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News



Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

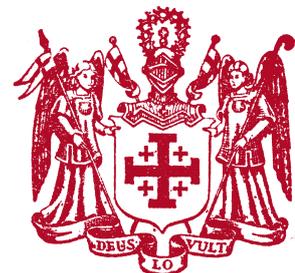
THE CARDINAL GRAND MASTER SUBMITS HIS RESIGNATION

On the evening of 24 February the Members of the Grand Magisterium, together with the Lieutenants, Grand Priors and Magistral Delegates, received news that filled all of them with great concern: our revered Cardinal Grand Master, John P. Foley, had resigned.

The Governor General, H.E. Prof. Agostino Borromeo informed the Members of the Grand Magisterium, Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates of the step taken by the Cardinal Grand Master:



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IMPRESSUM
GRAND MAGISTERIUM
OF THE
EQUESTRIAN ORDER
OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE
OF JERUSALEM
00120 VATICAN CITY



February 24th , 2011

Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Your Excellencies and dear Confreres,

With deep regret I have been given the painful task of transmitting to you a letter dated February 21, 2011, with which His Eminence the Most Reverend Cardinal John Patrick Foley announces that he tendered to the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI his resignation as Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

I am certain I voice the general feeling of all the members of our institution in expressing to His Eminence our common, deep gratitude. Gratitude for the hard work, efficiency and wisdom with which he led us for three and a half years. Gratitude for the incisive spiritual impetus he impressed upon our militancy within the Order and our charitable mission on behalf of the Holy Land. Gratitude for the example he has given us of generous altruism, joyful serenity and fearless courage in bearing physical suffering. Gratitude, finally, for edifying us with the witness of his unwavering faith and submission to the Divine Will.

His presence among us was a gift from the Lord. Personally, I consider it a privilege to have been able to offer my services under his enlightened and authoritative guidance. On behalf of all, I wish to assure His Eminence the Most Reverend Cardinal Foley that we gather around him and that he can always count on our closeness to him by means of our thoughts and prayers.

I am grateful, therefore, to His Excellency the Most Reverend Monsignor Giuseppe De Andrea, Apostolic Nuncio and Assessor of the Order, for having immediately assumed the duties which fall upon him in accordance with our Constitution. I am sure that his proven experience and his thorough knowledge of various issues will enable him to lead with a steady hand the Order's life. I assure him of the Order's and my personal full and indefatigable cooperation in all circumstances.

May the Lord recompense our Cardinal Grand Master for all the good things he did!

I send to your Eminences and your Excellencies the assurance of my highest consideration.

AGOSTINO BORROMEO
Governor General





*We reprint below the
Cardinal Grand Master's letter
of 22 February:*

Your Excellencies:

On Thursday, February 10, 2011, I was granted a private audience with our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, to submit my resignation, for reasons of health, as Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

I informed the Holy Father that, due to the advance of an incurable type of leukemia, along with other illnesses, I was unable to fulfill the duties of my office and that I did not wish to be a burden to our wonderful Order.

I told our Holy Father how grateful I was to him for my appointment as Grand Master, because my experience was like an extended spiritual retreat before entering the final phase of my life in preparation for eternal life with our risen Lord.

I told him also what a pleasure it has been to work with our Knights and Ladies around the world and how edified I have been by your love for the Holy Land, by your own spiritual development and by your ever increasing generosity to our brothers and sisters in Christ in that land made truly holy by the presence of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When he heard of your great generosity and of the expansion of our Order into new lands, he asked me to express his gratitude to all of you to whom he sends his Apostolic Blessing.

Before the appointment of a new Grand Master, our Assessor, Archbishop Giuseppe De Andrea, will, with our Governor General Agostino Borromeo, carry on the daily work of our Order. I am sure that you will extend to them the magnificent cooperation you have shown to me over the last four years; those years have been all too brief – but precious to me, and I ask that you continue to remember me in prayer as I pray for you every day.

May God continue to bless you, your loved ones and our dear Holy Land with His love and grace!

Sincerely in Christ,

John Cardinal Foley
Grand Master

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem



*The Order's Assessor,
Archbishop De Andrea,
subsequently wrote the following letter
to the Members of the Order:*



February 24th, 2011

*Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Your Excellencies and dear Confreres,*

We all have carefully and emotionally read the letter from the Grand Master His Eminence Cardinal John Patrick Foley dated 21 February, announcing his resignation to the Holy Father from the government of the Order because of his serious health conditions.

His words reveal once again his strength of character, his feelings of kindness and serene and deep faith.

Our gratitude and admiration towards His Eminence Cardinal John Patrick Foley should be expressed in fervent prayer that the Lord grant him solace and peace during this time, and by each of us, in a renewed commitment of hard-working militancy within our beloved Order.

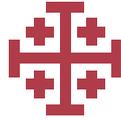
While trustfully awaiting that the Holy Father appoints a new Grand Master, I assume, according to the Constitution, Article 19, par. 2, the Order's representation and regency in cooperation with the Statutory Bodies provided under the present circumstances. I promise to serve the Order as best as I can and I have confidence in your united prayers.

*In the Risen Lord,
yours*

ARCHBISHOP GIUSEPPE DE ANDREA
*Assessor of the Equestrian Order
of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*



REFLECTIONS OF A RETIRING GRAND MASTER



In June 2007, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone informed me that I was being named Pro-Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Since that time, it has been my great privilege to be the admittedly unworthy leader of a truly great and historic organization of lay men and women around the world intent on their own spiritual development and on the support of their brother and sister Christians in the Holy Land, the land of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I had been a member of the Order since the early 1990s, after Cardinal Caprio and Russell Kendall had invited me to join. Cardinal Caprio had also kindly invited me to speak to the Grand Magisterium on the spirituality of the Order.

Thus, while the Order was known to me, I had not been deeply involved in its activities, much less in its administration. I do recall that I asked to be affiliated with the Eastern Lieutenancy of the United States, headquartered in New York, which included my home Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In that way also, my periodic contributions, small as they were, could be deducted from my Federal Income Tax! Unfortunately, because I worked in Rome as president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, I could not attend the meetings of the Lieutenancy.

After I was appointed Grand Master, however, I resolved to work every day in the central offices of the Order and to visit as many Lieutenancies as possible for investitures and for other special occasions.

I was happy to note that the then Governor General, Pier Luigi Parola, was working for ever greater transparency and accountability in the management of the finances of the Order. The fact that he had to commute from his home in Milan, however, was proving very wearing for him and very difficult for his wife. After accepting his resignation, I was extremely fortunate to obtain the consent of Count Agostino Borromeo, professor of Church History at two universities in Rome and President of the Circolo di Roma and a former Chancellor of the Order, to become the new Governor General. Happily, Adolfo Rina di agreed to remain in his important work as Vice-Governor of the Order.



In the United States, Cardinal Justin Rigali agreed to assign Father Hans Brouwers of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia as my personal assistant and I was happy to be able to appoint him also as Vice-Chancellor and later Chancellor of the Order. The Holy Father honored him with an appointment as Chaplain of His Holiness with the title of Monsignor.

I was also most grateful that Archbishop Giuseppe De Andrea, a priest from Ivrea who had become incardinated in the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, before being appointed as Nuncio to Kuwait, kindly accepted being named Assessor of the Order, the prelate who acts on behalf of an impeded or absent Grand Master.

With the new leadership team in place, we were able to work to unify the staff by bringing the administration from offices at Sant’Onofrio on the Janiculum Hill back to our central office, after we guaranteed that the integrity of our records would be respected as a central entity of the Catholic Church and the Holy See. This made it possible for us to gather at noon every day for prayer and it reinforced the unity of our staff.

Shortly before I submitted my resignation to the Secretary of State and to the Holy Father, Governor General Borromeo made it known to me that the Order had achieved three “firsts” in the year 2010:

- 1) the largest amount of donations ever received: 10.3 million Euros (\$13.7 million);
- 2) the largest number of members in history: more than 28,000;
- 3) the largest number of jurisdictions: 58, with new jurisdictions in Brasil, Russia, South Africa, and Italy – with promising developments in India, New Zealand and Croatia.

As all our members know, it is our desire to have rental income from the Hotel Columbus to cover all the administrative expenses of the Grand Magisterium. Negotiations are continuing to this end – and it is our prayer that this longstanding preoccupation may soon be finally resolved.

I renew my thanks to Almighty God for the great grace to have been appointed by our Holy Father as the Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

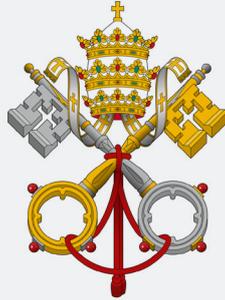
I renew my thanks to our officers and staff and to all our members for their splendid cooperation in a spirit of faith and charity.

I renew my thanks to Patriarch Fouad Twal and to the clergy, religious and faithful of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem for their wonderful example of fidelity to the Gospel in the midst of great difficulties.

I ask you all to pray for peace with justice in the Holy Land – and I ask you also to pray for me as I begin this final phase of my life. Be assured that I will be praying for all of you!

JOHN KARDINAL FOLEY
Grand Master





POPE BENEDICT XVI:
A SENTENCE FROM
THE “URBI ET ORBI” MESSAGE
OF 25 DECEMBER 2010

*“May the light of Christmas shine
forth anew in the Land where Jesus was born,
and inspire Israelis and Palestinians
to strive for a just and peaceful coexistence.”*



❖ *From the Grand Magisterium* ❖

THERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN SEVERAL CHANGES
IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM,
STARTING FROM JANUARY 1, 2011.

There have recently been several changes in the composition of the Grand Magisterium, starting from January 1, 2011.

His Excellency Knight of the Collar Peter Wolff-Metternich zur Gracht has resigned as Lieutenant General of the Order and is succeeded by Knight Grand Cross Count Professor Giuseppe Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto.

The Vice-Governors General, their Excellen-

cies Jean-Marc Allard and Hubert Simonart, have also resigned their office on grounds of age. They will be succeeded, respectively, by Lieutenant of Honor Patrick D. Powers, former Lieutenant for USA Western, and Lieutenant of Honor Giorgio Moroni Stampa, former Lieutenant for Switzerland. Finally, two other esteemed confreres Dennis J. Looney and Michael R. Earthman, have resigned as Members of the Grand Magisterium. John C. Piunno, Lieutenant of Honor of the Lieutenancy of USA Middle Atlantic will join that body.”

The present membership of the Grand Magisterium as well as all changes in the Lieutenancies can be viewed on the Order's homepage at

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/institutions_connected/oessh/ (Italian) or

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/institutions_connected/oessh/index_en.htm (English).



HALT IN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE LEADS TO BETHLEHEM'S MERRIEST CHRISTMAS IN YEARS

(AP) The traditional birthplace of Jesus celebrated its merriest Christmas in years, as tens of thousands of tourists thronged Bethlehem on Friday for the annual holiday festivities in this biblical West Bank town.

Officials said the turnout was shaping up to be the largest since 2000.

Unseasonably mild weather, a virtual halt in Israeli-Palestinian violence and a burgeoning economic revival in the West Bank all added to the holiday cheer.

Merrymakers blasted horns, bands played and traditional Christmas carols were sung in Arabic, Boy Scout marching bands performed and Palestinian policemen were deployed around the town to keep the peace.

Both church officials and the Palestinian President voiced hopes for peace.

Pat Olmsted, a 64-year-old teacher from Sugar Land, Texas, was celebrating her first Christmas in Bethlehem and broke into tears as she stood in Manger Square. "It just gives me a whole true meaning of the Bible. As I read the pages, it will mean so much more to me," she said.

The Roman Catholic Church's top clergyman in the Holy Land, Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal, crossed through the gate in a traditional midday procession from Jerusalem. Later, he celebrated Midnight Mass, the peak of the town's holiday events.

In his homily, Twal issued a conciliatory call for peace between religions and urged an intensification of dialogue with Jews and Muslims.

"We need to unite and integrate the many values we have in common: prayer, piety, fasting, almsgiving, and ethical values," he said.

"Our hope for Christmas is that Jerusalem

not only become the capital of two nations, but also a model for the world, of harmony and co-existence of the three monotheistic religions," he added. "During this Christmas season, may the sound of our church bells drown the noise of weapons in our wounded Middle East, calling all men to peace and joy."

Today, just one-third of Bethlehem's 50,000 residents are Christian, down from about 75 percent in the 1950s. The rest are Muslims.

With the end of fighting, the West Bank has undergone an economic revival in recent years, illustrated by new shopping malls and widespread construction projects in the bustling city of Ramallah.

Abbas, a Muslim, traveled to Bethlehem to greet the revelers, saying he hoped the coming year would finally bring peace. He also said the Palestinians were issuing a special postage stamp honoring Bethlehem.

"We are seekers of peace in the path of Jesus," he said. "We hope that next year will be a year of peace by establishing the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security."

Israel maintains an embargo on Gaza, which is governed by Abbas' rival, the Islamic militant group Hamas. In a goodwill gesture, Israel allowed 500 members of Gaza's tiny Christian community to travel to Bethlehem.

Niveen Wadia, a 40-year-old Gaza woman, said coming to Bethlehem was a very beautiful feeling.

"In Gaza we don't have any atmosphere of celebration. We are the minority there," she said.



A MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS 2010 THAT WILL ACCOMPANY US FAR INTO THE NEW YEAR

Holy Night encourages us to make room for God in our lives. The heavenly child yearns to come to us once more, to live in our midst, in our hearts, our families, our peoples and our world.

He is Emanuel, the Prince of Peace, the only one who can comfort us in our suffering, our fear and our difficulties; the only one who can give us the gift of peace and the only one who can increase our hopes and our joy, for He it is who reveals to us the ultimate secret of our lives: we are the children of God, we are brothers and sisters.

That is why the birth of Christ is a constant invitation to us to reflect upon fundamental values such as peace, hospitality, sharing, forgiveness and the meaning of each and every human life. Let us join with those who are suffering and, with them, offer our fervent prayers for God to come among us and to grant us the gift of His peace.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

+ FOUAD TWAL
Latin Patriarch

In the February issue of the Belgian Lieutenancy's Lettre Mensuelle (monthly letter) the Lieutenant gave the following account of the meeting held by the European Council of Bishops:

THIRTY EUROPEAN BISHOPS IN THE HOLY LAND

In the wake of the Synod for the Middle East, around thirty bishops and representatives of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe, North America and Scandinavia met in the Holy Land. They began this, their eleventh annual assembly, with a pilgrimage on the banks of the Jordan and a visit to Jericho, in order to gauge the mood of the country, meet locals active in the community and judge what needs to be done and how to do it so that the Universal Church may be more closely and more appropriately linked with the Church in the Holy Land, which is the Mother of all Churches and, as always, still subject to the historic dangers and difficulties of all kinds encountered in the Middle East.

The meeting, which took place from 9 to 13 January, was organized by the Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in support of the Church in the Holy Land and by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops in the Holy Land under the patronage of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), in the light of the work of the Special Assembly for the Middle East held in Rome from 10 to 24 October last.

The wide-ranging and fruitful content of the meeting was inspired by the theme selected for the Middle East Synod: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4: 32).



The bishops congratulated Father Pietro FELET, Secretary of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land, on his organization of the event from which they saw emerging before their eyes a picture of the Church in the Holy Land, a picture that was neither other-worldly nor idealistic but which confronted reality with the energy required to overcome difficulties as and when they arise.

The challenges are many and varied, from ecumenical and inter-faith dialog to education in schools, from religious life in a local Church with universal attributes to hosting pilgrims and pilgrimages; which led one participant to comment, “It is extraordinary to see the challenges the Church in the Holy Land has to face in such a small region. How it has to deal with the different languages, cultures, political regimes, geographical areas, social conditions and rites and yet remain united”. (Mgr. Michel Dubost, Bishop of Évreux)

In their closing communiqué, the participants recalled that they had met to “relate,

share and exchange” their experiences and to express “the love and solidarity” of the Catholics in each of their countries for the “Land of our Savior”, for the Holy Places and, in particular, for the people who form the community of believers in that very place”.

They pointed out that, above all, the meeting centered on “getting together with all Christian confessions” because the vocation of a Christian was to “build bridges” and therefore the common hope was to “bring all Christians together in pursuing a just peace for everyone on this earth”.

Despite “certain improvements” in visa regulations, the bishops once again declared their painful awareness of the feelings of frustration experienced by Catholic clergy and religious... because of the restrictions placed on their movements.

They also encouraged the organization of pilgrimages and visits to the land where “Jesus walked and where people continue to live out their faith”.

THE SOUND OF CHRISTIANITY OVER JERUSALEM

From the bell tower of the Dormition Abbey, through the Valley of Kidron to the Old City, clear tones carried by the wind are pealing the solemn hour of the Holy Mass.

Finally, in May 2010, a new sound of the Co-Cathedral calls the Christians of Jerusalem out the glory of the day, thanks to the grateful donation of the Austrian knights of the Holy Sepulchre. Since the 1970’s the Bell Tower of the Co-Cathedral of the Latin Patriarchate

had none or very little work done. The main objective of this project was the preservation, the restoration of the Bell Tower and the installation of a new fully automated system for the Bells.

