

JERUSALEM CROSS

ANNALES ORDINIS EQUESTRIIS SANCTI SEPULCHRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

2017

**With Christ
let us make
our lives into
a Holy Land**



**Education and
humanitarian aid:
two pillars of the
Order's work**



VATICAN CITY - 2018



ANNALES ORDINIS EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCHRI HIEROSOLYMITANI **2017**

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A Knight of the Lieutenancy for Belgium praying at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in front of the Aedicule (photo by Christine Demoulin); on the right: some young refugees from the Middle East welcomed to Jordan thanks to the help of the Latin Patriarchate with the support of the Order (photo by Claire Guigou)

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Let us make our lives into a Holy Land

Dear Knights and Dames, dear friends of the Order,

We recently celebrated, in 2017, the 170th anniversary of the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the reorganization of our Order. This double event brings us back to the source of our mission. By cultivating the living memory of the past we can look towards the future with hope. For example, Msgr. Joseph Valerga, the first Latin Patriarch named by Blessed Pope Pius IX, established a missionary model for our Order. Overcoming great difficulties with a faith able to move mountains, he restored the Diocese of Jerusalem, our Mother Church. Times have surely changed, but should not his courageous example – and that of so many others who have preceded us – prompt the same spirit of solidarity on behalf of our brothers of the Holy Land.

Our mission as Knights and Dames is to support the Christian presence in the lands where God-made-man lived, suffered, and rose. From there, countless graces still flow for pilgrims seeking to follow Him in resurrection–faith. To quote the thought of abbot Laurent Villemin, former ecclesiastical Master of Ceremonies of the French Lieutenancy, having prayed at those holy sites, we can “make a Holy Land of our life”, in our families, and in our local Churches.

This issue of our annual magazine, *Jerusalem Cross*, illustrates the ecclesial life of our Order’s Lieutenancies in their commitment to serve the Church in the Holy Land. I invite all our Lieutenants to share this issue with a view towards the Consulta of 2018.



The Grand Master of the Order visits the Lieutenancies – like here in Switzerland – to strengthen the bonds of unity between Knights and Dames of the world, in a joyous and vibrant expression of universal fraternity.

Notabene:

Taking place every five years in Rome, our Consulta, or general assembly, is a crucial moment for our Order to better define our identity, message and mission. A new Constitution will be welcomed to assist us in this effort. Let us be prepared to adapt ourselves to new challenges ahead and let us pray that this Consulta will breathe new life into our mission.

Edwin Cardinal O’Brien

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A magazine that is being transformed

Dear readers,

in this issue of *Jerusalem Cross*, published in five languages, we retrace the great events experienced in 2017 in the Universal Church, in the Holy Land and in the Order. This retrospective document is complementary to the website of the Grand Magisterium (www.oessh.va) and to our social media, more clearly linked to current affairs.

Soon, *Jerusalem Cross* will also become an instrument of preparation for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, projecting itself further and further towards the coming months rather than looking to the past.

This new formula of the Order's annual magazine will leave the task of recounting current events to the quarterly publication (to which it is possible to subscribe through our website). So you have in your hands the last issue of a long series, a collector's item!

The interviews, testimonies and reports published here allow us to better discover the mission of the 30,000 Knights and Dames present on the five continents, at the service of the Church in the Holy Land, as well as their commitment to local churches.

Do not hesitate to share the *Jerusalem Cross* with all those around you, as the Grand Master himself wishes: it is an ideal instrument for discovering the vocation of the members of the Order, called to be witnesses of the Risen Christ.



Alfredo Bastianelli
Chancellor of the Order

THE ORDER IN UNION WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

“WE MUST SHOW ORIENTAL CHRISTIANS OUR CLOSENESS”

*An interview with Cardinal Leonardo Sandri,
Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches*

Eminence, in your role in charge of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, what would you see as the priorities in providing support to Christians living in the vast biblical territories?

I often receive groups of Catholics led by their bishops, eager to express their generosity to their brothers and sisters of the East. Benefactors want to know our priorities. Promoting the fullness of religious freedom of Christians is part of the issues at stake, especially in Muslim majority countries. Eastern bishops work with us, so that governments legislate in this direction and so that all citizens are treated in the same way. I also insist on the importance of Catholic schools in the Holy Land, for example, as they are a source of dialogue and peace in society. Without the economic support of the universal Church, these schools would not survive: the competition is very strong and many teachers prefer private institutes that are able to pay them better. Another challenge is emigration from the Middle East. Christians leave the area because of insecurity, so their absence unbalances the countries. We must work to restore trust and this happens every time we build bridges of friendship where we live. Finally, we need to show our eastern Christians our closeness and to support them morally, as do the Knights and Dames of the Order by going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and meeting the local communities that comprise the “Mother Church”.

Each year, you coordinate the Good Friday collection, which involves the whole Church.



The Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches shows his support for the Christians of the Holy Land during a trip to the territory of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

How are the fruits of this action of solidarity shared?

All the dioceses in the world deliver the outcome of these collections to Rome: 65% go to the Franciscan Custody for the maintenance of the holy places; 35% is assigned to our Congregation for Oriental Church Projects, which – we can say – extend from Ukraine to Iraq, from Eastern Europe to Mesopotamia ... This is certainly not enough, but fortunately some Institutions are dedicated throughout the year to the supporting these Christians who are often in difficult economic situations because of the various conflicts that

wound the world. Some good news is that of the progressive return of Christians in the Nineveh Plain: many are returning to their liberated villages and are trying to help reconstruct their homes and their churches.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem occupies a special place in the heart of the universal Church. How is the pastoral care of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, partly coordinated by the Franciscan Custody, articulated?

Christians throughout the whole world go on a pilgrimage to “see Jesus” by retracing his steps in the Holy Land, where he lived and gave his life. The popes entrusted these holy sites to the Franciscans, through the Custody, whose mission extends far beyond the territory of the Latin diocese of Jerusalem. This patriarchal diocese – reconstituted at the end of the 19th century – today expresses the identity of a local church gathered around its bishop, without losing that universal openness that has always characterized the vocation of the holy city of Jerusalem. It is the former Franciscan Custos Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa who leads the patriarchal diocese, that stretches from Cyprus to Jordan, passing through Palestine and Israel. The Mother Church of Jerusalem is at the center of our concerns in Rome, and I would like to thank the Order of the Holy

Sepulchre, for without its help the life of the Latin Patriarchate would be impossible, especially with regard to the seminary, Catholic schools and all the pastoral activities of evangelization. It is also important to emphasize the importance of the work done by the Order for Hebrew-speaking Catholics, also present in Israel. In the areas of education, assistance and protection of the Christian presence in the Holy Land there is an effective collaboration between the Patriarchal Diocese and the Custody of the Holy Land, while maintaining the shrines and serving the pilgrims is almost entirely entrusted to the Franciscans.

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre collaborates with you through the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches known as “ROACO”, which you preside over. What is this committee’s role?

Indeed, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is part of Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches, a coordinating body established forty years ago in 1968. It brings together several Catholic agencies and institutions operating alongside the Catholic Churches, Oriental and Latin, in the territories followed by the Congregation. Every year we gather to reflect

During his visit to Jordan, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri met with some Middle Eastern refugees supported by the local Caritas.



**NOURSAT
JORDAN**
زيارة الوفد
الفاتيكانية لمركز
مشروع الرافدين



A moment of prayer with some refugees in the presence of Cardinal Sandri and of the Apostolic Nuncio in Jordan and Iraq Msgr. Alberto Ortega Martín.

by Pope Benedict XV one hundred years ago, the formation of the clergy has always been a priority, because the people of God needs shepherds. That was the theme of our last ROACO meeting.

How would you envision the evolution of relations between the Congregation for Oriental Churches and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre?

There is an existential connection between our Congregation and the Order of the Holy

Sepulchre. Relations have been strengthened thanks to Cardinal Edwin O'Brien – Grand Master of the Order – and the outgoing Governor General Agostino Borromeo, two personalities who have encouraged aid to the Eastern Churches, also in the name of the Order's commitment to serving the Holy Land. I would like to express our profound gratitude to the Knights and Dame of the Order for this effort: they are witness to the resurrection and joy of the Lord, especially in today's times when we face the problem of refugees in the Middle East, trying to support families fleeing from the areas of war and to fuel their hope of returning to the lands of their ancestors. I would like to express my greetings and my warm wishes to Prof. Borromeo's successor, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti of Modrone.

Interview by François Vayne

You can access the full interview on our partner website [Vatican Insider](#).

EDITORIAL NOTE

On May 31, Archbishop Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, was appointed by Pope Francis as a member of the Congregation for Oriental Churches.

PRAYING WITH THE POPE FOR THE CHRISTIANS OF THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES

The centenary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches – of which Cardinal Edwin O’Brien, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a member – coincided with the Centenary of the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Marking the occasion, on October 12, 2017, the Pope concelebrated a Mass with the Eastern Patriarchs in the basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, also a member of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, was present.

Recalling the context of the creation of the Congregation by Benedict XV, during the First World War, the Holy Father reflected on how the current “piecemeal world war” involves the Christians of the Oriental Churches, causing a

growing diaspora. Pope Francis invited us to continue praying for our brothers and sisters of these churches, forced to abandon the biblical lands of their ancestors.

“This leads us to ask so many questions, so many whys?” he emphasized in commenting on the first reading (*Malachi* 3: 13-20), in which the people wonder why the wicked often go unpunished. “How many times do we do this experience?” asked the Pope before responding: “God does not forget His children, His memory is for the righteous, for those who suffer, who are oppressed and who ask ‘why?’ and yet they never cease to trust in the Lord.”

The Holy Father also indicated prayer as the best means of listening to God, pointing out how praying is an act of trust. “Man knocks with prayer at God’s door to ask for grace. And He, who is our Father, gives me that and more: the gift, the Holy Spirit,” insisted Francis, assuring everyone that this persevering spiritual commitment will bear its fruit in due course.

The Holy Father exchanges the sign of peace with Cardinal Leonardo Sandri during the October 12, 2017 Mass marking the Centenary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Pontifical Oriental Institute.



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THE ORDER OFFERS A PATH OF SANCTIFICATION FOR EVERYONE

Cardinal Anders Arborelius, Bishop of Stockholm, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and Grand Prior of Honor of the then Lieutenancy for Sweden (today for Sweden-Denmark) answers some questions about the Church in Sweden, the role of the Order and female participation. The first Swedish cardinal in history, the Carmelite Cardinal Arborelius was elected in 2017 as “Sweden of the Year”, and this appointment is also a record since in the traditionally Lutheran country it is the first time that such recognition was given to a Catholic priest.

What does it mean to serve the Church in a non-Catholic majority country? Do you think that the fact of being a minority Church invites one to perceive one’s own Catholic identity in a particular way?

As member of a Catholic minority in a secular surrounding you have to live in a very deep personal relationship to Jesus and be well integrated into the local Church. There will be many circumstances when you can give witness of your faith and try to explain why you want to be a faithful Catholic. People are often more open and interested than we think. You have to rely on God’s grace and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and have the courage to speak with an open heart also about difficult issues. Then people will listen and



Anders Arborelius, first Swedish cardinal in history, greets his confreres of the College of Cardinals.

respect you, even if they cannot accept everything you say.

For many years you held the role of Grand Prior of the then Lieutenancy for Sweden (now Lieutenancy for Sweden-Denmark). What was your experience of this? How do you think the Order can support the call to holiness of Catholics in your country?

It is important to show the candidates who enter and become part of the Lieutenancy that it is their vocation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in their everyday life, not some kind of privilege or high position. The notion of evangelical service to God and his Church in the Holy Land is essential to understand. We belong to the holy people of God and there are many ways to live a life of sanctification, but they who want to enter the Lieutenancy have to understand that they shall be

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open to the call to holiness in the Order.

Recently you spoke in favour of a broader involvement of women at various levels within the Church. As a lay institution, the Order already offers an example of collaboration between men and women thanks to the possibility for women to be nominated for any position within the Lieutenancy. Could you tell us something more about it? What would you suggest to bolster female participation in the Church?

Many women today have difficulties to enter the traditional apostolic congregations and still many of them want to follow Jesus on the path to holiness and service of the Church. A more contemporary charism for modern women is highly needed, when this model of life seems to lose its force of attraction. As you said the Order could offer women of today the possibility to give themselves for God and the Church in the Holy Land. Similar possibilities have to be found on various levels for women of today.

Interview by Elena Dini

Shepherds and members of the Order, honored by the Pope's trust

On the occasion of the Consistory of June 2017, Pope Francis appointed the Bishop of Stockholm, His Eminence Anders Arborelius, Knight Grand Cross and Grand Prior of Honor of the Lieutenancy for Sweden and Denmark, a cardinal. The Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, was able to congratulate the first Scandinavian Cardinal personally, expressing his joy in seeing the growing development of the Order in Scandinavia. Among the recent highlights announced by the Holy Father, two other eminent members of the Order were honored by his trust in 2017: the new president of the Italian Bishops' Conference in the person of **Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti** – Archbishop of Perugia, Knight Grand Cross and Prior of Umbria section – as well as the new Vicar of the Pope for the Diocese of Rome, **Msgr. Angelo De Donatis**, a member of the Order for thirty years. We entrust the mission of these shepherds to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Palestine, Patron of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.



The new Cardinal Anders Arborelius, a Swedish member of the Order, in the company of the Grand Master during the Consistory in Rome, June 2017.

RESPECTING THE STATUS QUO OF JERUSALEM

On Wednesday December 6, 2017, Pope Francis launched an appeal during the general audience, “that everyone’s effort respect the status quo of the city, in conformity with the pertinent United Nations Resolutions”, stating that “Jerusalem is a unique city, sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in which the Holy Places are venerated by the respective religions, and which has a special vocation for peace”.

The following day, in a press release, the Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem – Cardinal Edwin O’Brien – shared “the deep concern expressed by the Holy Father and countless other religious and civic leaders for the possible consequences of any unilateral decision that might alter the equilibrium of the Holy City”. He also recalled “the necessity that all initiatives within the Land that contains the places of worship of the three major monotheistic religions, the Holy Sepulchre, the Wailing Wall and the Mosque of Omar be the result of a peaceful dialogue among all the interested parties”.

The UN General Assembly has reaffirmed the principle of the internationalization of Jerusalem

since 1948 and – taking into account historical reality – the Security Council emphasizes that it will not recognize any changes to the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem, where the Old City is located, inhabited by 300,000 Palestinians but annexed by Israel.

The Palestinians received the support of a large majority of the UN General Assembly Member States on Thursday December 21, with the approval of a resolution declaring the American decision to recognize Jerusalem as capital of Israel “null and void”. Fourteen of the fifteen member states of the UN Security Council had already tried to condemn the US choice on Monday, December 18, then blocked by a Washington veto.

“While winds of war blow on the world”, Pope Francis transmitted in his own way – in his 2017 Christmas message – an appeal to the international community in favour of a concerted effort in the Holy Land. He indicated “the sign of the Child”, which leads us to “recognize him in the faces of children”, alluding to those for whom – just as for Jesus – “there is no place in the Inn” (*Luke 2,7*). “We see Jesus in the children of the Middle East

who continue to suffer because of growing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians” he said. “Let us ask the Lord for peace for Jerusalem and for all the Holy Land. Let us pray that the will to resume dialogue may prevail between the parties and that a negotiated solution can finally be reached, one that would allow the peaceful coexistence of two States within mutually agreed and internationally recognized borders. May the Lord also sustain the efforts of all those in the international community inspired by good will to help that afflicted land to find, despite grave obstacles the harmony, justice and security that it has long awaited”.

The audience granted by the Pope to the King of Jordan, on December 19, 2017, was marked by a fraternal and serene atmosphere that touched those present, while Pope Francis and King Abdallah spoke as friends. The Hashemite sovereign gave the Holy Father a beautiful painting representing the holy places in Jerusalem that he traditionally protects.



“JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY LAND HAVE BECOME MY HOME OF CHOICE”

Interview with Pierre-Yves Fux, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Holy See

Your Excellency, do you see a connection between your diplomatic vocation to the service of peace and the mission of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre?

For me, the link between these two distinct realities became clear one morning in 2001 in Jerusalem. Before a series of meetings and appointments, I was going through the old city, which was still dark and deserted. I had slept badly; I heard the gunfire coming from Bethlehem. I was walking quickly so as not to miss the Mass celebrated before the tomb of Christ ... only two taking part. The Franciscan priest signalled us to follow him inside the Sepulchre. Every mass actualizes the same mysteries, but on that occasion I felt involved as never before!

A unique moment that inspired contradictory desires in me: to relive it, but without the causes that had generated such a situation. As a diplomat, I benefited from almost exclusive access to holy places, while violence, fear and repression deprived others of the possibility or desire to visit them. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was in charge of “human security” in the Middle East. The pursuit of peace, humanitarian law and the coexistence of cultures are very rooted values in Switzerland. How not to promote all this in the Holy Land? The politics of various countries – including mine – are linked to one of the objectives of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Diplomatic action can transform unjust situations. I took part in some initiatives that allowed innocents to get out of prison and even – once – to avoid the death penalty. The Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre can recognize themselves in such actions, but they do not make politics. They save their words, but not their



Ambassador Pierre-Yves Fux during his Investiture in Disentis, Switzerland (in this photo together with Lieutenant Jean-Pierre de Glutz-Ruchti).

prayers or acts of generosity. Many know the Holy Land and its inhabitants, appreciating the value of symbols and history. Having become a member of the Order, I saw an impartiality and understanding comparable to the best I could see in diplomacy and development aid.

In what way does the action of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre or the prophetic example of Pope Francis to annihilate the walls of separation between peoples, inspire your diplomatic action?

Thanks to my role as ambassador to the Holy See I have the opportunity to see and listen to Pope Francis. He manifests a love and predilection for the most humble and vulnerable, whether they are Christians or not. This approach is not always



Pierre-Yves Fux on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in March 2017, together with his traveling companions.

understood. How to watch over one's flock without simultaneously excluding anyone? Similarly, when one represents his country abroad, one defends its interests and values, promotes a just international order, while supporting his compatriots.

It was again in the Holy Land that I had the opportunity to reflect on what "walls" are, the visible and invisible ones. Years after that Mass in Christ's Sepulchre, I found myself once again before its entrance, March 22, 2017. Joining together to renovate and reinforce the sanctuary's walls, the different Churches had not yet fixed lamps and ornaments. That restoration carried out together showed a sign of hope for Christian unity. I was also moved for another reason: we had left on foot twelve days earlier from Acre, in three ... then in four, we were reaching the goal!

The journey of the last day – from the basilicas of the Nativity to the Resurrection – appeared sinister. There were no gun shots to be heard overnight from the Bethlehem side, but bad roads, barbed wire, waste and especially the corridors of the check-point to cross the wall. Shortly before, we had passed in front of the *Caritas Baby Hospital*, in which thousands of children were born whose parents are not asked for their nationality or religion. This very modern maternity ward – supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre – was founded by a Swiss citizen 65 years ago. It existed before the wall and announces better times, I am convinced of it. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre supports both the seminarians of the

Latin Patriarchate and the African workers who must leave their children in the "baby warehouses". In this way, the Holy Land becomes more "Christian", with all the dimensions and meanings that this term carries with it. This is connected to the Pope's appeal to build bridges, rather than erecting walls.

Your pilgrimage to the Holy Land was preceded by a pilgrimage to Rome, as training in perseverance in the face of those obstacles to peace that risk discouraging people. Where do you get the strength to hope in your work as a diplomat?

In diplomatic work, as in pilgrimages, perseverance and attention are essential. In this temporary exile, one does not advance by chance: others have walked the same path and maintain contact with those who are at home and with those in the country that they cross. You become stronger, thanks to the experience gained kilometre after kilometre. Before going to Jerusalem, I had walked to Rome, and then further, to Otranto and Leuca. Year after year, these pilgrimages give me joy and serenity.

Visiting the country of Jesus, the holy places and those who guard them is an irrevocable commitment when one is admitted to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. During the night that preceded the Investiture, the "vigil of arms", I had immersed myself in all of these memories and thoughts with prayers. For centuries, the pilgrims of the Holy Sepulchre see the edge of the sword approaching their shoulder ... Chateaubriand tells it better than me. I lived that moment in Saint-Martin de Disentis, in that part of the Alps where they speak Romansh, German and Italian. Even more, Jerusalem and the Holy Land became the home of choice for me. A few days before, I had witnessed as an official witness, the swearing of the oath of the Pontifical Swiss Guards. In a different way, my turn had come to enter into life in a group of confreres and sisters. This provides an answer to my dilemma of 2001: no longer being alone in visiting the Sepulchre ... therefore, giving and receiving, materially and spiritually.

Interview by the Communications Office of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre

The Inauguration of the Holy Sepulchre Aedicule

WE WELCOME A NEW SPIRIT IN ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

The eyes of Christians throughout the world turned to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre during the Easter celebrations on April 15 and 16, 2017: it was a special occasion given the wonderful coincidence of Easter celebrations for both Catholic and Orthodox. In this way, the ecumenism experienced through the closeness and spiritual communion of the Easter period was the continuation of that experienced in the practical action of collaboration for the restoration work of the aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

On March 22, 2017, a crowded Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre celebrated with contagious joy the reopening of the aedicule. The three communities that guard the Holy Sepulchre (Greek Orthodox, Latin Catholic and Armenian) collaborated fraternally for about a year to allow for the necessary redevelopment work, drawing closer to each other. “We all read the same Gospel and profess the one and only Jesus Christ,” said the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Nourhan Manoogian, who intervened after Theophilus III, present Primates of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, and Father Francesco Patton, Custos of Holy Land. “The teaching of Jesus,” he continued, “is beyond our theological, cultural, or liturgical differences.”

After listening to the joyous words, full of hope and gratitude to all the benefactors who have made the restoration possible, most notably King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, the Apostolic Administrator the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew, the then Apostolic Delegate to Jerusalem Msgr. Giuseppe Lazzarotto and, through a message, Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians also intervened.

“The restoration of this physical building puts oil and balm on the body of Christ which is the Church,” summed up Msgr. Pizzaballa.

The Holy See announced it would contribute to the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, setting aside a sum of \$ 500,000 for the new phase of the work that will affect the area around the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre. ■

The Aedicule guarding the tomb of Christ in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre has been restored thanks to an ecumenical collaboration of the various Christian Churches, united by the same faith in the Resurrection.





GUCCIONE
SINCE 1975

DECORATIONS OF KNIGHTLY ORDERS



Order of the Holy Sepulchre
Papal Equestrian Orders
Order of Malta

Italian Dynastic Orders and Orders of the Italian Republic

A NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL FOR THE ORDER

“I WANT TO SERVE THE ORDER IN CONTINUITY WITH MY PREDECESSOR”

Interview with Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone

Excellency, as you settle into the role of Governor General of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, what are you innermost sentiments?

I have some trepidation, being well aware that this is a very important office within the Church in the service of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Professor Agostino Borromeo has devoted his professional life to the history of the Church and has always viewed his commitment to the Order as an ecclesial mission, so he was very well suited to taking on the responsibility of the Governorship for two terms. We must pay homage to him as he leaves a healthy legacy: we have never had so many members and so many donations. My experience is very different, as I have served my country in the diplomatic service as an ambassador and this has allowed me to establish many important international relations. I trust that this will be useful to our pontifical institution which is universal in dimension. However, I still have a lot to learn from my consoeurs and my confrères, Dames and Knights all over the world, and I count on Agostino Borromeo to accompany me, especially in the first phase of my four-year term. I want to serve the Order in continuity with my predecessor.

You mentioned your diplomatic experience. In what way would you see it as being valuable to exercising your new role, alongside the Grand Master, at the head of the Order?

Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations that structure the life of the Order on all continents are somewhat equivalent to embassies for a government. Looking at the map of our peripheral



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The official photo of the new Governor General of the Order.

structures, in many countries, I think of my work that has been, for over forty years, in dialogue with a multilateral diplomatic network. I can therefore make this dialogue experience available to promote cooperation, exchange, coherence in action and a dynamic of communion between all and everyone.



The Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone during a visit to the Holy Land. Here we see him in one of the educational structures supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

I will have to visit the Lieutenants, keep in touch with our local leaders in continuity with what Professor Borromeo accomplished and in accordance with the directives of our Grand Master appointed by the Holy Father, His Eminence Cardinal Edwin O'Brien. He himself sets the example by frequently traveling to meet our members and to encourage their spiritual life and their mission of service to the Mother Church which is in the Holy Land. His visits, in recent years, have revitalized the Order in a truly exceptional way.

Your right-hand-man in all of this, Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli, who has been Chancellor of the Order for about a year, is also a close former colleague from the diplomatic service. How will your collaboration work?

I am pleased to find my colleague and friend Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli. We worked together with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in close collaboration for many years. As Chancellor of the Order, his in-depth knowledge of

the current situation will be of great help, especially as I take my first steps as Governor General. We will continue to work in close proximity and complementarity, as we did earlier in our shared diplomatic career.

In your opinion, what is the current situation of the Order and what are the challenges that lie ahead in the coming years?

The Order is important for the Church and for society, but it deserves greater consideration because it is too often unknown to the public and even to the political world. Our action in the Holy Land is in fact fundamental, especially through the educational works we sustain in Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Cyprus, on the vast territory of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. We will have to boost our communications to participate in initiatives in favor of justice and peace in these regions of the world where people aspire to fraternity and serenity in a dialogue of cultures and respect for different religious traditions.

The Pope counts on the Order of the Holy Sepulchre to continue to support Christians in the Middle East whose role as mediators is fundamental: they constitute a great bridge between communities, as witnesses of openness to others and actors of dialogue in fidelity to the Gospel of Christ. In your view, what can be improved within the Order to help boost this mission?

The Holy Father invites us to evangelical consistency. His directives call out to us: we must give less importance to the external aspect of our belonging to the Order and to favor our inner, spiritual commitment to deepen our struggle for dialogue and social justice in the Holy Land. My concept of the Church is in full agreement with that of Pope Francis, and I hope that the members of the Order will be increasingly focused on the living Gospel, abandoning everything that can, from a distance or from close up, evoke vanity, pride, and “worldliness.” This is the expression of the Catholic faith that my wife and I have tried to convey to our three children and that is what we now witness to our six grandchildren. Humility is the only path that radiates the joy of the Kingdom of God already in this world.

What is the first message you want to send to the members of the Order as you take up office?

I invite all the members of the Order to unity and ask them to strengthen their effective participation in resolving problems in the Holy Land, especially by going on pilgrimage and being in contact with people on the ground as often as possible. I have been deeply affected by my pilgrimages to the Holy Land, which began in my adolescence. At 13 I had the opportunity to live for some weeks in a kibbutz with other pilgrims and the priest of my parish, and I believe that we must do everything to educate young people to love this land, where God-made-man gave his life to teach us to live as brothers and sisters. In this sense, we should take care not to superimpose our liturgical celebrations with respect to our mission of solidarity: their meaning is to spiritually nourish our commitment to serving the Church’s works on biblical territories that the Pope entrusts to our care. That is why we must create local synergies with all the political, social and economic forces, eager to promote peace and justice in these lands of suffering and hope.

Let’s prepare for the 2018 Consulta, which will bring together the leaders of the Order in order to welcome our new Statutes to adapt our whole course of action to the challenges that await us. The urgency is consistency.

**Interview by the Communications
Office of the Grand Magisterium
of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre**

Brief Curriculum Vitae of Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone

Leonardo Visconti di Modrone was born in Milan in 1947 and graduated in Economics and Commerce in 1970. He entered the Italian Diplomatic Corps in 1971 and served in diplomatic representations in New York (United Nations), Cairo, London, Vienna and Madrid. He has also carried out foreign missions in various European nations, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

He has served as an advisor to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with ten different heads of government.

From 2005 to 2010, he was the Head of the Diplomatic Ceremonial of the Republic. He finished his career in 2012 as Ambassador of Italy to Spain.

Later he held positions for the Italian Government, among which he was recently consultant in the organization of the G7 Summit in Taormina.

He is a member of the Grand Magisterium of Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem since 2014.

Married in 1971 with Anna Sanfelice di Monteforte, he has three daughters and six grandchildren.

THE TWO ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

The Spring meeting of the Grand Magisterium

The members of the Grand Magisterium met on May 3 and 4, 2017, in Rome gathered around Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, and in the presence of the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

This meeting, a time of prayer and work, gave the Grand Master the opportunity to thank the Governor General Agostino Borromeo, whose mandate expired at the end of June, and officially welcome his successor, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone (already a member of the Grand Magisterium), who began his term of office on June 29, 2017.

The Spring meeting started with the summary presentation of the budget of the previous year, which had the outstanding result of 16.3 million euros: this demonstrates the unrivaled generosity of members of the Order, unprecedented in the history of the Institution, after three years of steady growth of donations sent by the Lieutenancies to the Holy Land.

Msgr. Pizzaballa outlined the situation in the Patriarchate territories, ranging from Jordan to Cyprus, passing through Palestine and Israel, underscoring the importance of the ecumenical approach experienced at the inauguration of the renovated Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre. The second phase of this restoration project will strengthen the links between the Christian Churches, particularly the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

The Apostolic Administrator, addressing several other topical issues, spoke in positive terms about the ongoing meetings to bring about the signing of a bilateral agreement allowing Israel and the Holy See to consolidate their relations. He also shared his priority concern for the Christian identity of Jerusalem. In fact, Christians count for little more than a few thousand, including just 5,000 Catholic faithful in the Holy City.

The President of the Holy Land Commission, Thomas McKiernan, intervened to present the current status of the Grand Magisterium's projects



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The Grand Magisterium sessions, presided over by Cardinal O'Brien, take place in the Vatican normally over a two-day period.

for 2017: the economic support for teachers' wages, as has been the case for some years (more than \$ 500,000), the construction of Jubeiha church (about one million dollars) and work on the Naour School (about \$ 200,000).

In 2016, gains of 17 million were recorded also accounting for banking interests and income from property rental (four million more than in the previous year) while spending diminished and represented 7,64% of the budget. This all lends to a more effective aid to the Holy Land which is immersed in the effects of the Middle East crisis.

Chancellor Alfredo Bastianelli then took the floor to outline his intention to create a graphic

code at an international level to coordinate the universal image of the Order in a unified way. Communication activities, which Bastianelli also supervises, are in development thanks to the new website in five languages, as well as to the annual magazine and the quarterly bulletin (Newsletter), which have now been named *Jerusalem Cross*. A spiritual booklet produced by the Grand Magisterium Communications Office in coordination with Order's Master of Ceremonies, Msgr. Fortunato Frezza, this year helped members of the Order experience an hour of adoration on the Via Dolorosa for the Patriarchate's intentions and peace in the Holy Land.

Feast of Our Lady of Palestine and Autumn Meeting of the Grand Magisterium

The Autumn meeting of the Grand Magisterium began on October 25, 2017, the liturgical memory of Our Lady of Palestine, Patroness of the Order. A Mass was celebrated by Cardinal O'Brien at the tomb of the Apostle Peter, in the presence of all the participants who carried the prayer intentions of the inhabitants of the Holy Land in their hearts.

During this Mass, concelebrated by Monsignor Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Grand Master invited the members of his supreme council not to lose sight of the Heavenly Jerusalem which is built mainly thanks to the sanctity of "every living stone," as all baptized are called to a precise mission in God's vast plan where everyone has their place. In the late afternoon, Cardinal O'Brien received his guests in the halls of the Palazzo della Rovere, first among whom



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During the Fall Session of the Grand Magisterium, the Grand Master presided at Mass at the tomb of the Apostle Peter in St. Peter's Basilica on the feast day of Our Lady of Palestine, Patroness of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

During these two days of fraternity and gathering, members of the Grand Magisterium also worked on a very dense agenda.

The Governor General shared the experience of his official trip to the Holy Land at the end of the summer, rejoicing in the welcome received by the new pastoral and administrative team organized



During the annual Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, the Grand Master welcomed guests to Palazzo della Rovere, first among them the Holy See Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

transparency. The audit carried out by Deloitte is an essential point of reference for new operational and professional procedures that will facilitate the control of the deficit.

Sami El-Yousef noted that a substantial part of the Patriarchate's budget concerns schools, with nearly 20,000 students but less and less Christians. A combination of factors explains this drop such as the fact that in schools that do not offer all levels of education, it is not possible to complete the entire educational process. The Patriarchate hopes, therefore, to strengthen existing structures rather than to create new ones.

On behalf of the Grand Magisterium's Holy Land Commission, Professor Bartholomew McGettrick, explained that the increase in teachers' salaries in order to assure the quality of teaching in the schools of the Patriarchate, is a continuous effort destined to last and to increase in the years to come. He then summarized ongoing projects concerning the school and parish house in Jaffa of Nazareth, Israel, as well as the church of St. Paul in Jubeiha, Jordan, where Engineer Adolfo Rinaldi went on an inspection mission this fall. The project of mosaic and craft workshops – to give work to Christian refugees from the Middle East in Jordan – attracted the attention of the Grand Master, who asked the Order to step up its communication of this subject.

Lastly, discussions turned to the upcoming Consulta in November 2018, which is being coordinated by Lieutenant General Agostino Borromeo, on the mandate of Cardinal O'Brien. This five-year event will be the occasion to study the new Statutes of the Order, soon to be approved by the Secretariat of State of the Holy See. ■

by Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa. The smiles on the faces of the young people he met has strengthened his will to commit himself to developing the Order's action in the service of dialogue and coexistence in the Holy Land. Governor General Visconti di Modrone expressed his desire to establish priorities and to promote synergies, as well as to visit all the Lieutenancies during his mandate, with an emphasis on the importance of following the formation of new members.

Msgr. Pizzaballa, just over a year in his duties, shared some important novelties, including the creation of a new pastoral office of the Patriarchate, primarily responsible for family issues. He also made known the administrative changes, in particular the arrival of Palestinian Christian Sami El-Yousef as the first layman in charge of financial issues in the diocese.

Sami El-Yousef later provided a clear account of the management of the Latin Patriarchate – announcing a nearly \$ 13 million budget for 2018 – explaining that he wants to empower people at all levels in order to advance on the path of

THE CONTINENTAL MEETINGS OF THE LIEUTENANTS

Annual North American Lieutenants' Meeting

Summary by John Carmen Piunno, member of the Grand Magisterium

In early June, the 16 North American Lieutenants gathered for their annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, USA. Situated on the banks of the Missouri River, Omaha is the heartland of America: a stop on the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail; it is known for its pioneer history, agriculture, beef industries, and a crossroad of railroads and commerce.

Professor Thomas Pogge, Lieutenant of the Northern USA Lieutenancy, and his wife, Anne, hosted the meetings. His Eminence, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, and the then Governor General Agostino Borromeo, travelled from Rome to attend the meeting.

The Grand Master gave an opening address in which he emphasized the importance of the annual meeting, and asked that the Lieutenants continue their efforts in renewing the spiritual lives of the Knights and Dames.

Vice Governor General Powers gave a detailed presentation on the finances of the Order, provided

an update on the status of the revised Statutes of the Order, and announced the dates of the 2018 Consulta in Rome.

The two days of meetings included a wide variety of topics and exchange of ideas ranging from the operations of a Lieutenancy, finances, liturgy, pilgrimages, and candidate formation. Several newly appointed Lieutenants attended and the meeting provided them the opportunity to observe and participate in various discussions.

Monsignor John E. Kozar, President of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), having recently returned from the Holy Land, provided first-hand insight into the on-going refugee crisis facing Christians in Syria and Iraq.

At the end of the meeting, Thomas Pogge presented on behalf of the North American Lieutenants a beautiful framed image of Our Lady of Palestine to Agostino Borromeo in thanksgiving and appreciation for all he has done for the Order during his various mandates.

A group photo taken at the Church of St. John of Creighton University in Omaha during the annual meeting of the North American Lieutenants.



Annual Meeting of European Lieutenants

During the meeting of the European Lieutenants in Rome (June 27-28, 2017), Cardinal Pietro Parolin – Secretary of State of the Holy See – delivered the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Gregory the Great on behalf of Pope Francis to Governor General Agostino Borromeo, at the end of his second and last four-year mandate.

The Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, warmly thanked Professor Borromeo who received a lengthy and warm applause from participants at the meeting of European Lieutenants.

The new Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, was then presented, declaring that he hoped to focus his attention on the needs of all the members of the Order and to work in continuity with his predecessor, who has left an exceptional legacy.

The financial report was presented, revealing an unparalleled growth in donations to the Holy Land (over 16 million euros), made possible above all through the activity of the Grand Master who systematically visits the Lieutenancies throughout the world, giving impulse and vitality to their local life and encouraging international communications within the Order. "In this way, a climate of trust and fraternity has been created, bringing the center closer to the peripheries," Professor Borromeo noted.

Regarding support provided to the Church in the Holy Land, the then Assessor, Archbishop Antonio Franco, stressed that the St. John the Baptist Vatican Foundation, wanted by the Pope, has succeeded in restoring the situation of the University of Madaba, favoring best practices and transparent management on the path towards full autonomy. In a broader sense, the Foundation's vocation is to promote culture and education in the Middle East.

Professor Thomas McKiernan, President of the Holy Land Commission – in charge of managing the Grand Magisterium projects at the request of the Latin Patriarchate – presented the current state of the projects concerning the church of Jubeiha, the school in Naour, as well as the pay increase for teachers in schools belonging to the patriarchal



A working session of the meeting of the European Lieutenants in one of the halls of Palazzo della Rovere, headquarters of the Order in Rome.

diocese of Jerusalem, which includes Cyprus, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. These schools – which welcome many Muslims – are key places for building bridges of friendship and mutual understanding, which are key elements and guarantees for a future peace.

Among other questions, the issue of the Consulta, scheduled for 12 to 16 November 2018, was discussed. The main agenda items will include the adoption of new Statutes for the Order; the preparation of Lieutenants to carry out their functions, as well as the place occupied by the ecclesiastics in the Lieutenancies.

The Grand Master hopes that clergy will not exceed 10% of the members and that priests or religious be explicitly destined for a specifically spiritual service. Their role must therefore be better defined in this essentially secular Order, as opposed to that of Malta, which is instead a religious Order.

The first regional meeting for Australian and Pacific Rim Lieutenancies

Summary by Paul Bartley, Vice Governor General for Asia and Pacific

The Lieutenants of the Philippines, Australia Queensland, Australia New South Wales, Australia Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, the Magistral Delegate from New Zealand and a representative from Taipei, Taiwan took part in the meeting at the end of June 2017. Unfortunately Guam and South Africa were not able to attend.

70 Knights and Dames also attended the event despite the great distances they had to travel.

The agenda discussed the spirituality of the Order, in particular the formation of new members, and we agreed that a major task for the future is the development of a process of formation for future Lieutenants. We considered some means to improve the level of donation which is significantly retarded in Australia by the lack of any tax deductible ability. We discussed as well about how to attract younger members and about the

importance of developing the field of communications. Locally speaking, some Lieutenancies are producing a newsletter either quarterly or monthly of quite a high calibre.

The idea of a unified national project of solidarity at the benefice of the Holy Land for the five Australian Lieutenancies could give new impulse to the members and result in an increase of the level of donations and there was interest in the issue of the day care centers for the children of foreign workers in Israel and in the projects supporting the Christian refugees, particularly in Jordan. This idea will be further discussed. Everybody was very impressed by the current project by the Lieutenancy for the Philippines of having a priest in Amman, Jordan, to serve the Filipino migrant workers community.

A visit of the Grand Master to Australia and New Zealand is scheduled in September 2018. ■

From the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan, the leaders of the Order of the Land of the Rising Sun gathered in Sydney in the summer of 2017.



NOMINATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

A new Lieutenant General for the Order

Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, has accepted the resignation of Professor Giuseppe Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, Lieutenant General, entrusting this position to Professor Agostino Borromeo as of 27 July 2017. The Lieutenant General, who is part of the Grand Magisterium, exercises those special functions entrusted to him by the Grand Master and represents him in events involving the Order as his delegate when necessary.

Professor Dalla Torre has been a member of the Order since 1991. He was born in 1943, is a graduate in law and is president of the Vatican State Tribunal and rector emeritus of the Lumsa University (Libera Università di Maria Ss. Assunta). Recently he was appointed by the Holy Father to the Board of Directors of the Roman Pediatric Hospital Bambino Gesù, which belongs to the Vatican.

Governor General of the Order until June 29 last, and a historian by profession, **Professor**



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During the meeting of the European Lieutenants in Rome, Cardinal Pietro Parolin – Secretary of State of the Holy See – delivered the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Gregory the Great on behalf of Pope Francis to Governor General Agostino Borromeo, at the end of his second and last four-year mandate. He has since been appointed Lieutenant General.

Borromeo, is Secretary General and member of the Board of Directors of the St. John the Baptist Vatican Foundation, in support of education and culture in the Middle East. He is also a member of the Holy See's Historical Science Committee.

Three new members of the Grand Magisterium

Also in July, the Grand Master appointed three new members of the Grand Magisterium – an Italian, a German and an Irish man – who will attend the meetings of the Order's advisory body.

Dr. Saverio PETRILLO, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, was born in Rome on October 7, 1939, and holds a Law degree. He held the role of Lieutenant for Central Italy. A married family man, he was the director of the Pontifical Villas of Castel Gandolfo and has always occupied certain functions at the service of the Church, in particular as a Gentleman of His Holiness, Vice President General of the Circle of St. Peter and also as a member of the Permanent



Delegation of Holy See at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organizations. In July he was also nominated as a member of the Nomination and Promotion Committee of the Grand Magisterium of the Order.

Dr. Heinrich DICKMANN, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, was born in Kevelaer, Germany, on February 24, 1941. He completed his studies in mathematics and physics, then served as director of a company. Married, he is Lieutenant of Honor for Germany since 2015, after two very fruitful terms as leader of the Order in his country. He is also a member of the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium.



Nicholas McKENNA was born in Ballymena, Ireland, in the diocese of Down and Connor on July 9, 1947. Married and father of family, he was active in the financial sector. A Knight Grand Cross, he has been the Lieutenant of Honor for Ireland since 2014.



Professor Pierre Blanchard, who completed his two terms on the Grand Magisterium, was greatly thanked by the Grand Master who conferred upon him the Golden Palm of Jerusalem, the highest reward according to the Order's Constitution. Professor Blanchard remains a member of the Nomination and Promotion Committee.

■ Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto, new Assessor

With Pope Francis' approval, Grand Master Cardinal Edwin O'Brien has appointed Msgr. Giuseppe Lazzarotto Assessor of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The position was previously held by Msgr. Antonio Franco, who had asked to be replaced having reached the age of retirement. The new Assessor – who can be called to replace the Grand Master should the latter suffer an impediment or pass away – served for five years as Apostolic Nuncio in Israel and Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem and Palestine. His mandate ended in August 2017. Msgr. Lazzarotto knows the Order well, having been a member for about fifteen years.

"I have a visceral love for the Holy Land and its inhabitants," confided the new Assessor of the Order, as he recalls his first experience in that land in 1982-1984, when he was secretary for the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem, after a period spent at the Nunciature in Cuba.

After having held various positions of great importance representing the Holy See in diverse countries, it was a great and joyful surprise to be recalled to Jerusalem six years ago. He made his solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre on November 25, 2012, the eve of the entry to the Holy Sepulchre also of Cardinal O'Brien, who had just been appointed to the office of Grand Master by Pope Benedict XVI. "I met the Grand Master of the Order on that occasion, without imagining that one day I would become his right-hand man in Rome", commented Msgr. Lazzarotto, now fully available to assume the role of Assessor. In fact, he lives in Rome, not far from the Grand Magisterium, in a house where several retired nuncios continue to offer their important contribution to the Holy See.

When he was Nuncio in Israel, Monsignor Lazzarotto worked hard on the agreement between

this country and the Holy See regarding the places of worship and the taxation of religious institutes that have a commercial activity, a planned continuation of the fundamental agreement signed in 1993. "This desired final agreement is almost concluded", the diplomat observes, "and will represent a fundamental guarantee for the local Church", as in Palestine, where such an agreement was already concluded in 2015.

More generally, Archbishop Lazzarotto feels that his heart always remains in Jerusalem, a city that exercises "an incredible attraction" on those who fall in love with it. "Our mission – as members of the Order – consists in helping the Christian communities everywhere to live this luminous appeal, this special spiritual bond with a land chosen by God for His plan of salvation which continues today and of which we are called to be joyful channels of compassion and unity".



Msgr. Giuseppe Lazzarotto and his predecessor, Msgr. Antonio Franco, greet the Holy Father, Pope Francis, during a special audience.

■ Archbishop Antonio Franco appointed Assessor of Honor

On February 22, 2013, the Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, appointed Msgr. Antonio Franco, Assessor of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. During his four-year mandate, the Grand Magisterium and the whole Order benefitted from the wisdom, knowledge and welcoming spirit of this humble and dedicated pastor of the Church. Born in Puglianello, in the province of Benevento on March 24, 1937, he was ordained a priest on July 10, 1960. Shortly thereafter he entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See; on March 28, 1992, he was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine and elected titular Bishop of Gallese. He was consecrated bishop on

April 26, 1992, by Pope John Paul II. From April 1999 to January 2006 he was Apostolic Nuncio in the Philippines, before being appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Israel and Cyprus and Apostolic Delegate for Jerusalem and Palestine. His in-depth knowledge of the Holy Land and of the communities that live there has been of fundamental help to the Grand Master and to the Order in these years. On October 24, 2017, on the margins of the Autumn meeting of the Grand Magisterium, Cardinal O'Brien publicly thanked Monsignor Franco for the service rendered nominating him Assessor of Honor and conferring on him the Golden Palm.

IN MEMORIAM

Homage to Cardinal Montezemolo, Assessor of Honor of the Order

Son of Giuseppe Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, an Italian army colonel shot at the Fosse Ardeatine on March 24, 1944, by the Nazis; Cardinal Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo was the first Apostolic Nuncio in Israel. He died on November 19 in Rome, at the age of 92.

On November 21, 2017 the funeral was celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, vice dean of the College of Cardinals, in the presence of the Grand Master of the Order of the Holy

Sepulchre, as well as an important delegation of Knights led by the Governor General and by the Lieutenant General. As per tradition, Pope Francis presided over the rite of the *Ultima Commendatio* and the *Valedictio* at the end of the celebration.

The dignitaries of the Order gathered in prayer in St Peter's Basilica during the funeral of Cardinal Montezemolo, Councilor of Honor of venerable memory.



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THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM'S PROJECTS IN 2017

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre - in exercising its mission of support for Christians in the Biblical lands – engages in the spiritual and economic support of certain structures of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (schools, seminaries, centres for refugees) in the form of stable and continuous (600,000 dollars a month) funding, as well as some specific projects that may vary from year to year, according to the needs presented to the Grand Magisterium of the Order by the aforementioned Patriarchate and the Reunion of Aid Agencies to the Oriental Churches (ROACO), which depends on the Roman Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

PROJECTS CARRIED OUT TO DATE

A new recreation courtyard for the Tla'el Ali school (Jordan)

The project – dating back to 2016 – was completed thanks to the contribution of the Lieutenancy for Germany (\$ 127,000): the school in Tla'el Ali was in need of a larger recreation courtyard, or was in danger of closing.

New classrooms for the Naour school (Jordan)

Another construction to which the Order has contributed in 2017, to the tune of \$ 261,000, was the construction of the second floor of the school in Naour, a Jordanian city located west of the capital Amman and home to a small Catholic community. “Because the classes were already hosting 45 students per room (223 in total) and because of the increasing demand of enrollment from Christian families newly arrived in the area, it was necessary to build a second floor. Enhancing a good educational environment is crucial for our schools where the Latin



The Governor General of the Order inaugurated the new classes at Naour School on September 13, 2017, during his first official visit to the Holy Land.

Patriarchate members strive to help the youth in growing with a faithful heart and a broad mind”, explained Sami El-Yousef, the new administrative director of the Patriarchate.

The new structure was inaugurated by the Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone,

in the presence of Msgr. William Shomali, patriarchal vicar, on September 13, 2017 and now the work has been completed. The Lieutenancy for Western Spain and for Northern Italy contributed to the definitive realization of this project, which began in 2016.

Renovation of the church in Gaza

The renovation of the Church of the Holy Family in Gaza, scheduled for 2015 – following the bombings that hit the local population in 2014 – was finally achieved this year, to the immense joy of the small local community. The cost of construction equal to about \$ 226,000 – was sustained in a special way by decision of the Grand Master. Sami El-Yousef thanking the Order, explains: “The Church of the Holy Family had severe damages in its foundations columns, beams of infrastructure, bad water leaks from the roof, walls and windows and severe sinking of the foundation, thus presenting a potential risk of collapse. Therefore and during the winter season, masses were interrupted and canceled due to water leaking in the church. It became urgent and necessary for the parish to rehabilitate the church, which is located in a very utilized compound; the project achievement really helped to create a community center where a lot of people gather.”



The parish priest of Gaza and the director of the administrative services of the Latin Patriarchate, together with some religious committed to supporting the Palestinian population who face great suffering.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Teachers' salaries

As in 2016, some of the funds were allocated to the increase in teachers' salaries in the Patriarchate schools, an important measure to continue offering high-level education to pupils and students. In 2017, the Grand Magisterium sent \$ 800,000 to the Latin Patriarchate to meet these needs and ensure quality Catholic teaching. We hope that the contributions of the Lieutenancies will avoid the Grand Magisterium's having to resort to its reserves in 2018, since the economic demand will increase, in particular because of the severance and provident fund for professors that the Patriarchate must cover.

A kindergarten in Hashimi (Jordan)

Hashimi's nursery school no longer conformed to Jordanian law: the kindergarten must be on the ground floor, so that children do not risk falling down stairs. Without a timely intervention the school would have been closed. The project – which started in 2016 – continues thanks in particular to the Lieutenancies for Northern Italy, Western Spain, England and Netherlands, which donated \$ 329,000. The outstanding cost is \$ 372,000 that the Lieutenancy for France has pledged to pay in 2018.



Engineer Adolfo Rinaldi (in the foreground), during an inspection at the Hashimi camp, conducted in the name of the Grand Magisterium.

A school is flourishing in Jaffa of Nazareth (Israel)



The cornerstone and commemorative plaque in Jaffa of Nazareth contains a tribute to the members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for the help offered to the school and the parish.

In Jaffa of Nazareth, Israel, a new parish building is being under construction, both to create a nursery school and to move the presbytery to the edge of the school. This project has been ongoing since 2015. The Lieutenancy for Switzerland is supporting all costs – for a total of \$ 1,700,000 in two phases, half of which in 2017 – allowing the school of this parish to have more space to accommodate a larger number of students. Education is indeed a matter of fundamental importance, both for the local Church and for society. “There is a great need to improve the existing 12 grades of the school, by upgrading the existing and deteriorated facilities and to offer more space in order to respond to the increasing number of students”, Sami

El-Yousef told us, on behalf of the Latin Patriarchate. “There is also an urgent need to shift the priest residence and office, the kindergarten and the sisters’ house from the school old convent, so the 4 existing floors of the school building can be remodeled”, explains Sami. “Although the project was at a standstill in recent years, work is now proceeding rapidly and

well, since the foundation stone was laid on September 11 by Governor Leonardo Visconti di Modrone. On the occasion of a visit to those places in November, it was exciting to see the joy of the teachers with the progress of the work. They have waited so long to have a renovated school, fully able to offer the high quality education they wish to impart!”

A new church in Jubeiha (Jordan)

In 2017, the Grand Magisterium pledged to support a cost of about one million dollars for the completion of the construction of the church of Saint Paul in Jubeiha, Jordan. Jubeiha is a village located on the outskirts of Amman and where the first parish was founded in 1991, when there were still few houses in that area, which was mainly agricultural. Over the years, the population increased and – on the initiative of some parishioners and benefactors – work began on a church to accommodate the one thousand Latin faithful. Unfortunately, a lack of funds means the project was never completed. But now it has been relaunched, in the hope of being able to soon give to parishioners – who gather in a nearby room – an appropriate place to celebrate the liturgies. The Lieutenancy for Germany has already paid about a third of the sum needed, through the Grand Magisterium (approximately 300,000 euros). “Due to the unfinished works on the location, weather conditions and no contention work, the construction of Saint Paul church, launched with local contributions, was in bad and dangerous condition. In order to

prevent any advancement on the dramatic deterioration of the grounds surrounding, in addition to complete and deliver a proper church where the parishioners are able to pray and attend holy masses (the priest had no choice but to celebrate the holy mass in the school hall) the Latin Patriarchate with the support of the Order decided to complete the project”, Sami-El Yousef, the Latin Patriarchate’s administrative director, told us.



The church of Jubeiha, in Jordan, is being built in a suburb of Amman where many faithful have moved in recent years.

PROJECTS RELATED TO THE ROACO

On the occasion of the two ROACO meetings in Rome – the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches – the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre pledged to support various projects, especially in favour of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, a Church of Byzantine rite united to Rome since the 18th century.

■ **MAKER** is an Arab village located in the north of Israel. The **parish hall of the church of Saint Anthony** will be renovated to house local religious events. It is about sustaining the life of a Christian community made up of a thousand people, mostly Greek-Catholics, but also Maronites. Total: 64,000 euros

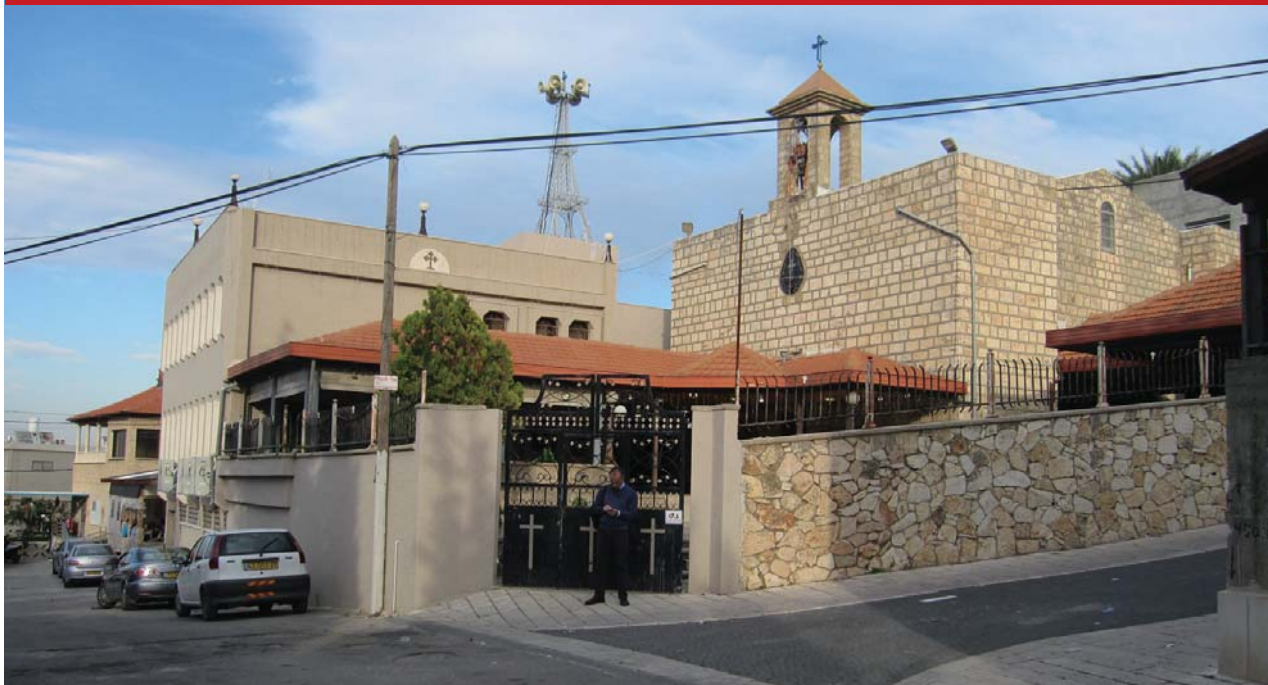
■ **IQRIT** is a village in Galilee that suffered greatly in 1948, when the Israeli army drove its inhabitants to Rameh. In 1951, the Supreme Court allowed the inhabitants of Iqrit to return to the village but, when they arrived, they found the houses destroyed. The **parish church of Saint Mary**, however, remained intact and today serves for weddings, baptisms and funerals for a population attached to the village but scattered throughout Is-

rael between Rameh and Haifa. The enlargement of the church – thanks to a loggia of 35 meters – will allow all the participants to take part in religious events. Total: 15,500 euros

■ **MAGHAR** is an Arab city in the north of Israel. The local Greek-Melkite community has 5,000 people living among 12,000 Druze and 4,000 Muslims. The parish hall – dating back to the 90s – needs an audio system, in order to promote the conviviality of meetings organized on a regular basis. Total: 19,000 euros

■ **SAKHNIN**, another Arab city in the north of Israel, with an essentially Muslim population of almost 30,000 people. The Melkite faithful – about a thousand – gather in the **parish church of Saint**

The Arab village of Maker, in Israel, numbers a thousand Christians, mainly Greek Catholics.



Joseph. The old pews must be renewed. Total: 19,000 euros

■ **RAMALLAH** – 15 km north of Jerusalem – it is



Construction of a nursery school in a Greek Catholic school in Ramallah, Palestine.

the current administrative capital of the State of Palestine. The **Greek-Catholic school Our Lady of the Annunciation** welcomes about 500 students, almost half of whom are Christians. A kindergarten school will be built for around sixty young children, to help working mothers. Total: 92,000 euros

■ **The Focolare Movement** is very active in serving the Church in the Holy Land, the Middle East and North Africa. Its members offer a testimony of evangelical life, characterized by a spirit of openness and dialogue. Having come from Europe and Latin America, nine local representatives of this movement – in Egypt, Jordan and Israel – need to proficiently learn the Arabic language. Total: 12,700 euros

■ **A summer missionary camp** – organized by the **Maronite diocese of BAALBEK** – for fifteen days helped to restore a little hope to some isolated and disabled people, thanks to visits and liturgical celebrations. The mission – animated by about fifty young people, accompanied by priests and religious – involved about 1500 people from seven parishes. Total: 12,000 euros.

Further reading for better understanding:

The Melkite Church is part of the Apostolic Church of Antioch, founded by St. Peter. Located in Turkey, near the border with Syria, it was the first pagan city to receive the Gospel: “In Antioch, for the first time, the disciples were called Christians” (*Acts* 11:26).

The word “melkite” comes from the Syriac “malko” which means “emperor”. First appearing in 451, this name was attributed by the Monophysites to the Christians opposed to them after the Council of Chalcedon, convened by the Byzantine emperor Marcian. Contrary to the Coptic and Syriac called Jacobites, the Melkites recognized – during the aforementioned Council – one Christ, the only Son and Lord, in two natures, without confusion, mutation, division or separation between these two natures.

In the denomination of the Church, the term “Greek” derives from the fact that the Fathers of that Church wrote their texts in the Greek language. Instead, the word “Catholic” is explained because this Church was connected to Rome in the 18th century (separation of the Greek Orthodox Church).

Unlike other Eastern Churches, Catholic or not, the Melkite Church is not a national Church, but a particular Church, in the canonical sense of the term. Widespread throughout the Arab Near East and in a diaspora that assumes large proportions, more than half of the Melkite faithful today live outside the eastern limits of the Patriarchate.

The liturgy of the Melkite Catholic Church is of Byzantine rite. It is mainly celebrated in Arabic, with parts in Greek and Syriac. In the diaspora, it can also be celebrated in the local language.

APPOINTMENTS IN THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

After a year of careful listening, analysis and evaluation, in the summer of 2017 the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem communicated the new appointments for the diocese entrusted to his governance by Pope Francis. Some changes were already effective such as, for example, the appointment of Msgr. William Shomali as vicar for Jordan. Given the importance of having a bishop present in Jerusalem, after more than twenty years of service, “Bishop Giacinto Boulos-Marcuzzo expressed his readiness to leave Nazareth and to come to Jerusalem, – as Archbishop Pizzaballa writes – while Abouna Hanna Kaldani leaves Jordan for the first time in his life, to face a completely new adventure: Vicar in Nazareth.”

With regards the Financial Administration, Archbishop Pizzaballa took the opportunity to thank Abouna Imad Twal for his service over the years as General Administrator and announce that as Administrator he would take direct responsibility of the office, with the help of a layperson, Mr. Sami El-Yousef, who has been the director of the Pontifical Mission to Palestine for many years. In the Patriarchal Seminary, Abouna Jamal Khader who served there for many years will be replaced as rector by Abouna Yakoub Rafidi.

Finally, Abouna George Ayoub, Chancellor, left his post to continue his studies in Moral Theology in Rome and was replaced by Abouna Ibrahim Shomali who also takes up the role of deputy director of the new Pastoral Office chaired by Abouna Rafiq Khoury.

In his Advent letter to the entire diocese, Archbishop Pizzaballa dwelt in particular on

this organism, composed of parish priests, religious men and women and especially lay people and couples from all parts of the diocese, that he hopes may contribute “to the vitality of our pastoral life in this period of the journey of our diocese. In fact, there are many transformations in our societies and in our communities that require new perspectives and new pastoral means”. The Council, with two offices, one in Jerusalem and the other in Amman, chose the theme of the family for the pastoral commitment of this and the coming years.

There has been another change for the Hebrew-speaking community of the Vicariate of St. James. After twelve years of service, Father David Neuhaus asked the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to be replaced in his duties, offering his resignation on August 14, 2017.

Father David is an Israeli Jesuit born in South Africa to a Jewish family and he converted to Christianity at the age of 15. Strongly engaged in dialogue with the Jewish world and with all communities living in the Holy Land, he was in the forefront of supporting the rights of many foreign workers, some of whom Christians, and migrants living in Israel. In particular, Father David gave an important boost to the creation of kindergartens where younger migrants could be safely welcomed. Father Rafiq Nahra has been appointed to succeed him. Father Rafiq was born in 1959 in Ismailiya,

Egypt, to a family of Lebanese origin and he was ordained to the priesthood in 1992. In 2004 he moved to Jerusalem where he immediately started to serve the Vicariate of St. James. ■

View of Jerusalem from the Latin Patriarchate.



A NEW APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN ISRAEL

Last September Msgr. Leopoldo Girelli was appointed to succeed Msgr. Giuseppe Lazzarotto who served as a Nuncio in the Holy Land from 2012 to 2017. The new Apostolic Delegate for Jerusalem and Palestine and Apostolic Nuncio for Israel and Cyprus made his solemn entrance in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre on December 14, 2017. Msgr. Girelli, 64, has previously held senior diplomatic positions as a representative of the Holy See in several Asian countries, particularly in Indonesia, East Timor, Singapore, Malaysia and in Vietnam.

Lit was at Jaffa Gate where the various bishops, priests, religious men and women, general consuls and the faithful welcomed Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the new Pontifical representative to the Holy Land. After some brief greetings, the procession towards the Holy Sepulchre started with rhythmic tapping of the Kawas' staffs.

Once in the Holy Sepulchre, the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Patton welcomed the Nuncio. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate, on the other hand reflected on the significance of such an entry to the Holy Sepulchre before the assuming of any office. "We come here to make clear to ourselves who we are, said the Archbishop, to see the empty Tomb and to believe, in order to give testimony and proclaim

that Jesus is the Lord". He added, "we come here also to ask the Lord to inspire us and protect our mission and to bring to Him our unresolved demands...especially in these days, when violence and misunderstandings seem to prevail again, where communities and peoples apparently refuse to acknowledge the rights of the other and where the sanctity of the Places of the Scriptures become source of division and not places of prayer for all the peoples."

The Nuncio then, standing before the renovated Edicule, thanked the bishops, vicars, the different Christian communities, the general consuls and he also expressed his warm sentiments to the "brothers and sisters of Muslim and Jewish faiths in the Holy Land, wishing for and with them an increase of mutual understanding, dialogue and fraternity".

(Source: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem)

The new Apostolic Delegate for Jerusalem and Palestine, Nuncio in Israel and Cyprus, on the day of his solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre.



THE FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL TO THE HOLY LAND

From September 10 to 16, 2017, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti of Modrone, Governor General of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, made his first official visit to the Holy Land. He was accompanied on this trip by a delegation composed of Msgr. Fortunato Frezza, Master of Ceremonies of the Order, Thomas McKiernan, President of the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium, Professor Bartholomew McGettrick, member of the same Commission, and the director of the Order's Communications Office in Rome. The visit providentially took place during the 170th anniversary of the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the reorganization of the Holy Sepulchre by Pope Pius IX in 1847.



The Governor General was able to spend time with his hosts at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem – in Israel, Palestine and Jordan – focusing his attention on the ongoing projects supported by the Order in the field of education, pastoral care and ministry for refugees.

Before his departure, the Governor General had the opportunity to meet with the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, in order to prepare for his pilgrimage since the Archbishop was in Rome for the meeting of the newly appointed bishops.

The first stone at Jaffa of Nazareth

The first leg of the journey took them to Jaffa of Nazareth, Galilee, where the Governor laid the cornerstone for an addition to the parish school and new priest residence, made possible by the

help provided by the Order.

In his speech, Father Hanna Kaldani, recently appointed Patriarchal Vicar for Israel and a member of the Holy Sepulchre, recalled the



A moment of prayer before laying the corner stone of a new space in the parish school in Jaffa of Nazareth.

importance of this school for the families of the region, particularly for the Christian community. A hundred of local authorities were present, including the mayor of the city, all deeply honored that the Governor of the Order had come to meet them.

The Governor told them he was particularly “impressed by the smiles of young students which convey a joy that makes us grow in the faith and encourages us to always serve people first.”

Meeting with the Pontifical Mission and the University of Bethlehem

The delegation then met Joseph Hazboun, director of the CNEWA - Pontifical Mission in Jerusalem, an organization that relies on the support of both the Archdiocese of New York and the Congregation for Oriental Churches.



Brother Peter Bray, President of the Bethlehem University, together with the Governor General of the Order and the members of the delegation of the Grand Magisterium and that of the Latin Patriarchate.

Ambassador Visconti di Modrone responded by sharing his desire to create momentum fostering coordination between all the initiatives that encourage coexistence and dialogue in the Holy Land.

In this spirit, the Governor General wanted to stop at the University of Bethlehem. This institution is crucial for young Palestinian students with over 3,000 enrolled in the five faculties,

including a nursing school whose building is currently being developed.

Lasallian Brother Peter Bray, president of the University, welcomed the Governor General and asked him to thank the members of the Order who have sent about nine million dollars to support this “oasis of peace” over the last twenty years, allowing so many students to keep hope alive, despite the separation wall and the “segregation” that cripples Palestinian territories stifled by unrelenting colonization.

Forming Future Priests: the Seminary of Beit Jala

That afternoon the Governor General and the delegation went deeper into Palestine, to Beit Jala, the town next to Bethlehem, where Father Yakoub Rafidi, rector of the Seminary, and his team welcomed the delegation. “You are part of our family,” said the rector, grateful for the regular aid provided by the Order covering 100% the formation of future priests of the Patriarchate. This year there are nearly sixty seminarians, twenty of whom are in the Minor Seminary.



Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone together with Father Yakoub Rafidi, new rector of the Beit Jala Seminary, in front of the Marian icon of the chapel in which the future priests of the Latin Patriarchate pray every day.

Synergy with the Custody

The second day also included a meeting with Father Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land, who is close to the new Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the former Custos.

Father Patton welcomed the Governor General to the headquarters of the Custody for their meeting, during which he described the mission of the Franciscan Friars in the holy places over the past 800 years. This, he said, was to preserve the presence of Roman Catholicism during the period when the Patriarchate did not have a physical representation.

Father Patton, insisted on the urgent need to



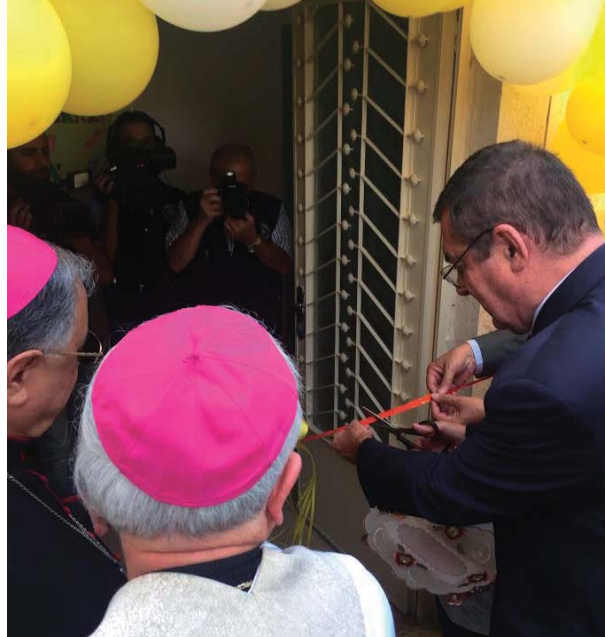
A moment of exchange between the Governor General and the Custos.

help Christian families, especially by supporting the education of young people, and found himself in agreement with the Governor on the need to work towards a “global synergy” in this field, in order to strengthen the transmission of faith and Christian formation.

Visit to projects in Jordan

The delegation headed to Jordan for a two-day visit. Bishop William Shomali, Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan, welcomed the General Governor to Naour, on the great outskirts of Amman, for the inauguration of a kindergarten and a new classroom wing in a parish school of the Patriarchate.

In the Kingdom of Jordan, the Catholic Church benefits from a rare stability in the region: in Jordan Christians are far more numerous than they are in Palestine or Israel, which justifies important projects such as building new places of worship.



The Governor General inaugurates the new classrooms of the Naour school.

The Governor General and the delegation visited the construction site of the parish church of St. Paul’s in Jubeiha, north of Amman, in a neighborhood where more and more Christians have come to work in the Jordanian capital. The parish community already has 1,500 families, that is, about 7,000 people, and the completion of the new church is greatly anticipated. The parishioners have shown how deeply they care for this project through their own financial gifts towards the initial construction work. The help of the Order will follow.

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the program included a pilgrimage to Mount Nebo from which Moses, before dying, could see the Promised Land. The delegation prayed on this mountain, facing Jerusalem, with the texts of the liturgy of the day that exalt the mystery of our salvation, asking God to protect all the inhabitants of the Holy Land.

The Order alongside refugees

The Governor General also visited some Iraqi refugees working in Madaba, 30 kilometers south of Amman, a Jordanian city with a large Christian community.

In a workshop, made up of portable buildings, refugees make mosaics which are for sale. The Order participates in the financing of these humanitarian activities, together with Caritas and the French Embassy (you can read more on the project “Living



Some refugees have rediscovered the dignity of work in a mosaic workshop supported by the Order in Jordan.

Mosaics” in the article on page 43-44).

Bishop Mauro Lalli, chargé d'affaires of the Nunciature in Jordan, invited the delegation of the Order to dinner. He was very impressed by the work carried out in the region by the Knights and Dames, “not just to keep faith in the holy places but to nourish it.”

On the day of the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, at the Holy Sepulchre, the members of the Grand Magisterium delegation carried all of the intentions of the Knights and Dames around the world in prayer.

The last meetings in Jerusalem

Returning to Jerusalem the Governor met with the Palestinian priests with whom he had a frank and direct dialogue during a lunch offered at the Latin Patriarchate. On that occasion, the Governor received an icon of Our Lady of Palestine, painted by one of the Little Sisters of Bethlehem and blessed the same day by Msgr. Fortunato Frezza during the pilgrimage of the Delegation to the Holy Sepulchre for the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

At the end of the stay, the delegation met again



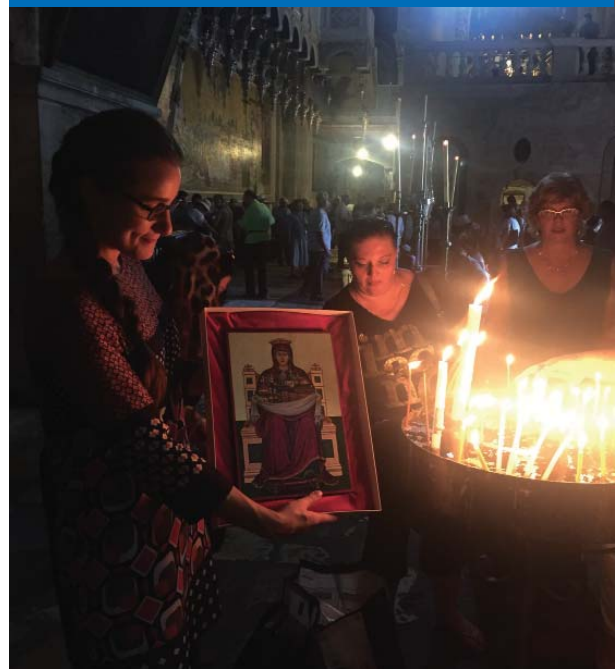
Meeting of the Grand Magisterium delegation with the project team of the Latin Patriarchate led by Sami El-Yousef, the new director of administrative services.

with Sami El-Yousef and his team, which included a pair of young French volunteers, Claire and Charles-Edouard Guilbert, then in charge of the project office. This afforded the group the opportunity to review the assistance the Order provides. They reported on projects that have been completed, illustrated ongoing projects and proposed future projects, all in a climate of deep confidence.

A final appointment before returning to Rome allowed to speak with Claudio Maina, director of the Secretariat of Solidarity, an office of the Apostolic Nunciature. Its mission, in coordination with the Congregation for Oriental Churches, is to distribute aid to Catholic schools that do not belong to the Latin Patriarchate. He reported that some Christian families have difficulty in paying the tuition fee. “Religious identity is lost and, too often, profitability is the working principle. The Order must ensure that the transmission of faith is not marginalized in schools that receive its support”, he recommended, echoing the Custos’ reflection. This journey undoubtedly opens up a new and promising chapter in the collaboration between the Order and the Church in the Holy Land.

François Vayne

The icon of Our Lady of Palestine, given to the Governor General by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, accompanied the delegation of the Grand Magisterium to the Holy Sepulchre, before returning to Rome (in the photo the icon is presented by Claire Guilbert, then in charge of the project office together with her husband Charles-Edouard).



THE MYSTERY OF THE EARTH

*A meditation by Msgr. Fortunato Frezza,
Master of Ceremonies of the Grand Magisterium of the Order*

I have often wondered: What speaks more to us of mystery, a fertile lush countryside, or an arid sandy expanse? A hill of olive trees and vines or a rocky canyon?

These terrains speak each in its own way, but the flowering of the fields and the green of the hills have the charm of tender and friendly words. Rather it is far more arduous to understand the harsh and repulsive voice of rock, sand and cliff.

I was mulling these thoughts during the week from September 10 to 16, when I was called to witness the first official visit of the new Governor General of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre to the Holy Land, Count Leonardo Visconti di Mondrone.

I knew well that in the Holy Land both terrains touch each other, extending each one into their own area. I knew the floridness of that garden of Galilee, which is the plain of Esdrelon, as well as the harsh saltwater of the Dead Sea valley.

Yet I could hardly reconcile the two ends of that blessed land.

And yet, coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho, I was convinced that the repugnance of the rugged rock hides the mystery of the speechless gaze, of pure absolute essential contemplation, free of the fascinated attraction for other things. And I was reminded that right there among that inhospitable aridity, the mystery of Samaritan charity (*Luke 10:30 and following*) and the mystery of love of enemy (*Luke 6: 27 and following*) were revealed by the Prophet of Nazareth, a love that is hard like a rock but also essential, a love which does not seek its own interest, a love which does not take into account the evil received, but which pardons all and bears all things (*1 Corinthians 13:4 and following*).

And yet, once I climbed Mount Nebo, I saw an expanse like ashes, but I better perceived the voice in the desert, even the mystery of the arid desert, but Promised Land. Moses, who had already seen the revelation of the Mystery, the fulfilment of the Promise (*Deuteronomy 34*) could end his journey there.

At that moment I thought of the new Governor General, who stood by me; I remembered all of us, Dames and Knights of our Order, experiencing a thrill of happiness: that land is also our Earth, which conceals the mystery of “our” Sepulchre and keeps it in the bowels of its arid and vibrant rock.



Meditation and prayer time on Mount Nebo, Jordan, where Moses contemplated the Promised Land towards which he had journeyed for so long.

CUSTODIANS OF A SPIRIT OF FRATERNITY SHINING FORTH FROM THE HOLY SITES

Interview with the Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton

800 years have passed since Fr. Elias of Cortona landed at Acri. 800 years of Franciscan presence, of their custody of holy sites, pilgrimages and charitable activities in the land of Jesus inspired by the charisma of the poor man from Assisi. “The seraphic Father Francis, in the Chapter of Pentecost of May 1217, opened the Order to the ‘missionary and universal’ dimension, sending his friars to all nations as witnesses of faith, fraternity and peace; and in this way the Province of the Holy Land was created, initially referred to as ‘Overseas’ or ‘of Syria’”: This is how Pope Francis summons the beginning of the Franciscan adventure in this part of the world in his message sent to Father Francesco Patton, the current Custos of the Holy Land.

From October 16 to 18, celebrations for this anniversary were held in Jerusalem, in particular with the presence of the Minister General of the Order of the Friars Minor Michael Perry, the Prefect for the Congregation of the Oriental Churches, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa and Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton, who granted us an interview (available in its entirety in five languages on our website www.oessh.va).

Father Patton, what were the historical ties between the Custody and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre before the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate, and how would you now consider the collaboration with the Knights and Dames who come on pilgrimage to the Holy Land?

The historical ties with the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre date back to 1474 when, by pontifical institution, the Custos of the Holy Land received the faculty to create the Knights. Since then, an institutional relationship has been developed down through the centuries with various forms of collaboration, especially in favour of the Holy Sites in general and of the Holy Sepulchre in particular. The last Knight invested by the Custos was Patriarch Valerga himself in 1848. From that moment on, more direct relations have been consolidated between the Order and the Latin Patriarchate.

Today, the relationship between the Custody and the Knights is inspired by a spirit of fraternal collaboration: whenever they make their solemn entrance into the Holy Sepulchre, or visit Jerusalem and ask to meet the Custos, or when they want to offer their help to support some projects in favour of the works of the Custody of the Holy Land, also in memory of their origins and their original bond with the Custody and for the benefit of local Christians.

The Custody coordinated the pastoral activities of the Latin Church in the Holy Land for several centuries. After the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate in 1847, how did the relations between these two ecclesiastical institutions evolve?

Until the year 1516, the Custody could not undertake other forms of apostolate except presence in the Shrines, prayer, liturgical celebrations, welcoming and caring for the pilgrims hosted in its own sites. Following the change of the regime in the region, when the Mamluks were replaced by the Ottomans who were to a certain extent more tolerant, the friars of the Custody commenced pastoral activity with local Christian populations. Beginning in 1555, the first steps were made in the return to the communion of the Catholic Church of local non-Catholic Christians, and hence the formation of the first “Latin” parish communities around the Sanctuaries. This growing activity over time enabled Blessed Pope Pius IX, in 1847, to create a Latin diocese in the Holy Land, which took the form of a “reestablishment” or “restoration” of the “Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem” (the title of the Patriarch existed from the Council of Chalcedon, and at the time of the Crusades it was resumed and survived after their defeat only in Europe as an episcopal title *in partibus infidelium*. In 1847 it was “returned to the See”).

In 1627, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide considered the

Custody of the Holy Land a true mission in *partibus infidelium*, declaring it directly subject to its jurisdiction and recognizing to the Friars Minor parish rights in all places where convents and hostels were founded.

Inevitably, the creation of the new Catholic territorial circumscriptions, especially those of the Latin rite, within the territory of the Custody’s Mission, initially gave rise to some uncertainty as to the precise relationship between the respective jurisdictions, which were dealt with in several successive decrees of the Holy See.

These issues have now been clarified: in the apostolate among the local faithful, the Friars of the Custody serve the Particular Churches, similar to the religious who exercise their apostolate everywhere in the Catholic orb; while the competence of the Custody of the Holy Places remains proper to the Custody who always



Father Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land, together with the Governor General and two members of the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium (Thomas McKiernan, president, on the left and Bartholomew McGettrick on the right).



800 YEARS of Franciscan Presence in the Holy Land

The logo of the 800th anniversary of the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land recalls the long voyage of Saint Francis and his companions through the waters of the Mediterranean.

safeguards these Sites on behalf of the whole of Catholicity. The Custody still carries out pastoral activities in 29 parishes and in numerous churches, chapels and institutions. Although, as with the creation of all Particular Churches, the pastoral care of those parishes entrusted to religious is subject to the government of the Ordinary of the ecclesiastical territory, according to canon law.

Today, after 170 years of experience and maturity, we can say that we live our mutual relation in a spirit of maximum respect for respective tasks and mutual cooperation, especially in the pastoral field.

Father Custos, what are the pastoral priorities that you must face with your brothers in the Holy Land, especially with regard to dialogue with Muslim and Jewish believers?

As Friars of the Holy Land, our first mandate, according to the will of the Holy See, is to guard the Holy Sites and render them accessible to pilgrims, so our first priority in pastoral care is caring for the Shrines and pilgrim reception in them, given that they are above all places where we live, pray and deepen our faith.

Then there is a pastoral priority linked to parishes, especially in Israel, Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and Rhodes, namely the care of local Christians and those who come in search of work. The priority in this case is to move towards an ever more universal and welcoming Church experience, capable of integrating those who live here and those who come here.

There is also a pastoral priority linked to the situation that our friars and Christians are living in Syria, where it is necessary to work on a very concrete plan to help the population that is sorely tried by many years of war but where it is even

more necessary to keep hope alive and resuscitate the small local Christian community, to help them look to the future with a perspective of reconciliation.

Regarding dialogue with Jews and Muslims, in everyday life, relations are basically good. There are special commissions that have the purpose of promoting dialogue and also organizing various initiatives. In the Custody itself, we have Jewish and Muslim professional employees, in addition to Christians, our schools are attended by students of different confessions and the majority of students are Muslims.

This year, in the space of a few months, I was able to attend a meeting on ecology with a Jewish rabbi and a Muslim jurist, to invite local Muslim community leaders to a dinner at the end of Ramadan in the square of our sanctuary in

Bethany; to host a convention at Ain Karem, at our shrine, on the figure of John the Baptist, living an experience of dialogue between Jews and Christians; and finally to organize at our shrine on Mount Nebo a convention on Moses in Judaism,

Christianity and Islam.

Opportunities are constantly present; the important thing is to know how to grasp them while at the same time avoiding any form of exploitation. Encounters, however, first and foremost take place in everyday life and personal relationships, and then at the level of commissions or specific topics. Personally, I believe that the greatest opportunity for dialogue with the Muslim world is our Holy Land Schools and that the best opportunity for dialogue with the Jewish world is in the field of culture. With both, we must then see to collaborate on social and charitable initiatives.

Interview by François Wayne

“ I believe that the greatest opportunity for dialogue with the Muslim world is our schools of the Holy Land ”

THE ORDER AIDING MIDDLE EASTERN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

Responding to Pope Francis’ appeal, in recent years the Order has come to the aid of migrants and refugees particularly in Jordan where many Iraqis and Syrians have found safe haven. In 2017 concrete projects in support of refugees were carried out in close contact with the Latin Patriarchate, in an attempt to respond to various needs: from rent subsidies, to covering healthcare costs or, in some cases, helping people find employment.

Among those Latin Patriarchate refugee projects supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the unique experience of “Living Mosaics”, a mosaic workshop in Madaba, stands out. The Lieutenancy for Germany decided to commit its efforts to enabling some Iraqi refugees who are currently in Jordan to learn the ancient profession of mosaicist and thus open up a possible path to social integration and economic and professional independence.

The city of Madaba has a rich artisan history of

Byzantine and Umayyad mosaics. There literally could not be a more culturally appropriate place to carry out this project. The workshop participants receive a small amount of money every day for their work and they make mosaics on different wooden supports, with stone supplies coming mainly from Jordan. These workers made a large wall mosaic for the parish of Al-Huson that incorporates the oriental motifs of the Dutch painter Piet Gerrits, depicting creation with saplings, angels, doves, trees and rivers.

In spring 2017, a good twenty-one Iraqis trained daily in the Madaba’s workshop. In addition to boosting individual technical skills, it allowed these people to find a community of belonging and above all, a sense of direction in their daily life. During his first official visit to the Holy Land, new Governor General Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, could not fail to visit to this important initiative.

On that occasion, the Ambassador had the

The Governor General and the delegation of the Grand Magisterium visited a workshop in Amman in September 2017, where people who have fled the war in Iraq or Syria create mosaics thanks to the help of the Order.





زيارة رئيس مجمع
الكنائس الشرقية
في القاتريكان
لجمعية الرحمة
في مادبا

Some refugees make mosaics as part of the work that the local Church provides them.

opportunity to personally meet some young trainees. Among them 31 years old Salaam Kikhwa. In 2005, the situation in Iraq became difficult for Salaam and his family. He was injured along with other Christian students when in May 2010, the bus he was travelling on to university exploded. Despite this Salaam wanted to return home, not abandon his land, after the treatment received abroad. It was in the summer of 2014, when his city was occupied by ISIS troops, that Salaam and his family had to leave their city of Qaraqosh and

became refugees looking for a place to restart their life. “Our faith in Christ is a solid rock, we have nothing but God”, witnessed this young man accepted among those taking part in the Living Mosaics initiative in Madaba.

The support for this initiative is continuing thanks to the desire of some members of the Order to buy handmade material from the refugees who participated in the workshop, thus supporting their small activity and giving them the opportunity to stay with their work. ■

Lena’s Experience

The link with refugees established in the Holy Land, particularly in Jordan, often continues for the members of the Order in their Lieutenancies. This was the case, for example, of the Lieutenancy for France who invited a young Syrian woman to sing in Aramaic at the Investiture ceremony that took place in Bordeaux. Lena Jabara is of Syriac origin and went to live in France in 2012 when the situation began to become complicated in her land, together with her husband Fadi and their two children, Adib and Christian. Lena says: “In Syria, we had a good standard of living and practiced our faith in complete freedom. I worked as a teacher in the Aleppo middle school “Sayyida al-Zanabiq”, run by a religious order and my husband owned a company in the field of construction and renovation. I am convinced that our arrival in France was by divine will, it was not a coincidence. The Lord has sent us as messengers to be his witnesses and to spread his message from the Christian East to the West, as far as possible for us.”



THE FILIPINO CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY IN JORDAN AND THE VISIT OF CARDINAL TAGLE

Despite the distance from their motherland, more than 67,000 Filipinos, both Muslim and Christian, reside in Jordan. For the most part they are women who work as domestic workers and some of them, unfortunately, do not have their documents in order or are forced to suffer physical and verbal abuse as well as being denied their legal rights by their employers.

The Christian minority in Jordan belongs to several churches: Greek Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Maronite, Coptic, Armenian ... The majority of Filipino Christians are Catholics and some of them participate in Sunday Mass in Arabic even if they prefer to attend Mass in Filipino or in English which they would know better than the local language.

Jordan already had a chaplaincy for the faithful from Sri Lanka. In 2011, during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the then Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Msgr. Fouad Twal, met Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, archbishop of Manila, and some members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of the Philippines,

accompanied by the then Lieutenant, Ambassador Jesus Tambunting, to whom he expressed the need for the creation of a chaplaincy dedicated to Filipinos present in Jordan. Since then, Cardinal Tagle, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for the Philippines and members of the Order have worked to ensure that the needs of this local church are met.

Their efforts led to the arrival of Father Gerald Metal in Amman on December 19, 2016. Father Gerald immediately set about becoming familiar

with the environment and celebrating the sacraments not only in Amman but also in other Jordanian cities, for example in Aqaba where since March 2017 a Mass in Filipino has been celebrated on the third Saturday of the month.



Father Gerald is the chaplain of the Filipino community in Jordan. The role of chaplain was bestowed upon him during a ceremony presided by Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, Grand Prior of the Order in the Philippines.

It was a moment of great joy in 2017, when Cardinal Tagle visited the community and officially inaugurated the Filipino Catholic chaplain in Jordan with Father Metal as chaplain. On this occasion the Grand Prior of the Order for the Philippines baptized two new-borns at the site of the Baptism in Jordan.

CLOSE TO THE CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM

The Order of Malta and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre join their forces to support the Holy Family Hospital

The Holy Family Hospital is a primary hospitaller work of the Order of Malta. In 2017 the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre supported this important institution for the benefit of local population in Bethlehem and beyond.

Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem, located just 1,500 steps from the manger where the Christ Child was born, is known by many names. It has been called the Beacon of Peace, the Preserver of Life, the Employer of Choice, the Center of Medical Training Excellence and the Maker of Everyday Miracles. Families come to Holy Family Hospital from across the Holy Land to deliver babies and seek care for, their mothers, children and grandmothers.

Since 1990 over 75,000 babies have been born at Holy Family Hospital. That is more than enough to fill a stadium with young people who had their start in a hospital where Muslims and Christians work together delivering life, peace and hope without regard to creed, national origin or economic status.

In 1989 His Holiness Saint John Paul II entrusted the care of Holy Family Hospital to the Order of Malta. His Holiness insisted that the Catholic presence of this Hospital be maintained and expanded to provide care to the neediest and



Since 1990, 75,000 children have been born in the Holy Family Hospital where Christians and Muslims work together to serve life.

to offer meaningful employment to the citizens of Bethlehem. The Order of Malta accepted the challenge and repurposed the Hospital to be an infant and maternity hospital with a dedicated Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit and gynecological surgery center. A residency and teaching program were established.

The motto of the Hospital is *the best for the poor*. Thanks to its generous supporters, Holy Family Hospital services are all subsidized by at least fifty percent, on the basis of a sliding scale which takes into consideration ability to pay. The Hospital makes free services available to the poorest families. Hospital

social workers provide pastoral care to patients and help determine what other services may be needed by the poor and by refugee families. No service is ever withheld for economic reasons.

Holy Family Hospital operates the only state of the art NICU in the region. It regularly nurtures babies born at just one pound to full health. The Hospital supplies more than just excellent

healthcare. It provides meaningful employment to over 170 Palestinians, bringing vital economic stimulus to the region. It also purchases supplies locally to help the struggling economy.

The Hospital partners with hospitals and other entities both locally and abroad; including the Bambino Gesù Vatican Hospital in Rome. Locally, the Hospital provides over a dozen internships for Bethlehem University students in the fields of healthcare and administration. The Hospital also partners with other local hospitals to sponsor continuing medical education days quarterly. These training days are staffed by medical professors from around the world, and offered free of charge. Over 70 medical professionals attend these seminars, raising the level of care and excellence across the West Bank. The Hospital also maintains ties to hospitals in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where neonates requiring advanced surgical procedures can be sent for care.

Just this May, a pregnant Muslim mother came to the Hospital with life endangering complications. The Hospital was able to deliver her baby two months early, saving both her life and that of her son. During their baby's two month stay in the NICU, the family bought the NICU a beautiful icon depicting the Holy Family to hang above the 18 incubators. When asked why she chose this gift, the mother replied that the Holy Family watches over the babies, doctors and nurses in the NICU, and the visiting families need to see the icon so they can be reminded of the love and protection of the Holy Family.

The Holy Family Hospital is a place of Christian witness and an enduring sign of peace where the doors are always open, and no one is ever turned away.

Michele Bowe
Order of Malta

The “thank you” of the children of Bethlehem to the members of the Order

A children's Reception Center in Bethlehem, administered by the Daughters of Charity, received the support of the Order: the Grand Magisterium forwarded the aid destined for them specifically by the Lieutenancy for Germany. We are happy to publish the moving letter that the children of this center, The Holy Family Children's

Home, wrote to their benefactors of the Order before the start of summer holidays.

“We know we are very fragile but also very sensitive to gestures of affection, care, human warmth and tenderness.

We are, like all the other children, in need of gestures of humanity, fraternity, and friendship that

The children of Holy Family Children's Home in Bethlehem wrote to the members of the Order to thank them for their help to the Daughters of Charity who care for this educational institution.



have been unfairly denied since we were born.

Dear friends, your desire to help us and your concern for us, move us. We are very grateful to you.

It is all of you who are our strength and our support. Do not forget us, do not abandon us! We carry the experience of abandonment within us

from birth... It's a very harsh and frustrating experience not to be repeated. Thank you for all that you have always done with great love and that you continue to do with the same generosity that we know will not fall into a void.

We love you so much.”

The work of the Holy Child Program in Beit Sahour

The relationship between the Holy Child Program and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre began several years ago. The Mother General of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, Mother Shaun Vergauwen, would meet periodically with the Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, who took an interest in the activities of the community, and in particular, their work in the Holy Land. This relationship took on new impetus when a grant was submitted to the Order, for sustainability of the Holy Child Program. In 2016, the Holy Child Program became the beneficiary of an endowment fund of Rev. Dr. William W. Hamischfeger, through the generosity of the USA Western Lieutenancy, and a contribution from the USA Middle Atlantic Lieutenancy. Thanks to this generous endowment, the Holy Child Program has been able to be more self-sustaining and has had greater financial stability as it endeavors to support its local Christian staff, provide continuing education and training, and offer its vital service to the community. Grants such as this give increased hope to the staff and parents while they look at their and children's future.

Founded in 1995, by the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, the Holy Child Program is one of the very few centers in the Bethlehem area serving children with severe behavioral and emotional problems in a therapeutic day treatment setting. Located in Beit Sahour (the place of the

Founded in 1995 by the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, the Holy

Child Program is one of the rare centers in the Bethlehem area that deals with children with serious behavioral and emotional problems through outpatient treatment.



Shepherds' Field), it was founded at the request of parents whose children were suffering from psychological

distress, resulting from the first Intifada, or military incursion into the West Bank by Israeli forces. The Program began with four children and currently serves 35 children and their families.

Iskander Khoury, the program director, comments: "In each child who comes here you see something; you see potential. You see a holy child. That is why we named the Holy Child Program as it is. We can see in this child, a dancer; in this child, a musician. But sometimes it is covered up. These children are a part of the Holy Land. They are a part of children all over the world. In each child, we should plant a seed of hope and peace. In each child, we can promote change for all the world."

50 YEARS IN THE ORDER: THE LIEUTENANT FOR CENTRAL ITALY LUIGI GIULIANELLI REMEMBERS HIS YEARS AS A KNIGHT

Knight of the Grand Cross Engineer Luigi Giulianelli, Lieutenant in charge of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy, celebrated his 50 years of presence in the Order in 2017. Through his testimony we retrace these decades within the history of the Order in one of its Lieutenancies.

What motivated you to enter the Order?

Initially I took this path inspired by my father's family tradition. I was very young when I joined the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, 50 years ago, December 21, 1967. My father passed away soon after that, at the age of 61, and the Lieutenant of the time, the lawyer Ciocetti, called me to invite me to be more present within the life of the Lieutenancy, asking me to take on the role of Master of Ceremonies, which I held until October 8, 2017.

In all these years is there a particular moment that you carry in your heart and which bolstered your commitment to your mission within the Order?

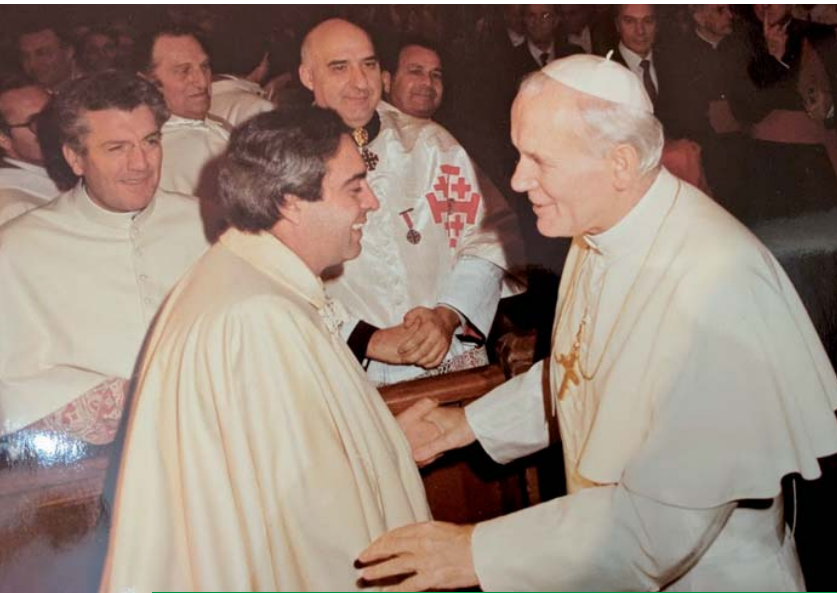
Every Investiture, every time a new Knight or a new Dame enters the Order is a moment of joy. I have had the grace to experience many Investitures and each ceremony is different from the last. Another moment that I remember with particular warmth is the international pilgrimage that I led to Lourdes in 2005. The many Knights and Dames present, there at the grotto in front of Our Lady, the intense ceremony and the whole context gave me a great impulse and renewed my commitment within the Order. In these 50 years I have never missed an important ceremony and for this I am grateful.



Lieutenant for Central Italy, Luigi Giulianelli considers his commitment as a Knight as the realization of his baptismal vocation: to live the Word of God which is, as St Paul says, the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17).

It can be said that the Order has become a bit like a family ...

Certainly. First of all because I had the good fortune to always collaborate with people, Lieutenants, with whom I came to create a family atmosphere: Ciocetti, Alberti Poja, Lamberto Cantuti Castelvetri, Mario Cantuti Castelvetri, Consoli Palermo Navarra and Petrillo. We have always established relationships marked by respect.



The future Lieutenant Giulianelli with Saint John Paul II, on the occasion of a celebration attended by some representatives of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Being part of the same family can also be felt in the Lieutenantancy meetings on the first Friday of the month at the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, in Rome, with the Grand Prior and at other spiritual moments (retreats and preparation for important liturgical moments in the life of the Church). There are also opportunities for even more spontaneous encounters and fraternal sharing. Moreover, since Rome is the operative arm of the Grand Magisterium, I have participated in many initiatives also in this environment, thus having the possibility to build relations also with the Order's central body.

For a member of the Order, pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a decisive experience. Is there any place that was particularly meaningful to you in this land to which all Knights and Dames are deeply attached?

The place where one ponders one's life is without doubt the Holy Sepulchre. Entering the shrine one at a time and kneeling before the empty Sepulchre of Christ for a few minutes is a unique experience. Coming from a very Catholic family, for me it was a moment of confirmation of my faith. I also had the good fortune to visit these places with Msgr. Natalino Zagotto who had been in the Holy Land more than 100 times: it is important to discover the

holy places under the guidance of someone who knows them very well.

Is there a passage from Scripture that particularly speaks to you?

I am particularly fond of the Scriptures of the Vigil of Arms and of Prayer with its three readings and three psalms that speak of Jerusalem. Through them one sees Jerusalem as a point of arrival both on earth and in heaven. The readings then conclude with the Gospel of the Resurrection.

How did you feel following your appointment as Lieutenant?

Over the years I have been a Master of Ceremonies, President of Lazio, Secretary and Chancellor and now I have been asked to take on the role of Lieutenant. At first I was hesitant but then I saw that there was really a lot of expectation around me and so I decided to accept. I was deeply moved especially when the Governor General gave me the decree with which His Eminence Cardinal O'Brien appointed me Lieutenant for Central Italy. What pleased me the most was the context: all the Knights and Dames – whom I have invested over the years – were happy and this encouraged me.

The Order has a long history but, like the whole Church, lives in step with the times, opening itself to change, paying attention at the same time to keeping itself in line with tradition. What changes have you witnessed in these 50 years?

Our ceremonies have always remained the same and this helps us to maintain the tradition and actualize it year after year without it becoming just "history" but a living part of the "present". But what changes is the new members: we have more and more young people who are asking to become part of our Order. In the last investiture more than 40% of those admitted were under the age of 40. We have also noticed a growing need for spirituality and so we decided to give the preparation for Investiture (which lasts a year) a purely spiritual emphasis, thanks to the support of the Priors.

Interview by Elena Dini

PILGRIMS IN THE HOLY LAND

Pilgrimage of the Squires and Maidens of the Order

Our shared desire to bring the Holy Land into a concrete and living way into our lives, led to the decision to take part in the pilgrimage organized by the Squires and Maidens of the Order. From the desert to Jerusalem, passing through numerous symbolic sites that marked the life of Christ, we walked in the footsteps of Jesus in the places where he was 2000 years ago. More than an “ordinary” pilgrimage, this experience was a real initiation into the land of our ancestors in the faith, immersing ourselves in the daily life of the Christians of the Holy Land for whom the Order never ceases to pray and work.

As soon as we arrived in Tel-Aviv, we headed towards Beerot in Judea to be able to spend the first night in the desert. The next day, we embarked on a long day of walking in the Makhtesh Ramon crater in the Negev desert, accompanied by explanations from our guide, Abbot Nicolas.

We could not only see, but also concretely feel to what extent water becomes a central and vital element in the daily life of those who crossed and still cross the desert.

The image of the desert, which pervades the biblical texts, took on full meaning for us here: it exposes you and strips you bare, which proves



These young pilgrims linked to the Order have deepened their faith walking through the biblical territories where the history of the salvation of all mankind unfolds.

favorable to reinforcing the bond that unites us to the Lord. We took time to pray before we marched back to Masada and spend the night there.

We entered the fortress of Masada, passing through the access ramp built by the Romans during their siege in 73. This is where the Sicarii committed suicide before the Romans entered the city after seven months of siege. A symbol of resistance in the face of oppression, the soldiers of the Israeli army go there to swear an oath in their military service.

Afterwards, we walked to the Dead Sea for a short but well-deserved bath, before returning to the oasis of Ein Gedi, of which Abbot Nicolas unveiled all the riches. After that, we celebrated Mass near the Jordan, where we renewed our baptismal promises.

In Nazareth, we visited the various places of the apparitions of the angel Gabriel to Mary. Then, we went to meet the Poor Clares, where we celebrated Mass and visited the museum of Blessed Charles de Foucauld. Later, we went to Cana – where the married couples received a blessing – and then to Capernaum, before leaving for the Mount of Beatitudes for a time of prayer and reflection.

In the morning we drove to the north of the country, to Dan Baniyas. Finally, during the crossing

Who are the Squires and Maidens of the Order?

The experience of the young Squires and Maidens was born in France a few years ago. Recruitment takes place among university students. They gather in groups of ten, led by an animating Knight and a chaplain, with monthly spiritual meetings. The formation they receive prepares them to live their mission in a profound and committed manner. The Squires participate in the great events of the Lieutenancy, helping very concretely both on the charitable and liturgical level. At around 27 years of age, they must choose whether to continue in the Order. On average, three to four annually are invested.

of Lake Tiberias, we reread the passages in which Jesus calms the storm and walks on water, reminding us that we must place our trust in Him. The evening was animated by an impromptu vigil, which enabled us to experience a beautiful moment of friendship.

Our pilgrimage then took us to Mount Tabor, the place of the Transfiguration of Christ, after which we stopped at Jacob's well in Nablus. We spent the afternoon in the village of Aboud, where the Christian presence dates back to the first centuries. We were warmly welcomed by the community and we had the joy of spending an evening with them in a sign

of fraternity.

We then visited Bethlehem where we prayed in the Basilica of the Nativity and then finally reached Jerusalem. The days in Jerusalem were extremely rich and we visited the symbolic places of Christianity, such as the Upper Room, Dormition Abbey, the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane. We also marked a Way of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa, before arriving at the tomb of Christ: the Holy Sepulchre.

Our visit to Jerusalem ended with a magnificent Vigil of Arms at the church of Saint Anne, then with a Mass of thanksgiving the following day, at the Holy Sepulchre, where four of our Squire

“We think that the time has come to spread this reality, in order to guarantee the Order a quality renewal”

Alfredo Bastianelli

Chancellor of the Order, in a letter to the Lieutenants dedicated to the French experience of the Squires

friends received Investiture as Knights.

Our pilgrimage ended with a stop at Abu Gosh, the place of Emmaus, where Christ reappeared before the disciples after his Resurrection. It was an opportunity to meet the Benedictine monks who

live there and to receive the marvelous witness of this community which continually assures a fraternal presence in this region torn by conflict. A beautiful message of love and hope to bring our pilgrimage to a close!

A night of vigil at the Holy Sepulchre

In an exceptional event, some young people from the Lieutenancy for Belgium were able to spend a night in vigil, inside the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. For many, this alone was worth the trip, and they awaited it with hope, impatience and curiosity. Here is the testimony of one of those who took part, David Colling:

You do not really understand the privilege of being allowed to spend a night in that most holy place, except when you are there face to face with your solitude. Those who have already been able to visit this place during the day know that it has nothing to envy at St. Peter's Square on Palm Sunday, or Rue Neuve in Brussels during the sales period. And there, what a luxury it was to be able to have silence! To have this all you had to do is keep quiet. Our first approach to the complex was to discover it through numerous historical-architectural readings. We had to familiarize ourselves with the environment, to learn about its evolution; however, warned by our Franciscan host that access to the Aedicule would have been possible only before midnight – because of the various liturgies that would take place later – we hastened the pace of the visits to dedicate ourselves more to prayer. Soon after, we went in groups of three, in pairs or alone, to the spot where Christ was laid. While the passage in the Aedicule during the day allows you to stay only a few seconds, under the pressure of the incessant flow of visitors, instead now each of us prolonged minutes to pray before the empty

Tomb. In reality, once you are in front of the Tomb, all notions of time fades ... I have no idea how long I spent there.

While someone abandoned themselves to prayer in the Aedicule, others passed from one chapel to another, to see the various holy places up close. Personally, Calvary impressed me a lot. What a strange feeling to be able to approach the place where the Cross was planted, on top of Golgotha, with the rocky relief in evidence! And what a typically Orthodox beauty that chapel built there! We consider ourselves unanimously lucky to have been able to spend that exceptional night in the company of our dear Lieutenant, who had prepared various readings and reflections for the occasion, focusing on the themes of suffering and death.

The second part of the night was an opportunity to witness – sometimes from a distance – some liturgical “dances” of various kinds, by ministers of different confessions. Despite the inevitable tensions due to the simultaneous use of those places by different denominations – sometimes documented by the media – we could see the mutual respect shown by Latins, Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Copts, especially when they came to incensing each other mutually during their respective liturgies. It was a fine example of ecumenical union in the heart of the places we consider the most holy.



Praying in the Holy Sepulchre brings us closer to Christ and revives in us the desire to joyfully witness His resurrection to the world of today.

“Everything happens according to God’s will and His timing”

The long-awaited pilgrimage of Stephen and Renetta Torres

Deir Rafat is a special place for the Knights and Dames of the Order: there in 1927 the then Patriarch Luigi Barlassina wanted to have a shrine erected in honor of Mary Queen of Palestine who is the patron saint of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. For almost a century, therefore, this place has attracted faithful Christians from Israel, Palestine and beyond, especially on the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Palestine which falls on October 25 but is normally celebrated by the local community the first Sunday after this date.

Yet Stephen and Renetta Torres d’Albuquerque did not know this when they arrived at Deir Rafat on October 29, 2017, together with more than 2000 other faithful. “What a joyous coincidence! We were there but did not know there would be the feast of Our Lady of Palestine. God wanted us to be there at that moment: it was what He willed for us”. This is how Stephen Torres describes the experience he had with his wife during their pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a pilgrimage that served as a balm for the couple after a particularly harrowing period for them. Originally from the state of New Mexico (USA), Stephen and Renetta, Knight and Dame of the Order had desired to go as pilgrims to the Holy Land since 2005 but the illness and the subsequent death of their son meant they had to postpone this dream.

In Renetta’s own words: “We had been trying to come to the Holy Land for 12 years but our



In the shrine of Our Lady of Palestine, Stephen and Renetta honored the Mother of God who helped them through great trials.

situation was never tranquil enough. I think everything happens according to God’s will and His timing. Here at Deir Rafat, I feel the hand of the Lord so close. We are here to participate in this Eucharistic celebration in our capes as Knight and Dame of the Holy Sepulchre and we could never have believed that this would happen. All of this is a gift from God. I think it is our deep faith in Him that guides our steps. We lost a son six years ago and this trip is really special for us. He wanted to come with us but the complications first and then his death made it impossible. It was the Blessed Mother of God who helped us through these trials of life. She is so important to us and, of course, to the people of this country as well.”

From an interview by Vivien Laguette

An hour of adoration during the pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Prayer allows us to fulfill our mission of supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The booklet we published in 2017 (available on the website of the Grand Magisterium, www.oessh.va, in the media section) was designed to aid pilgrims in the experience of Eucharistic adoration in Jerusalem, at the Armenian-Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Spasm, at the fourth station of the Via Dolorosa, which commemorates the pain of Mary who meets her Son who carries the Cross. Many Knights and Dames have used this instrument, also to join in prayer from a distance, from their home or from their parish. This booklet is still available. Do not hesitate to download it and share it.

THE GRAND MASTER'S VISITS

Just after the holiday season, the Grand Master celebrated the Investiture of four new members of the Order at the North American Pontifical College in Rome – institution of which the cardinal Edwin O'Brien was the rector from 1990 to 1994 – in the presence of Cardinal Blase Joseph Cupich from Chicago and Cardinal Donald William Wuerl from Washington D.C. On January 19, he was one of the co-consecrating bishops at the episcopal consecration ceremony of Msgr. Adam Parker, Commander with Star of the Order, former special assistant and secretary to Cardinal O'Brien, from 2012 to 2013.

On February 10 and 11, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien visited the **Lieutenancy** which in October 2016 was officially named **for Sweden and Denmark** for an Investiture in Stockholm. The visit began with an appointment on February 10 at the Royal Castle, where the Grand Master met with the highest Swedish state authorities for the Royal Orders of Chivalry. It was an important signal of friendship, mutual trust and mutual recognition between our Catholic Order and the (Lutheran) Kingdom of Sweden. The Investiture ceremony was held on February 11 at the cathedral of Saint Erik and was, as always, a great moment of communion and fraternity. The Eucharistic celebration was followed by a dinner in honor of the Grand Master during which Bo Theutenberg

resigned as Regent *ad Interim* of the Lieutenancy and Cardinal O'Brien presented the decrees appointing Tommy Thulin the new Lieutenant and new Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy, the bishop of Copenhagen, Msgr. Czeslaw Kozon, joined by the Swedish Grand Prior coadjutor, Msgr. Stejpan Biletic.

A few days later, on February 18, the Grand Master celebrated an Investiture in the **Lieutenancy for Italy Sicily** in Palermo.

During the month of March, Cardinal O'Brien covered many miles for Investitures first in **South Africa**, Cape Town, and then in the **Russian Federation**, in Moscow.

In April, the Grand Master was in Rome for Holy Week solemnities and the Easter celebrations.



After the spring meeting of the Grand Magisterium, held at the headquarters in Rome from May 2 to 4, Cardinal O'Brien celebrated an Investiture in **Viterbo** of 29 new members of the Order. These included Msgr. Fabio Fabene, titular bishop of Montefiascone and under-secretary of the Synod of Bishops. The ceremony took place in the Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Viterbo. On the weekend of May 12-14, the Grand Master went to Zagreb for the first Investiture of the **Magistral Delegation for Croatia** which was celebrated in the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the afternoon of May 13, participants of the ceremony visited the museum dedicated to



Blessed Alojzije Stepinac, cardinal and Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, and then attended the inauguration of the exhibition on the historical links between Croatia, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Land.

In June the Grand Master celebrated Investitures in Halifax (**Lieutenancy for Canada Atlantic**) and Salzburg (Lieutenancy for Austria), and he presided over the two regional meetings of the American (June 1-3 in **Omaha**, USA) and European (June 27-28 at the headquarters of the Grand Magisterium in **Rome**) Lieutenants. During these meetings His Eminence formally welcomed the new Governor General of the Order, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone.

From July 15 to 18, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien went to **Amman** where he met Prince Hassan of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, particularly



engaged in the Christian-Muslim dialogue and the issue of refugees. Commenting on this meeting, the Grand Master noted that the prince “reflects the moderation of the Kingdom in a turbulent global epicenter. The nephew of the King of Jordan emphasized the common values between Judaism, Christianity and Islam: faith in a compassionate and loving God and the universal desire for peace.” The Grand Master also had the opportunity to attend a graduation ceremony at the University of Madaba which the Cardinal follows through the St. John the Baptist Vatican Foundation, of whom he is President.

After the Summer break, the Grand Master presided at the Investiture ceremonies at Valletta (**Lieutenancy for Malta**) on September 22-23;

Bordeaux (**Lieutenancy for France**) from September 29 to October 1 and Echternach (the **Lieutenancy for Luxembourg**) from October 20 to 21. On October 7-8, His Eminence planned to go to Mobile, AL (USA) to celebrate Investiture.

Unfortunately Hurricane Nate prevented him from travelling there. A few days later, members of the Grand Magisterium gathered in Rome for their usual autumn meeting chaired by His Eminence. The Grand Magisterium meeting was also an opportunity to mark together one of the most important celebrations of the Order, the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Palestine.

At the end of October, Cardinal O'Brien returned to the United States to celebrate **USA Middle Atlantic** Investitures in Baltimore. Before being called to Rome to lead the Order of the Holy Sepulchre the Grand Master was the Archbishop of Baltimore.

During the month of November, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien visited the **Lieutenancy for Gibraltar** where he presided over an Investiture ceremony on November 18. A few days before his departure, the Grand Master had made one of his habitual visits to Cardinal Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, Assessor of Honor of the Order, during which he celebrated Mass in his apartment. The same weekend Cardinal Montezemolo died and Cardinal O'Brien, together with the highest offices of the Order, full of recognition for the service rendered by the Assessor of Honor, attended the funeral on November 21.

On November 24, His Eminence celebrated the Investiture of Msgr. Andrew McLean Cummings and Father Michael Sedor at the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in the presence of Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect, and of all the staff of the Congregation with whom the Order often interfaces and collaborates within the context of ROACO (Reunion of Aid Agencies for Oriental Churches).

At the beginning of December the Grand Master, accompanied by the Lieutenant General Agostino Borromeo, the Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone and the Vice Governor General Patrick Powers, went to **Mexico City** to preside over the Investiture of 18 new members of the Order in this increasingly lively Lieutenancy. ■

LOOKING BACK AT THE GREAT EVENTS IN THE LIEUTENANCIES IN 2017

The Order is present and active on five continents. The following is a selection of photos highlighting important moments in various Lieutenancies around the world, that speak of the ordinary life of members of the Order at a local level. You can find more news and stories on our website www.oessh.va in the section dedicated to the Lieutenancies.



Sunday, October 29, 2017, in the suggestive basilica-sanctuary of Maria SS. Annunziata in Trapani, the Lieutenancy for ITALY SICILY celebrated the anniversary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, Patron of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. After a brief moment of prayer led by the Bishop of Trapani and Prior, Msgr. Pietro Fragnelli, in front of the statue of Our Lady of Trapani, the more than 200 Knights, Dames and Novices entered the Sanctuary following the then Lieutenant, the Knight of the Grand Cross Prof. Giovanni Russo who at the end of the celebration addressed the assembly with these words: “Today we feel the desire to meet people who are able to give clear and radical witness of faith and life (this is the true meaning of our capes and our insignia). We must bear this witness at all times, within the family, in the exercise of our professions, in the administration of public affairs, in our relations with our neighbour”.



The **TAIWANESE Lieutenancy** feels a deep connection to the Universal Church. In 2017, a Mass was celebrated to commemorate the fourth anniversary of Pope Francis' pontificate in the Church of the Holy Family in Taipei, the largest Catholic church in Taiwan. The photo shows the Knights and Dames of the Order together with Vice-President Chen Chien-Jen, also a member of the Order, and his wife.

The year 2017 for the **AUSTRALIAN Lieutenancies** was characterized by the Australian national retreat of the Order, preached by Msgr. Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem from July 28 to 30 in Sydney, on the sidelines of the first regional meeting of the Lieutenancies of the countries of the Rising Sun that also involved representatives from New Zealand, the Philippines and Taiwan. The entire retreat took place under the gaze of the beautiful icon of Our Lady of the Southern Cross. The Southern Cross is a constellation visible only in the southern hemisphere and is a traditional symbol of Australia.

The icon was commissioned expressly for this occasion by the Australian Lieutenancies and presents the Cross of Jerusalem over the globe that Mary protects with her hand. At the end of the retreat, Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney and Prior of the Order, blessed the icon and gave it to Monsignor Marcuzzo to take it with him to the Latin Patriarchate as a sign of spiritual closeness between the Order in Australia and the Church in the Holy Land.



The Lieutenancy USA NORTH CENTRAL committed to the dedication of an altar to the blessed Bartolo Longo in the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii located in Chicago, wanted and financed by voluntary contributions from the Knights and Dames of this American Lieutenancy. The altar was built as a replica of the one which contains the body of the blessed under the altar of the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary in Pompeii and it bears an effigy of the Knight wearing the cape of the Order. "We are in the process of having the altar recognized as the national sanctuary of Blessed Bartolo Longo", reports the Lieutenancy USA North Central.



After the establishment of the Section of Pompeii, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary, the Delegation dedicated to the Virgin Mary of the Arch and the Delegation consecrated to Our Lady Queen of Palestine in Scafati (Salerno), in 2017 the Lieutenancy for SOUTHERN ITALY TIRRENICA created a Delegation dedicated to The Virgin of Montevergine (Avellino). On September 30, the territorial Abbey of Montevergine hosted a solemn ceremony presided over by the Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy, Msgr. Beniamino Depalma, Archbishop emeritus of Nola, during which Dom Riccardo Luca Guariglia, territorial Abbot of Montevergine and now Prior of the "Montevergine Delegation", received Investiture together with thirty-six Knights, four Dames and four ecclesiastics.



In May, a group of Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy for CANADA ATLANTIC went to the Holy Land. The group went to the Latin Patriarchate where Knight Will Sweet received the Pilgrim Shell from Msgr. Kamal Hanna Bathish, emeritus vicar general. The bishop then shared first-hand news about the situation of Christians in the Holy Land with the group.

On the occasion of the closing of the centenary of the last apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to the three little shepherds in 1917, a solemn liturgical celebration was held on October 12, 2017, preceded by an imposing procession promoted by the Lazio section of the Unitali. The **Lieutenancy for CENTRAL ITALY** was present at this important moment of communion with the Universal Church with more



than one hundred Knights and Dames of the Rome Section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, led by the Grand Magisterium member Saverio Petrillo, the Lieutenant for Central Italy Luigi Giulianelli and the President of the Rome Section Francesco Sicilia. After the evocative procession on Via della Conciliazione, Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Vicar of the Pope for the Vatican City, led the recitation of the Rosary and celebrated Holy Mass in the presence of the Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy, Msgr. Franco Croci.



From March 8 to 15, 2017, the **Magistral Delegation for the CZECH REPUBLIC** organized a pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Fr. Milan Pálkoviã together with Baron Jaroslav Battaglia, also a Knight, in which a large group of 55 pilgrims participated. The group was warmly welcomed to the Latin Patriarchate by Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa who handed over the Pilgrim Shell to the members of the Order.

Another fundamental activity in the life of the Lieutenancies is the preparation of new members to Investitures. The **Lieutenancy for WESTERN SPAIN** organized a course dedicated to aspiring Knights and Dames on June 16 and 17, an event that is repeated every year in the formula of two days of sharing and cohabitation with some members to allow those who are preparing to enter the Order to familiarize themselves not only with how this pontifical institution works, its goals and objectives but also to experience the spirit of fraternity that is breathed within the Lieutenancies.



Twelve members of the Order – among them Dominican Father Christian Eeckhout, a Holy Land guide – of the **Lieutenancy for BELGIUM** and eleven members of the **Lieutenancy for CANADA QUEBEC**, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land together in October. The group of pilgrims was welcomed to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In the first row we see in the center, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Patriarchate and Pro Grand Prior of the Order; to his left, Cardinal Cyprien Lacroix, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for Canada Quebec and Archbishop of Quebec; to his right the Lieutenant M. Jean-Claude Michaud. This pilgrimage to the roots of our Christian faith is fundamental to fully live the vocation of Knights and Dames, called to generously witness the light of the Risen Christ in contemporary society.

Moments of community fraternity and prayer are very important in the life of a Lieutenancy. **The Lieutenancy for MALTA** took advantage of the month of November – when the dearly departed are commemorated – to propose a memorial service for the recently deceased members of the Order in the church of Santa Maria tal-Angli a Baħar lċ-Cagħaq, followed by a convivial moment in the church’s pastoral center. The year ended with a meeting in preparation for Christmas during which the members were invited with their families to spend some time together and get to know each other better in an informal atmosphere.



The Lieutenancy for AUSTRIA has been actively present at the national ecclesial level by participating in an exciting ecumenical appointment: the Night of Churches. The Ecumenical Council of Churches, through about 650 parishes and thousands of volunteers, organized the 13th edition of this event which totalled 350,000 visitors on June 9, 2017. The initiative aims to open the doors of the churches to promote greater knowledge and discussion of topics that touch the lives of people and society. The Lieutenancy for Austria in the Delegations of Klagenfurt, Linz and Vienna took advantage of this opportunity to present the Order and its commitment in the Holy Land through conferences with a space dedicated to questions and even the sale of products from the Holy Land.

During 2017, two sections of the **Lieutenancy for SWITZERLAND** went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The German-speaking Swiss Section went in May led by Abuna Bernt Besch, Canon of the Holy Sepulchre and priest of the Latin Patriarchate, while the Knights and Dames of Italian Switzerland went in November accompanied by Professor Marcello Fidanzio. Below is the testimony of one pilgrim: “The visits to school projects that we economically support profoundly touched me. As a group, we were greeted warmly by the students in uniform, then the principal gave us a tour of the school. The enthusiasm of the teachers and the pupils was contagious: this is an experience that I miss in Switzerland. The term “living stones” has often been used by professors and priests. The pupils are strengthened by a faith that is lived and transmitted and have a goal, which explains their good results. [...] This was my first visit to the Holy Land and I was struck by how I could feel the strength of faith when we are among so many people who share the same ideals. This happened also during the Way of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa. What did Jesus feel at the time? [...] Many people noisily crowded the streets and our guide Abuna Bernt explained that at the time it was the same. And we were at the center of this bustle up to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. Once we got there we found redemption. We give thanks to God”.

Henrieta Suter, Muri AG
member of the Order since 2016, German-speaking Swiss Section



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHRIST IN ROME

The relics of the Holy Land preserved in the Eternal City

A piece of the cross, the “Holy Stairs” that Christ climbed during his journey towards execution, thorns from the crown with which he was tortured, earth from Calvary and even a piece of the cradle of Bethlehem, are some of the relics that still today attract pilgrims from all over the world to Rome. How and why did they arrive here?

Professor of anthropology at Turin University, Massimo Centini, has made an interesting study on the links between Rome and the Holy Land and the authenticity of the relics. In his opinion, during the first centuries of Christianity both the original elements and copies or that which ‘came into contact’ with them were considered relics, thus certifying their provenance has become a sort of ‘mission impossible’.

Most of the relics in Rome are linked to very important figures, such as that of Saint Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine. Around the year 326, a trip to the Holy Land allowed her to see and bring to Rome and Constantinople some objects related to the passion of Christ that reinforced the devotion of the faithful and the figure of the emperor as protector of Christianity.

Rome’s **Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem**, sponsored by St. Helena herself, houses some of these relics. The oldest part of the church consists of a room of just 40 square meters. It has been dated to 225, although over time it has undergone various transformations.

In this small place of worship one of the three “lignum crucis” that Saint Helena found in Holy Land was brought by the Saint (the other two are



In Rome, next to the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, pilgrims can climb the Holy Stairs on their knees: tradition has it that they were part of the steps of the palace of Pontius Pilate in which Jesus was condemned.



The Pillar of the Flogging is venerated in Rome's Basilica of Saint Praxedes, next to Saint Mary Major.

kept in Jerusalem and Constantinople). According to tradition, these three pieces of wood were found in the excavations to bring to light the Cross of Christ. To ascertain which belonged to the cross of Christ, the splinters were brought into contact with a sick woman, who was healed by one of them.

A nail of the cross, part of the sign that justified the condemnation and thorns of the Lord's crown are also venerated in the same Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. Moreover, Saint Helena brought with her a large quantity of the earth from Calvary, still preserved under the paving of the church.

The **Holy Stairs** is another element among those most revered by pilgrims in Rome. More than a million climb the steps, which according to tradition led the Lord to the Palace of Pontius Pilate, where he was later condemned. Once again,

it was thanks to Saint Helena that this staircase, composed of 28 stone steps, was brought to Rome. To avoid deterioration in the year 1723, the staircase was covered with wood.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, to facilitate the high flow of pilgrims, the architect Domenico Fontana, built a staircase parallel to the original one so that the pilgrims, once they had climbed the original one, could use the second to descend. This consolidated the building which today can be visited together with the Basilica of Saint John Lateran.

In the **Basilica of Saint Praxedes**, a Byzantine church close to that of Saint Mary Major, the Pillar of the Flogging is venerated, where Christ was bound and flogged. It is a small piece of stone, only 63 centimeters high, with a hole; inside a piece of iron would have been fitted. The pillar of stone was obviously part of a very large column. Before being transferred to Rome, until 1223, the column was revered in the church of the Holy Apostles in Jerusalem.

The **Basilica of Saint Mary Major** houses a fragment of Christ's cradle. Under the altar of this Roman basilica, in the 5th century, a copy of the Bethlehem grotto was built and this fragment that is worshiped was brought to Rome by pilgrims from the Holy Land.

One of the Vatican's lesser-known relics is the fragment of the lance with which the centurion Longinus wounded Christ on the cross. It is located inside the **St. Peter's Basilica**, in one of the statues that act as a pillar to the central dome, four meters high. The relic is covered with gold and was donated by the Turkish sultan to Pope Innocent VIII, since it was transferred to Constantinople in the Byzantine era.

The relics from the Holy Land have meant that Rome was considered as the "New Jerusalem" and favored as a new center of pilgrimage, once Christianity lost its authority in Palestine. The Eternal City, Rome, was then conceived as the place of worship par excellence. This idea was strengthened even more with the celebration of the first jubilee of history convened in 1300 after the loss of the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, Acre.

Antonio Olivie
Rome Reports TV News Agency

MEETING GOD IN THE UPPER ROOM

The Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, recommends the recently published book "Meeting God in the Upper Room" by Msgr. Peter Vaghi. "It is an exceptionally good and timely spiritual reading for our English-speaking members."

The sacred places in the Holy Land bring us back to the foundational events of our faith that have happened there. The great room on the upper floor, of which the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles speak to us, the Cenacle, has a peculiar feature: it has seen the occurrence of several events that today continue to speak to each of us and to the whole Church.

It is here that Jesus celebrated the last supper with his apostles, where the washing of the feet took place; where the apostles except Thomas saw the Risen Jesus; it was here that Jesus appeared a week later also to Thomas, and finally, it is here where the Holy Spirit fell on Mary and on the Apostles gathered on Pentecost. Many events in the same place have led Monsignor Peter J. Vaghi to more profound reflection on the great treasure that this room still has to give to us today. His book, "Three moments to change your life. Meeting God in the Upper Room," wants to be not only an invitation to re-read the biblical texts that tell us about the events of the Cenacle but a real spiritual instrument that helps us to "be in touch again and again with our God who lives and moves in our very midst, the God of the Upper Room. Just like the apostles, each one of us needs to spend some time in the upper room in our own hearts, drawing close to God in prayer". That is why each of the fourteen chapters of this book end

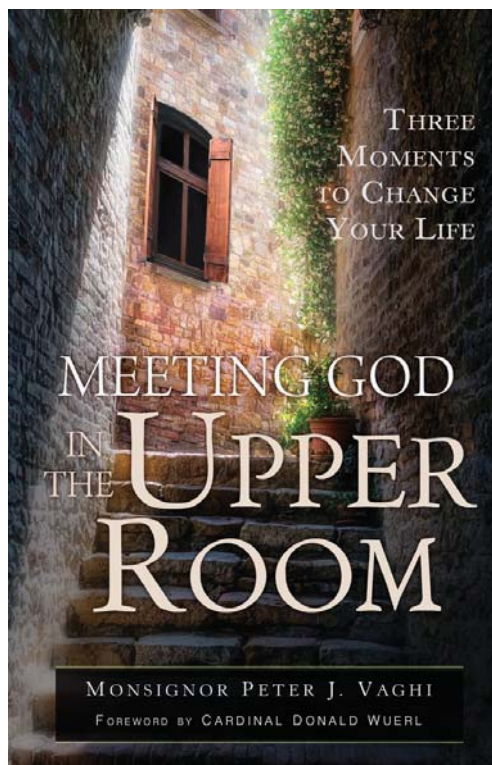
with a paragraph devoted to personal reflection, preparing the Upper Room, in our own heart, to meet with God.

This place, this room, has been carefully thought out and chosen by Jesus for the last supper, as the Gospels tell us, and it did not just "happen" that Jesus and his disciples were there for this last intimate meal they shared before of the Master's Passion. And if the physical site was important to those who lived, walked and followed Jesus in his earthly life, to the point that they remained connected even after his death, this is the place where the Church we form was born and where the sacraments of the Eucharist, of the Order and of Reconciliation were delivered to Her.

Msgr. Vaghi concludes his book on Pentecost: "Until now, the events of the Upper Room have

taken place in private. But Pentecost changes everything" (103). The apostles open the doors and become witnesses of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is also our destiny and our calling, supported by the example and the benevolent gaze of the first to have accepted this mission: Mary of Nazareth, Mother of God and our Mother.

Elena Dini



Meeting God in the Upper Room: three moments to change your life
by Msgr. Peter J. VAGHI
Servant Editions
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