand for work and soon contacted Bishop Patrick Dunn of Auckland, sharing with him his **desire to form a peripheral structure of the Order** in his diocese. Immediately Bishop Dunn put the knight in touch with Fr. Malone and, soon after, together with an aspiring knight and Msgr. Hackett, they organized a trip to visit the Lieutenancy of Australia-New South Wales. From that point on, the steps that led to the founding of the Magistral Delegation for New Zealand quickly fell into place.

During the year 2011, Bickford, Fr. Malone and Msgr. Hackett organized a full training program for **six** aspiring **knights and dames** who received the **Investiture in the Auckland Cathedral in 2012**. New Zealand was now a local delegation of the Order belonging to the Lieutenancy for Australia-New South Wales. The following years saw the consolidation of the structure.

In 2014, when Bickford was transferred by his company to Singapore, Knight John (Jack) Gibbs was appointed as the new President of the local delegation. The year 2014 was also the year in which members of the Order who belonged to the local delegation voted unanimously in requesting that New Zealand receiv the status of Magistral Delegation.

Cardinal O'Brien, the Grand Master of the Order, was pleased to sign three decrees **this year in July**: one for the **founding of the new Magistral Delegation for New Zealand**, one for the appointment of John Barry Gibbs to Magistral Delegate, and thirdly for the appointment of Most Rev. Patrick James Dunn, the Bishop of Auckland, to Grand Prior of the Magistral Delegation.

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