

News Letter



ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

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REFLECTIONS OF THE GRAND MASTER

MISERANDO ATQUE ELIGENDO

It began on an ordinary Saturday evening as he headed to a party with other student friends. En route, something prompted him to offer a prayer in the church he was passing. He entered and felt the need to go to confession: "And I don't know what happened, but I came out different, changed. I returned home with the certainty of having to consecrate myself to the Lord."

The words of Pope Francis in a recent interview, describing a simple unexpected moment that changed his life and ultimately, the world as well. "He has had mercy on me - and he chose me!"⁽¹⁾ It was a moment filled with an overwhelming personal awareness of God's mercy - his compassion - inviting us and urging us to experience in our lives as well: "For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church."



The Order in Union with the Universal Church

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IMPRESSUM
GRAND MAGISTERIUM
OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER
OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE
OF JERUSALEM
00120 VATICAN CITY
E-mail: gmag@oessh.va

In turn, I urge every lieutenancy/section to see it as its serious response to take full part in the Holy Year celebrations of its local diocese. It would be appropriate for a member to be specifically delegated in each diocese to coordinate members' participation as a group.

Participation must begin with a spiritual experience of God's mercy by each member. It needs not be AS dramatic as was the young Jorge Bergolio's experience. Still, each

of us must take stock of the good things God continues to do for us – unworthy as we are – and in a return to the Sacrament of Penance, ask His forgiveness for our misuse of his many gifts.

What a great opportunity for spiritual renewal awaits each of us and our Order!

(1) "Miserando atque eligendo": Pope Francis' motto.

The Order in Union with the Universal Church

JUBILEE OF MERCY: A NEW FUTURE OFFERED TO MANKIND

Traditionally, every 25 years the Pope proclaims a holy year. The next one was scheduled for 2025... However, during the "24 Hours for the Lord" penitential celebration on Friday March 13, 2014, the Pope surprised us all: on the occasion of the second anniversary of his papacy, he announced an extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Opened on December 8, this event will go until November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King.

The Jubilee celebrates the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, as the Year of Faith (2012-2013) marked the 50th anniversary of its opening. From Pope Benedict XVI to Pope Francis, the Catholic Church speaks with one voice to proclaim the Gospel in a new language, as initiated by the Council Fathers and prompted by the Holy Spirit a half century ago.

The address by Pope Paul VI, during the last general meeting of the Second Vatican Council on December 7, 1965, giving the Good Samaritan as the model for the renewal of the Church, is an important

reference for understanding the meaning of what we experience during the Holy Year. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36): each of us needs to personally obey Christ's call and live accordingly, together as a missionary people proclaiming God's love and tenderness. In this perspective, the Pope hopes that this Jubilee is also occurring in local Churches, in a decentralized manner, and that initiatives are complementary. Therefore, each diocese has had the opportunity of opening a Door of Mercy, particularly in Marian Shrines.

Regarding the Roman Calendar (see www.im.va), in addition to the major





December 8 was the 1,000th day of Pope Francis' pontificate. On this Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, there were many faithful present in St. Peter's Square for the inauguration of the extraordinary Holy Year Mercy. The Mass included the Ave Maria of Lourdes, in an atmosphere of intense contemplation. After having passed through the Holy Door, the Holy Father was followed by his predecessor, Benedict XVI. This common step symbolized their profound unity at the service of a Church that is in dialogue with the world, 50 years after the close of the Second Vatican Council.



events planned such as the one for volunteers actively involved in the works of mercy on September 4 or for detainees on November 6, the Pope plans to symbolically visit the "existential peripheries", hoping that bishops and priests will do the same throughout this Holy Year, to witness the

spiritual conversion through gestures of forgiveness, support, help and love. This will also be an invitation to Judaism and Islam to continue discussions on the common basis of mercy.

Citing a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and



faithfulness (Exodus 34:6), the Hebrew Bible uses the word "rahamim", which evokes the maternal womb, the place from which life comes. The Hebrew word "hesed" is also used in the scriptures to express other aspects of merciful love, faithfulness, kindness, goodness and solidarity.

"Making space for the Lord so that he can come and change me"

The love of God is inexplicable, "it is something that no theologian can explain. One can only feel and cry with joy," said the Holy Father during a morning Mass, emphasizing the Gospel of the day, which described the healing of the royal official's son. This man believed that Jesus had the power to heal his son and set out to find God. Faith means "creating a space for love" that is the power of God, Pope Francis added brightly: "it's the power of the one who loves me, who is in love with me and who wants to rejoice with me." "This is faith," he concluded, "making space for the Lord so that he can come and change me". We will first experience this in the sacrament of reconciliation, in the heart of all our tears, on the occasion of the Holy Year of Mercy, to then become humble and joyful witnesses.

During the great persecution of the Christ's Church in many countries from Pakistan to Nigeria through Libya, Syria and Iraq, Saint Peter's successor will feed his sheep in many tribulations. May this Jubilee "bring comfort to every man and woman of our time," as Pope Francis wants, recalling that "God forgives all, and God forgives always." (homily of March 13, 2015).

Let us henceforth entrust this Year to the Mother of Mercy, "that she turn



POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR THE JUBILEE OF MERCY

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
Show us your face and we will be saved.
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;
made Peter weep after his betrayal,
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us,
the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:
"If you knew the gift of God!"*

*You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
let the Church be your visible face in the world,
its Lord risen and glorified.
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.*

*Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm,
may bring good news to the poor,
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,
and restore sight to the blind.*

*We ask this through the intercession of Mary,
Mother of Mercy,
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.
Amen.*



her gaze upon us and watch over our journey: our penitential journey, our year-long journey with an open heart, to receive the indulgence of God, to receive the mercy of God." More broadly, we all have the opportunity to give up the certainty of feeling "just" and constantly judging others,

to abandon the pride that pushes us to always be right, to love and forgive generously. As Pope Francis said in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, *Misericordiae Vultus* (no. 20), based on Psalm 50: "God's justice is his mercy".

AN EXEMPLARY AGREEMENT THAT STIMULATES PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND

At the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy, last January 2, the Global Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Palestine entered into effect. Pope Francis applauded this Agreement at the beginning of his greeting to the Diplomatic Corps on January 11, highlighting that it above all shows "how peaceful co-existence between the followers of different religions is possible when religious freedom is recognized and practical cooperation in the pursuit of the common good, in a spirit of respect for the cultural identity of all parties, is effectively guaranteed." "I pray", he added at the end of his address, "that this new year can heal the deep wounds dividing Israelis and Palestinians, and enable the peaceful coexistence of two peoples who - of this I am sure - in the depths of their heart ask only for peace!".

With courage and perseverance, the Holy Father pushes towards peace through this exemplary Agreement in order to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this way he continues to fight against the roots of the evil, which, in part, feed international terrorism, determined to act on the causes and not on the effects. Forty years ago Blessed Pope Paul VI was the first pope to affirm that the Palestinians do not form a single group of refugees but a people.



Pope Francis' meeting with the Diplomatic Corps last January 11.

THE SAVING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Saint Maria Goretti has prepared for the Jubilee of Mercy in the United States

Maria Goretti died at age 11 in 1902 while defending herself from an attempted assault. Her last words were forgiveness for her assailant and murderer, and she appeared to him several times while he was in prison, bringing him the joy of conversion and of approaching Christ through a path of holiness. Canonized in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, Saint Maria Goretti is a saint to whom many turn and who has worked various miracles.

This year, from September to November, relics of the Saint have visited the United States for the first time, in what was called "the pilgrimage of Mercy". The experience was certainly an occasion for important

preparation to live the Jubilee Year, which began on December 8.

Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, who celebrated Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Grace and St. Maria Goretti in Nettuno on November 24, 2014, for the occasion of the transfer of the relics of the Saint in

the U.S., said: "I am delighted that the Church in the United States may have the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Year of Mercy through the inspiring story of the life and death of St. Maria Goretti! May the opportunity to reverence her relics demonstrate the power of Divine Mercy and forgiveness awaiting every one of us who takes the message of Jesus seriously to heart."



Illustrative logo of the historic pilgrimage of St. Maria Goretti's relics in the United States.

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Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

THE AUTUMN MEETING OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

On November 10 and 11, members of the Grand Magisterium gathered in Rome together with the Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, and with the presence of the Grand Prior, His Beatitude Msgr. Fouad Twal, Patriarch of Jerusalem. They prayed together and entrusted the inhabitants of the Holy Land to Our Lady of Palestine, whose icon is found in one of the rooms in the Palazzo della Rovere (Palace of the Rovere, Rome) where every morning Mass was celebrated before all seated proceedings.

On the first day Cardinal O'Brien spoke of his latest visits to the Lieutenancies in various countries such as Denmark, Slovenia, France, the United Kingdom and Australia. He furthermore announced his intention to travel, in the future, to Guam, the Philippines and

Taiwan. The Grand Master insisted on the necessity of continuing the allocation of funds for individuals fleeing from the Middle East who are pouring into parts of the territory of the Latin Patriarchate in Jordan. He also reiterated the importance of the initiatives undertaken by Lieutenants in marking the participation of the Order in the Jubilee of Mercy in dioceses, encouraging local pilgrimages according to the instructions indicated in the Bull of Indiction of the Holy Year, *Misericordiae Vultus*.

The Governor Agostino Borrromeo then gave a few words, extending a special greeting to Mary O'Brien, an American and presently the only female member of the Grand Magisterium. Agostino Borrromeo likewise made mention of the first meeting in Australia of the Lieutenants and Magistral



Members of the Grand Magisterium gathered for the morning Mass at the opening of their work meeting in Rome last November.



Last November 11, Grand Master Cardinal Edwin O'Brien received guests, members and friends of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, in honor of Our Lady of Palestine, in the halls of the Palazzo della Rovere. In this picture we see him together with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness.



Delegates of Asia and Oceania, emphasizing the capacity for expansion of the Order that for some years now has not ceased to grow. He also informed the Grand Magisterium of a decision of the Italian Corte di Cassazione (Court of Appeals) that would soon allow the renovation of the management of the hotel, which thus far is entrusted to the Columbus society, to the benefit of the activity that aids the Holy Land.

The Priority of the Support of Persons: "Living Rocks"

For his part Patriarch Twal made a point of the situation of countries where he has pastoral responsibilities (Palestine, Jordan, Cyprus and Israel) and his displeasure over some of the episodes that have damaged the will to dialogue – such as the construction of the separation wall in the Cremisan Valley – and yet his joy in the educational and social action of the Patriarchate, something made possible through the support of the Order, to confront a "crisis that seems to have no end." Currently, the Middle Eastern migrants number twenty million, forty-two thousand each day. Those who arrive in Jordan benefit from the educational standards for their children, often in the Catholic schools of the Patriarchate, where Christians and Muslims live out a "meeting of cultures" on a daily basis.

Speaking of these nearly fifty Christian

schools in the Holy Land, the General Administrator for the Patriarchate, Father Imad Twal, presented the 2015 budget and forecasts for 2016, carefully noting that up to this point the Israeli government, which seeks to assume all schools into the national system, no longer guarantees regular subsidies, but only what is extraordinary. This is something that renders the entire system fragile. Following a discussion, the Grand Magisterium approved sending thirty-five thousand dollars more per month to the Patriarchate for the schools and institutions like parishes and the minor and major seminary. "The formation of local clergy is essential", the Patriarch underlined. He furthermore reminded all that the schools in the city and villages of the Holy Land are peculiar in that they depend directly on the parishes. On behalf of the Holy Land Commission in charge of projects, Heinrich Dickmann added that supporting people, the "living rocks", is more and more a priority, as is the better coordination of assistance in a quinquennial plan.

Thomas McKiernan, president of the Holy Land Commission, presented said Commission's report and valorized three projects: a children's playground in Jaffa in Nazareth, the church of Marj el Hamam in Jordan and the multicultural pastoral center Our Lady of Peace near Amman, which also carries out humanitarian work. The report also gave a summary of the Commission's



visit that took place during the month of October. During this visit there were profitable ideas exchanged for the future, in particular with those in charge of structures that deal with education and health. Bartholomew McGettrick, one of the three members of the Commission, placed emphasis on the necessary task of supporting the formation of the Christian community, which has been rendered quite weak, so that they might continue to play a role of mediation in resolving injustices.

At the conclusion of the session on November 10, engineer Pier Carlo Visconti presented a provisory budget of the Grand Magisterium's accounts where it was shown that since January 2015 almost ten million dollars have been already sent to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, of which this year a remarkable and enormous gift of one million dollars came from the United States.

The project of a continental meeting in Asia

The second day of proceedings, concluded with the traditional friendly and brotherly reception in honor of Our Lady of Palestine, began with a report on the schools of the Patriarchate that have recorded deficits.

Father Imad Twal showed in all clarity the importance of this parish and academic channel for the Christian minority. Muslim children who grow up here build friendships that will bear fruit for all of society in the future. The Gaza Strip, for example, holds three schools of the Patriarchate whereas Catholics number at only 130 out of almost two million inhabitants. "At the heart of our mission we are pastoral and at the service of dialogue by means of education," said Patriarch Twal, to which Cardinal O'Brien publicly manifested his support in favor of the social impact of the Christian presence in the

Holy Land. The salaries and pensions of professors must continue to be adequate and this cannot be a disregarded challenge.

This was followed by a report on the work in Gaza that demonstrated how above all emergencies must be addressed because reconstruction is tied to a peace accord between two parties in conflict.

The next item of the day was an account given by Paul Bartley of what has happened during the first meeting in Australia of the Lieutenants of Asia and Oceania, once again stating the idea of an upcoming meeting in Singapore to specifically grow closer to the Lieutenants of the Philippines and Taiwan. He underlined the importance of maintaining the relationships between the Grand Magisterium and the farthest geographic Lieutenancies from Rome for the better circulation of news.

Msgr. Antonio Franco, Assessor of the Order, then brought to the attention of the members of the Grand Magisterium the current situation of the Saint John the Baptist Vatican Foundation (Fondazione Vaticana San Giovanni Battista) for culture and formation in the Middle East. This pontifical Foundation was born in May 2015 and, presided over by Cardinal O'Brien, has already found ways for the reduction of the deficit of the University of Madaba. In this sense it continues in its work, leading negotiations with banks, and yet there is still much more to be done.

Lastly, the Chancellor Ivan Rebernik provided the details of the statistics of the Order, which welcomed 1,164 new Knights and Dames in 2014. He described the work of the Communications Service that is creating a new internet site for the Grand Magisterium. He also spoke of the work undertaken to increase the space for the paper archives of the Order. He furthermore suggested and encouraged the creation of a documentation service for the Order in the future.

“ At the heart of our pastoral mission: the service of dialogue by means of education ”



“DO NOT HAGGLE WITH GOD”

The joy of breaking the Word together before the meetings of the Grand Magisterium

The Grand Magisterium's days of meetings never begin without having celebrated the Eucharist together. It is not just another moment in a long series of appointments of the members of the Grand Magisterium, during the two days for which they come together twice a year, but it is the *conditio sine qua non*, that which gives meaning to everything that the Order does in the Holy Land and throughout the world. It is a key time, therefore, to return together to the source and to entrust everything to God's hands.

On November 10, 2015, at the opening of the Grand Magisterium's autumn session, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, the Grand Master, presided over the Holy Mass. Commenting on the complex Gospel of Luke 17:7-10, that of the "useless servants", the Grand Master said: "In this passage the Lord is not sympathetic and appealing, but seeks to undermine a dominant trend in the spirituality of those days, which is also in our own. We believe that God owes us something; that, if we behave well, God should repay us. However - he continued - God does not owe us anything, he gave us life and we are called to live not seeking immediate rewards for our actions. Do not haggle with God." A key word in the homily was "service". Every good deed that we carry out is a gift of God's grace and we should be grateful for the opportunity that He gives us to put ourselves at service.



Msgr. Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Grand Prior of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, during a Mass celebrated at the autumn meeting of the Grand Magisterium, before the icon of Our Lady of Palestine, which was recently placed in the Palazzo della Rovere to be venerated.

The following day Msgr. Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Grand Prior of the Order, celebrated the Holy Mass. Beginning with the Gospel of Luke

17:1-19, the passage about the ten healed lepers of whom only one returned to thank Jesus, the Patriarch emphasized the call of the Order, saying: "If Jesus gave his hand to the lepers, we too as an Order, as a Church, we must help those who suffer. Can we heal these people with our love, our friendship and our solidarity?". The example which we can refer to for our attitudes is that of the Holy Family of Nazareth, an example of humility, silence, peace and trust. Msgr. Twal concluded with a thought directed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, whose icon was behind the altar set up in one of the rooms of the Palazzo della Rovere: "This Mary is holding not Jesus in her arms but the entire city of Jerusalem, with all its joys, sorrows and all its inhabitants."



A REGIONAL MEETING HELD IN AUSTRALIA: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A SHARED JOURNEY

On 17 and 18 October, 2015, Adelaide hosted the first meeting of the Lieutenancies of Asia and Oceania which was also attended by Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, the Grand Master, and Agostino Borromeo, the Governor General. Since 2004 there had not been a meeting organized between the five Lieutenancies of the Order in Australia. Paul Bartley, an Australian member of the Grand Magisterium, who was in Rome for the meeting of the Grand Magisterium in November, commented on the event during an interview he granted us.

Compared to other regional meetings that currently take place for the Lieutenancies of Europe and America, the October meeting saw the participation of not only the Lieutenants but also of other members of the Order engaged in various responsibilities within the local councils (chancellors,

treasurers, secretaries and masters of ceremonies). "It definitely provided the Grand Master and the Governor General with a different point of view compared to the other meetings of this type," commented Paul Bartley.

One of the most appreciated moments of the two days in Australia was that of the session on the Order's spirituality. François Kunc, Supreme Court Justice, had prepared a discussion which involved all participants. Another key moment was the meeting between the Lieutenants, Paul Bartley vested as a member of the Grand Magisterium, the Governor General and the Grand Master.

Paul Bartley wished to especially emphasize the work that is still to be done and the things that need improvement. Therefore, as a result, it became evident that the various Lieutenancies do not follow a common line



A group photo during the first regional meeting of Lieutenancies of Asia and Oceania, organized by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Adelaide, Australia, in the month of October 2015.

and that not everyone knows about the documents produced by headquarters. On this point, the member of the Grand Magisterium affirms: "I absolutely do not believe that the Lieutenancies deliberately act inappropriately, but that we have gradually been detached from the rules without people realizing. That being said, as a knightly order, the rules are important and we should work to have a certain conformity." Every Lieutenancy, as has been reported, is very active on various fronts, with charitable activity and spiritual commitment in first place, and this is a great source of joy and inspiration for the Order throughout the whole world. A greater cooperation and sharing among Lieutenancies of the region will certainly bring great results in the future.

Another emphasized point was that of the formation of Lieutenants. The formation of new Knights and Dames was addressed, and the proposal was advanced for evaluating the possibility of also organizing a course for new Lieutenants.

The meeting in October brought forth various resolutions and above all the desire to meet more frequently. First of all, a telephone appointment was scheduled for the Australian Lieutenants, which took place on December 6, and the idea is that this might be repeated every six months. In addition, the importance of meeting in person and the great opportunity of counting on the presence of the Grand Master and the Governor General has become apparent. Australia, Bartley commented with a smile, is isolated to the point that it is always safe from any contagion of infection that affects the rest of the world, but this also means that reaching the country is not so simple, neither for the Lieutenants of Asia, nor for those coming from Europe. Therefore, the proposal which may be suitable would be to meet in Singapore on a weekend in 2016.

Paul Bartley concluded his interview by saying: "When we speak of the Order, it is not about honours and titles. We are not here for the glory of any one of us."

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THE GRAND MASTER'S VISITS TO MEMBERS OF THE ORDER AROUND THE WORLD

After having had the pleasure of attending the first meeting of the Lieutenancies of Asia and Oceania in Adelaide on October 17 - 18, and of celebrating the ceremony of Investiture of the Lieutenancy for South Australia, the Grand Master spent the month of November in Europe. Following the autumn meeting of the Grand Magisterium of the Order, held on November 10 - 11, Cardinal O'Brien traveled to Bari (November 15), to Belgium (November 17) for the awarding of collars to the King and Queen, to Cagliari (November 21) and to Acquapendente (December 6) for the Act of Entrustment of the Delegation of Viterbo to Mary Holy Immaculate at the Co-Cathedral Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. A journey is being prepared over the coming months which will bring the Grand Master to Asia, a continent in which the Order is currently growing.



Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, was received on November 17, 2015, at the Royal Palace of Laeken. He was accompanied by Agostino Borromeo, the Governor General, to deliver to their Majesties the King and Queen the honors of Knight and Dame of the Collar, the highest distinction of the Order, of which they have been members for many years. Also present at the ceremony were Msgr. Giacinto Berloco, Apostolic Nuncio, and Msgr. Jean Kockerols, Grand Prior, as well as François t'Kint de Roodenbeke, member of the Grand Magisterium, Lieutenant for Belgium and the Chancellor. (Copyright: Koninklijk Paleis-Royal Palace)

A WOMAN DEEPLY COMMITTED IN THE ORDER BECOMES PART OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

Mary Currivan O'Brien, entered as a Dame of the Order in 1987, was Lieutenant for USA Northwestern from October 2008 to September 2015. A resident of San Francisco, she is married with four children and five grandchildren (the sixth on the way). In this testimony

O'Brien recalls the path that led her to give herself more and more to service within the Order up to her appointment as a member of the Grand Magisterium.

"My recent appointment as a member of the Grand Magisterium was not a surprise to some of the members of the Order, but it certainly was to me! My involvement with



the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre has been a journey of many years. I have served for many other non-profit charities along the way. Catholic Charities of San Francisco and Santa Rosa were my passion for 25 years and I was on various fundraising committees. All volunteering was done while my husband, Terry, and I raised our four children. My motto learned from my father: Take the "t" out of "can't" and you can!

Starting in 1987, I was one of the younger members of the Order, and with my husband, the annual meetings were our "vacation." We spent three days every year enjoying the liturgies, learning about the Holy Land, and renewing our friendships with other members of our Lieutenancy. My involvement started slowly with chairing the Saturday theme nights and Sunday banquets for the 900+ members of our expanding Lieutenancy.

In 1993, I was appointed the area representative for the Santa Rosa Diocese, and held that position until 2003 (10 years) when I was appointed the Chancellor for the Lieutenancy. The year 2008 was difficult for all the members of our Lieutenancy: our Lieutenant, John McGuckin, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Three weeks before our planned annual meeting in Oakland, California, I was asked to preside over the entire annual meeting. No sooner was I appointed to the position of Lieutenant (only woman at that time among 58 men) in

October 2008, and then I received notice that I was expected to attend the Consulta in Rome the end of November.

Our Northwestern Lieutenancy is the smallest numerically in the United States, but one of the largest geographically from Alaska to California (8 Western states and 21 Dioceses). My travel miles have increased over my seven years as Lieutenant by visiting our members in their Dioceses, and meetings in Rome and Bethlehem. I have served on the Bethlehem University

International Board of Regents for the last four years.

The best description of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre membership is: Prayerful, committed and generous. Many times throughout the year, our members come together to pray for the suffering of the families in



Mary O'Brien accompanied by Msgr. Fouad Twal, Grand Prior of the Order, during the meeting of the Grand Magisterium in Rome.

the Holy Land at retreats, annual meeting liturgies, and especially on Good Friday when Knights and Dames take up the special collection in their parishes for the Holy Land.

Our membership has been committed and generous to the Christians in the Holy Land. We have nine scholarships for students attending Bethlehem University. We also support a parish school in Mafraq with tuition subsidies, two summer school programs in Mafraq and Ader, the Our Lady of Peace Center for special needs children in Amman, Jordan, and tuition support for a Seminarian at Beit Jala. One of my favorite commitments is a program our Lieutenancy



started five years ago in honor of my predecessor, known as the "McGuckin Mentoring Program," for Bethlehem University. Over 50 students in the last five years have been able to travel to the United States and Australia for six weeks in the summer, and be mentored by various employers. This is due to the commitment and generosity of our members. When the

students return to Bethlehem, they are eager to give back to their University and their homeland with their new business knowledge.

It has been an incredible journey in assisting with the mission of the Order, and I look forward to serving as a member of the Grand Magisterium, even if I am the only woman for now!"

WELCOME TO FATHER JOHN BRUCE BATEMAN, NEW SECRETARY OF THE GRAND MASTER

In the early days of January father John Bruce Bateman was presented at the offices of the Grand Magisterium as the new secretary of Cardinal O'Brien. He was ordained a priest in 1996 in the diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and for the past 12 years has served the Church as a parish priest, in addition to serving as a military chaplain. On his arrival to Rome he said: "This assignment was a big surprise for me. In recent years I began to feel a spiritual closeness to persecuted Christians and I am glad to be able to work for the Christians in the Holy Land. Without my knowing it, God was preparing me for this task." The Order extends its best wishes to Father Bateman who will enter into full service next spring.



Father John Bruce Bateman, welcomed to the Grand Magisterium on January 12 (in this picture we see him in the company of Cardinal O'Brien, Assessor Msgr. Franco, the Governor General Borromeo and Chancellor Rebernik). The orange ribbon on his jacket is a sign of solidarity with Christians in the Middle East, the original initiative of which was born in a parish in the United States of America.

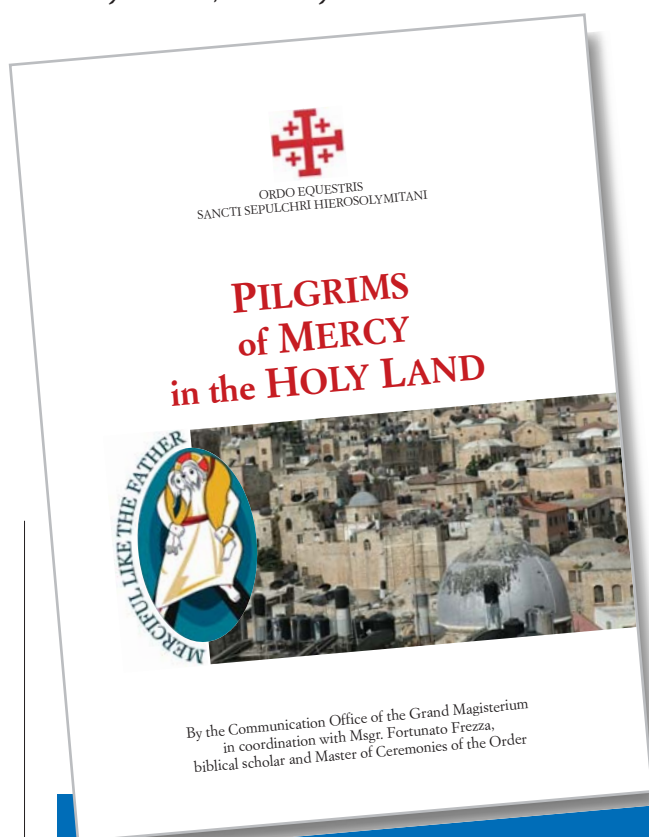


The Order and the Holy Land

LIVING THE JUBILEE OF MERCY IN THE HOLY LAND

Our readers will soon be able to download a spiritual aid that will be available on our website (info.oessh.va). It was made possible by the Communication Services of the Order in Rome, in coordination with Msgr. Fortunato Frezza, biblical scholar and Master of Ceremonies of the Order, and is intended to accompany the Jubilee journey in the Holy Land, mainly in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. This booklet may also help to nourish prayer there, where everyone is, connected in communion with our brothers and sisters who live in the lands of the Bible. For those who have the opportunity of visiting the Holy Land, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has specified various "Holy Doors", which we describe to you below.

On Sunday, 13 December, in the Basilica of the Agony at Gethsemane, Msgr. Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, opened the Holy Year of Mercy in Jerusalem. Two other Holy Doors allow pilgrims to live the Jubilee: one that was opened in Bethlehem on 24 December, at the Latin Church of St. Catherine – beside the basilica which was built on the site where Jesus was born – and the other in Nazareth on 27 December, the Feast of the Holy Family, at the Basilica of the Annunciation. Other Jubilee doors are also open in the Holy Land, dedicated more closely to the local communities. In particular, with regard to Catholics belonging to the Latin Rite, Msgr. Twal open the Holy Door in Gaza on 20 December at the Church of the Holy Family, while in



*The cover of the spiritual booklet that has been proposed to members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for living the Jubilee of Mercy. It will become available, initially in English and Italian, on the Grand Magisterium's website (info.oessh.va), under the heading *Annales*.*

Amman, Jordan, the Holy Door was opened on 12 December at the Church of St. John the Baptist de la Salle.



WELCOMING THE PRINCE OF PEACE TODAY IN THE HOLY LAND

*Interview with Vera Baboun,
the Mayor of Bethlehem*

Christmas is always associated with joy, lights, the familiar warmth that come from the good news of the Incarnation, of a God who became like us to save us. In the Holy Land, where this concretely took place, the holidays take on a density and a special responsibility.

In his Christmas message, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Grand Prior of the Order, Msgr. Fouad Twal, launched an appeal urging that international resolutions be respected and that political leaders of both parties listen to the voice of the people calling for peace in the Holy Land. He makes clear reference to the sad situation that plagues the Middle East and does not hesitate to firmly ask for the conversion of those who favor instability with the weapons trade. The Church's response to this difficult time, Msgr. Twal affirms, is precisely the Jubilee of Mercy. To his diocese he made a particular invitation: that each parish turn the lights of their Christmas tree off "for five minutes, as a sign of solidarity with all of the victims of violence and terrorism. Likewise - he added - Christmas Mass will be offered for the victims and their families, that they may take heart and have the joy and peace of Christmas."

The Patriarch's voice echoes that of the first female mayor of Bethlehem, Vera Baboun, a Catholic, who a few days before Christmas allowed us a dense interview,



Vera Baboun, the Mayor of Bethlehem, and Msgr. Shomali, Auxiliary Bishop of Jerusalem, releasing doves as a sign of hope that peace may be reached in the Holy Land.

available in full on our partner website Vatican Insider, where she speaks of the atmosphere you breathe today in the city that saw the birth of the Savior. The following is a short excerpt.

Mayor Baboun, what is the situation today in Bethlehem concerning the everyday life of your citizens and particularly of the Catholic communities?

The Catholic community is part of the whole community. What happens in Bethlehem affects the Catholic population just as it affects everybody. This city is now segregated from Jerusalem, and the faithful of Bethlehem can hardly go to pray at the Holy Sepulchre: it is easier for people coming from Europe or America to go to the Holy Sepulchre than it is for a 21 year-old man from Bethlehem.



With the absence of peace, I face many complicated situations as a Mayor. Since 82% of the Governorate of Bethlehem is zone C, meaning that it is controlled by Israeli administration and security, it is an unbelievable challenge for me to practice my authority and serve the people.

You are the first female Mayor in Bethlehem, what can you tell us about the role women play in Palestinian society and about the relationship between Muslim and Christian women at the service of peace in your land?

Women in Palestine, whether Christian or Muslim, face the same challenges, the same restrictions and the same unemployment. Both Christians and Muslims are the

mothers of the victims, the mothers of unemployed youth, the wives of unemployed men and of the victims. They are unemployed themselves, and are victims. Therefore, they suffer twice as much.

Is there a final message you would like to share?

Life is about voices and to create a change you need a courageous and faithful voice that speaks the truth. I know that, as Christians, our Lord Jesus taught us that if we are not able to express the truth, it is better to remain silent. Since we are all facing the reality of Bethlehem, and we see what is going on here in Palestine, I ask that the true voices express the truth without fear: Bethlehem, the city of peace, is not living in peace, and this is a great disgrace.

JERUSALEM CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF *NOSTRA AETATE*

On October 28, 2015, the Catholic Church and all friends from other religious traditions celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the relations of the Church with non-Christian religions that marked a turning point in relations with other believers, especially Jews and Muslims. Affirming, together with the Apostle John, that "whoever does not love does not know God" (1 Jn. 4:8), this declaration opened the way to new interreligious exchanges in respect, friendship and dialogue. Precisely for this reason an evening took place to celebrate this event in Jerusalem, a city

dear to Jews, Christians and Muslims, and where various religious communities live side by side. On November 12, the Institute of Notre Dame then hosted the Jerusalem Expo 2015, which gave the opportunity to attend art exhibitions portraying local talent and to hear the moving testimonies of people and groups who work for understanding, dialogue and peace.



A prophetic meeting in which faithful from three monotheistic religions expressed the desire to live in friendship in the biblical lands.

The Life of the Lieutenancies

THE JOY OF THE INVESTITURE: A TESTIMONY FROM SLOVENIA

We have received and published the account of the Investiture celebrated by the Grand Master in Slovenia last September. From the Vigil for aspirants to the ceremony that marks the entrance into the Order, these moments are an important event which each member will cherish as a memory.

On September 12, 2015, the Slovene Lieutenancy prepared the fourth Investiture of new Knights and Ladies. Unlike in some European countries, the Order has been present on Slovene ground for only slightly more than a decade. The first Slovene Knights were invested in



The Grand Master on his pilgrimage to the church of St. Mary of the Assumption on Bled Island, aboard a traditional vessel called a "pletna". Cardinal O'Brien was accompanied by Slovenian Lieutenant Marjana Kos, by Msgr. Juliusz Janush, the Apostolic Nuncio in Slovenia, and Ivan Rebernik, the Chancellor, accompanied by his wife and by Msgr. Andrej Saje, the Master of Ceremonies for the Investiture.



2001 and made up a Magisterial Delegation. At the next Investiture in 2004 they were rather numerous and were allowed to establish an independent Lieutenancy.

The solemnities of the Investiture took place in Bled. The mystical image of the town is created by the islet in the middle of a glacial lake and a steep cliff with a castle from the 11th century on the top. The feeling of mystery is even deeper due to the Church of St. Mary of Assumption on the island and a view of the snow-covered Julian Alps far on the horizon.

The Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien arrived to Bled on September 11. After a working lunch he made a pilgrimage to the Church of St. Mary of Assumption on the island on a traditional boat called "pletna" and was accompanied by Lieutenant Marjana Kos, the Nuncio in Slovenia Msgr. Juliusz Janusz, the Chancellor of the Order Ivan Rebernik with his wife, the Master of Ceremonies for the Investiture Msgr. Andrej Saje and the parish priest of Bled Father Janez Ferkolj.

The island of Bled was a holy place as early as pagan times and this is evident from archaeological remains. The Church of St. Mary of Assumption today is located on the very foundations of a temple to the Slavonic goddess Îva (lat. Vita). A special spiritual message is conveyed by 99 stone stairs that lead to the entrance of the church: the invitation to allow one's soul to grow closer to God.

One special attraction of the church is a "wishing bell". Legend has it that each pilgrim is allowed to ring it and Cardinal O'Brien did the same... Upon a wish of the

local priest, the Cardinal also signed into the Roll of honoured visitors.

On the same evening, four Slovene aspirants stood Vigil in the church on the island. The Solemn ceremony, the historic and religious importance of the island, the rich message of nature and architecture of Gothic and Baroque artists prepared the aspirants for the ceremony of the Investiture, through which they entered a new path in their Christian life.

The rite of the Investiture was held the next day in the parish church of St. Martin and was presided over by the Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal O'Brien. This important ceremony was concelebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio in Slovenia, Msgr. Juliusz Janusz, and the Mass was also attended by the member of the Grand Magisterium and Chancellor of the Order Ivan Rebernik. The new brothers and sister received expressions of support and joy from over 30 Knights and Ladies from the Lieutenancies of Austria, Northern Italy, Hungary, Poland, Eastern Spain and a representative of the Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta. On the occasion of the Investiture, Cardinal Grand Master granted promotion to four members.

Due to official obligations in Rome, the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Ljubljana Stanislav Zore could not attend the Investiture. This is why Cardinal O'Brien invested him a few days earlier in Rome and the members of the Lieutenancy are honestly grateful for his having done so. On this occasion, the Cardinal Grand Master appointed the Archbishop Zore as new Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy of Slovenia.

*In the next quarterly Newsletter (Spring 2016), the Lieutenancies are invited to bear witness to the ways in which the members live the Year of Mercy. To share your experiences contact us at:
comunicazione@oessh.va*

