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Message from the Grand Master

BEING A PILGRIM

Going to Jerusalem is never a sightseeing tour. It is always a pilgrimage. It is going to the source of our faith or beliefs. Look at Egeria (4th-5th centuries AD), the Roman author of a fascinating travel diary recounting her visits to Palestine (*Peregrinatio ad Loca Sancta*); she, already, was attracted not only by the beauty of the place, but also by the spirituality that emanated from it.

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre is an institution, which, in addition to nobility of life and soul, requires of its members, the Dames and Knights, a commitment of charity, education and affection towards the Holy Land. As Grand Master, I made, as tradition dictates, my solemn



The Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre during his solemn entry into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, alongside the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

CONTENTS

The Order in Union with the Universal Church

"SEEING AND TOUCHING THE LORD" IV
A GREAT JOY FOR THE ORDER X

Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

THE SPRING MEETING OF THE GRAND
MAGISTERIUM XI

The Order and the Holy Land

FACES, PHOTOS AND BEAUTIFUL STORIES:
THE WORK OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY
SEPULCHRE THROUGH A SERIES
OF VIDEOS XIII

The Life of the Lieutenancies

THE KING OF SPAIN RECEIVED THE COLLAR
OF THE ORDER FROM THE HANDS
OF CARDINAL FILONI XVI

"MY PEOPLE IS GUIDED BY THE POWER
OF LOVE" XVIII

Culture

THE ORDER'S CHAPTER HOUSE CHURCH
IN FLORENCE XIX



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entry into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the place most evocative of Christian faith. When walking through the narrow and charming streets of the Old Holy City, passing through the historic gates of the ancient walls where time seems almost suspended, one has a sense of being in a timeless place. Its disputed neighborhoods, divided and strongly defended by the ancient communities that inhabit them (Jews, Muslims, and Christians), offer pilgrims, who never tire of watching, a glimpse of the dear and dense truth of a history that no one wants to relinquish. Here, visibility is almost obligatory: everywhere you find Franciscan friars in habits, nuns from various congregations, pilgrims, young and old, souvenir sellers, Israeli soldiers and city police, rabbis, men who wear the yarmulke (skullcap) and Orthodox Jewish worshippers with curls protruding from their characteristic black hats and falling down their faces. The names of the small streets – Via Dolorosa, Custody Street, King David Street, Armenian Street, etc. – tell us about the ancient history of this city and the successive eras it went through,

whose traces, churches, chapels, and mosques represent landmarks and reminders of the conquests and pious acts it experienced. Presence and prayer, pilgrimages and tourists from all over the world, the sounds of known and lesser-known languages accompany one's walk up the stairs, around the turns, and through the small squares that form the fabric of this city, the most loved of all time, especially by the followers of the three great monotheistic religions.

Yes! Going to Jerusalem is always a pilgrimage. Every good Jew and every good Christian goes there. According to Jewish tradition, Jesus went there several times on pilgrimage, from his adolescence onward; he too went to Jerusalem singing the Songs of Ascents (the Gradual Psalms) as he walked up to the city of David. Mary and Joseph went there out of gratitude to the Eternal for the Son who had been given to them as a gift, and they brought two turtledoves and two pigeons, birds that are still very prominent in the City. Muhammad also went there (according to Islamic tradition, one night around 621, an angel accompanied



Muhammad to Jerusalem, where the Al-Aqsa mosque now stands) and so do Muslim pilgrims nowadays, those who have the right of access to the Temple Mount, the rights to which they vigorously claim, just like the Jews who stop to pray near the remains of the ancient wall of the original Temple of Solomon, rebuilt by Herod the Great.

The heart of the Old City of Jerusalem is faith. For eight centuries, the Franciscans have guarded the most sacred places for Christians, in Palestine and in Israel. Francis of Assisi wanted them to be there in humility and simplicity; a living presence to preserve these "stones" that speak of the Lord and of the pilgrims who have always come there with devotion, respect and love. Pilgrims who go to the Holy Land will never be the same after they return home; they will be moved in their life of faith every time they read a passage from the Gospel and call to mind the places and landscapes.

Among the Christians in the Holy Land, there is a real experience of ecumenical relations, strongly supported firstly by Paul VI, the first pope in history to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, on January 5th, 1964 to meet the venerable Greek Orthodox

Patriarch, Athenagoras. Here, relations are also forged between Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities, and it is not uncommon for serious tensions to arise. Here, Christian schools are open to all and create a diversity that is the basis of a peaceful future for the Holy City.

One cannot go to the Holy Land without visiting Bethlehem and Nazareth: these places represent the silence and the humility of God, who visibly entered the world as part of a family. The story of God, that is, the story of Jesus (for God has no story) coming into this world here, in Palestine, had a beginning and an end. For the Christian, this story has become sacred, and it is freely given to all those who, says Jesus, "believe in me" (*Jn. 17:20*).

It is impossible to speak about emotions. In the Holy Land, we feel so many of them, and they are always new, even after several trips. This was the case for me too. I therefore hope that my readers, when they make their pilgrimage, experience them to the full.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

(this article was also published on Beemagazine.it)

GUCCIONE
SINCE 1975
DECORATIONS OF KNIGHTLY ORDERS

Order of the Holy Sepulchre
Papal Equestrian Orders
Order of Malta
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The Order in Union with the Universal Church

“SEEING AND TOUCHING THE LORD”

*The Grand Master of
the Order of the Holy
Sepulchre makes a
pilgrimage to the
Holy Land
(May 9th-14th 2022)*

“**W**e come here, as Francis of Assisi said, to ‘see and touch’ the Lord: to see his footsteps, to hear the echo of his words, to touch the place where he lay, as encouraged by the angel: “Come see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead!” (Matt 28: 6-7). It is where God saved us!”

Such were the words of Cardinal Fernando Filoni during the speech he delivered before the aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre, marking his solemn entry into the key Christian sanctuary that is the Basilica of the Resurrection.

He said he came as a pilgrim, thanking the “children of this Mother Church of Jerusalem”, those who have “the same mission as the angel who encourages us to see where the Lord lay. [...] Thank you for this service to our faithful brothers and sisters throughout the world and in particular to our brothers and sisters – Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre,” he added.

The same day, Tuesday, May 10th, from 3 p.m., Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa had accompanied him in procession through the streets of the Old City, from the headquarters of the Latin Patriarchate to the Anastasis, the place of worship that



encompasses both Golgotha and the sepulchre of Christ, a church built by order of Emperor Constantine during the 4th century.

Preceded by the clergy and followed by Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre from several European countries who were in Jerusalem at the time, the Grand Master was welcomed into the sacred building by the Franciscan Custos of the

*Cardinal Filoni
symbolically
receiving the
key of the Holy
Sepulchre
from the hands
of its guardian.*





The Grand Master of the Order speaking in front of the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton. This was after he had symbolically received the key to the holy place from the hands of the Muslim guardian, kept carefully by his family for centuries.

Many pilgrims from various countries attended the moving celebration and were

enthralled by this unexpected event. Cardinal Filoni explained the meaning of the spiritual path that he could finally take, after two years of pandemic. "We come today in the silence of faith to draw from this well of living water, where we discover 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin' (Ex 34:6-7). We come as pilgrims to discover this mystery. Here is the whole meaning of our pilgrimage, of coming to this place. Here every Knight and Dame who loves this place knows that they draw the meaning of their dignity and will carry with them for a lifetime the memory of their faith in the risen Christ."

The cardinal had arrived in Jerusalem from Rome the day before, with a small delegation from the Order, including Lieutenant General Borromeo and Governor General Visconti di Modrone. There, at the premises of the Patriarchate, he first met the Catholic Ordinaries and the Apostolic Nuncio, listening to their accounts of local pastoral projects.

During this meeting, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa highlighted the important role female religious vocations



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Meeting with the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land.



Lieutenant General Borromeo and Governor General Visconti di Modrone have accompanied the Grand Master during each stage of his pilgrimage (here at the Custody of the Holy Land).



play in reaching the inhabitants of the Holy Land in their homes. Handing over the collar of the Order to the Latin Patriarch, the Grand Master then described in a few warm words his desire to continue to serve the people who form the "Mother Church", and expressed his desire to make this fine mission carried out by the Knights and Dames better known among all the bishops of the world. He compared the Church of Jerusalem to an old family home where children, who have left and found their place in society, enjoy returning out of love.

Cardinal Filoni followed this important fraternal meeting, on the morning of his solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre, by a visit to the Apostolic Nuncio. He then went to see each of the representatives of the Status Quo, which governs the holy places; the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Theophilos III, the Armenian Patriarch, Nourhan Manougian, and the Custos. A special moment with the Franciscan friars at the Custody was when the Grand Master accessed valuable documentary archives, in particular those relating to the dubbing of the writer François-René de Chateaubriand, made Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1806.

On Wednesday, May 11th, after a morning Mass at the Holy Sepulchre, the Grand Master's pilgrimage continued with a long stopover in Bethlehem and its surrounding areas.

In the town of Beit Sahour, founded,

according to tradition, where the shepherds of the creche heard the angels' announcement, the delegation met with the priest and the parishioners. The latter described the problems posed by the colonization of their lands, which has led to a decrease in the number of Christians, many of whom are tempted to emigrate because of the permanent tensions in the country. That same morning, Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, a well-known Christian in the Holy Land, was shot dead during an Israeli military operation in Jenin, Palestine...

During the meeting, the Grand Master insisted on the importance of the education



Cardinal Filoni in discussion with the students of a school in Palestine.



and training of the future Christian leaders of Palestinian society. The delegation then went to greet the students and teachers of a school located in the same town, founded by the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist.

A time of prayer then took place in the grotto of the Nativity, and, afterward, the group went to the Hogar Niño Dios center for children with disabilities, led by the nuns and monks of the Incarnate Word. The joy of the children was contagious. One of them refused to let go of the cardinal's hand throughout the visit, illustrating the trust that the most vulnerable show to those who love them, and confirming in her own way the concrete bond of the members of the Order with the people embodying the suffering Christ in the Holy Land.

After a lunch at the University of Bethlehem, an Institute supported by the Order, the cardinal spent the afternoon at the seminary of Beit Jala, in the company of seminarians and their teachers, in an atmosphere full of gratitude towards the Knights and Dames.

That same day, after leaving Beit Jala for Nazareth in northern Israel, Cardinal Filoni was keen to stop at the shrine of Our Lady of Palestine, in Deir Rafat, halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The Sisters of Bethlehem who live there gave the delegation a friendly and prayerful welcome, demonstrating the spiritual service they provide in this place. The shrine was built in 1927, on the inspired initiative of Patriarch Luigi Barlassina who, through it, wanted to place the Holy Land under the protective mantle of the Virgin Mary.

That evening, in Nazareth, the Grand Master suggested a time of silence in the house of Mary, which stayed opened late especially for him and the delegation. Then, the next morning, he presided over an early Mass there, concelebrated by Mgr. Rafic Nahra, the new auxiliary bishop and Patriarchal Vicar for Israel. Each of the pilgrims was then able to add their little 'yes' to the great 'yes' of Mary, in the name

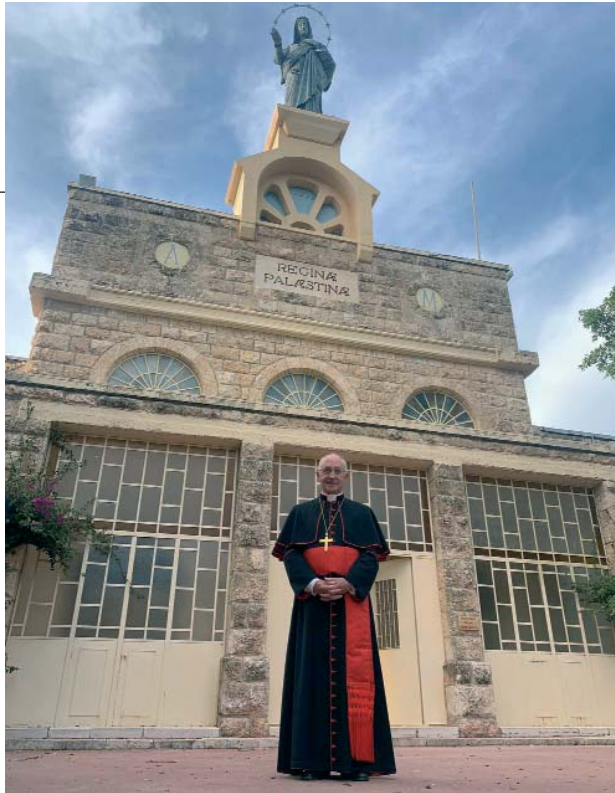


Moment of meditation in the Grotto of the Nativity, followed by a visit to children with disabilities of the Hogar Niño Dios center, in Bethlehem.



The Grand Master is welcomed at the seminary of Beit Jala.





Our Lady of Palestine is the patron saint of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Her shrine is located in Deir Rafat.

of the whole Order, so that the solidarity given to the inhabitants of the Holy Land stays, first and foremost, guided by the love of God and in complete openness to His will.

On Thursday, May 12th, the Cardinal and his delegation left for Jordan, via Jericho. They were due in Amman in the afternoon for the consecration of the Church of Saint Paul in Jubeiha, built in a district of the capital where the Christian population is experiencing great growth. The Mass was marked by an atmosphere of great fervor, the Patriarch insisting on publicly thanking

the representatives of the Order for the financial support they gave to the project over the past few years.

The Grand Master then addressed the faithful of the parish, entrusting them with the important task of completing the work of the builders thanks to "a prophetic Christian presence, that is to say, capable of proclaiming the mystery of Jesus, Son of God, who brings peace, mercy, forgiveness, respect for the rights of all, coexistence and fraternity."

In the evening, alongside the new auxiliary bishop and Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan, Mgr. Jamal Khader Daibes, born in Palestine, the Grand Master was dressed in the traditional *gandura*, an eastern sign of welcome. He was greeted amid applause from a crowd of guests aware that they were witnessing an historical event in this Muslim country where Christians have an important role to play.

On the penultimate day of his pilgrimage to the sources of the faith, May 13th, Cardinal Filoni walked in the footsteps of Moses, at the top of Mount Nebo, where the biblical prophet was able to look at the Promised Land after forty years of walking in the desert.

During the afternoon, he and his delegation attended a presentation by the directors of the 25 Jordanian schools of the Latin Patriarchate. The latter described their

The Mass in the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth was an opportunity to entrust all the members of the Order and their friends in prayer to the Virgin Mary.





On May 12th, in the suburbs of Amman in Jordan, the church of Jubeiha, financed by the Order, was inaugurated in the presence of many faithful.

educational project, which includes 30% of Muslim students, pointing out in particular that, for two successive years, the best baccalaureate results in Jordan



Meeting the directors of the schools of the Latin Patriarchate in Jordan was the Grand Master's last stop in the Holy Land before his return to Rome.



Meditation in the footsteps of Moses, on Mount Nebo.

have come from a Catholic establishment of the Latin Patriarchate. They also mentioned the need to develop professional schools in the country, asking the Order to commit to this if possible.

Cardinal Filoni and the six members of the delegation left Amman on May 14th, reliving in their hearts all these meetings, now able to put faces on the projects carried out. They were eager to share with those around them the enthusiasm felt during their pilgrimage, to encourage the members of the Order to take once again the path to the Holy Land, and to meet there the "living stones" of this vast diocese of Orient that is so important in the eyes of the Universal Church.

Francois Vayne



A GREAT JOY FOR THE ORDER

*Msgr. Fortunato Frezza,
Master of Ceremonies for the
Grand Magisterium, will be
created Cardinal by the Pope
on 27 August.*

Welcoming the Holy Father's appointment to the College of Cardinals of Monsignor Fortunato Frezza, Master of Ceremonies and Spiritual Assistant of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, the Lieutenant General, Professor Agostino Borromeo, and the Governor General Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone express



their warmest congratulations and joy for the new cardinal on behalf of all the members of the Grand Magisterium.

Biography of the future cardinal

Monsignor Fortunato Frezza was born in Rome on February 6th, 1942. In 1966, after studying in the minor seminary of Bagnoregio and the major seminary of Viterbo, he was ordained a priest.

In 1967 he received a Licentiate in Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University and in 1977 he obtained a degree in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome with a philological thesis on the book of the prophet Micah.

During his priestly ministry he held the following positions and ministries: from 1971 to 1984 he was Parish Priest of Spicciano and at the same time lecturer in Sacred Scripture at various theological institutes: Pontifical Gregorian University (as Assistant), La Quercia Viterbo Regional Seminary, various Institutes of Religious Sciences (Albano, Civita Castellana, Viterbo), International Theological Studentate of the Giuseppini del Murialdo in Viterbo and the Salesians in the Holy Land.

In 1983 he was employed in the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops and from 1997 to 2014 he was its Under-Secretary.

In 1999 he was appointed Prelate of Honour of His Holiness.

In 2013 he was appointed Canon of the Papal Basilica of St Peter's in the Vatican, then, in 2015, Commander and Master of Ceremonies of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, and, in 2022, became Chamberlain of the Chapter of St Peter's in the Vatican.

He has also held the position of Spiritual Assistant to Personnel in the Directorate of Health and Hygiene at the Vatican; spiritual assistance to several monasteries of nuns; chaplain of the A.S. Roma football team.

His bibliographical publications currently number 123 titles, particularly in the biblical field.



Proceedings of the Grand Magisteriu

THE SPRING MEETING OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

The Spring Meeting of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre was held on April 12th, 2022, at the Palazzo della Rovere. Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master, who chaired the meeting remotely, insisted on the importance of continuing to support the Mother Church of Jerusalem, even if news of the war in Europe tends to distract our focus away from the Holy Land. The Grand

Master also underlined the urgency of preparing for the future through facilitating the integration of younger people into the Order.

The Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, moderated the meeting, as usual, in the presence of the Lieutenant General, Professor Agostino Borromeo, of the two Vice-Governor Generals, Jean-Pierre de Glutz and Enric



The Spring meeting of the Grand Magisterium, led by the Governor General, took place partly in virtual mode, with the participation of His Beatitude Archbishop Pizzaballa.



Mas, of the Chancellor, Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli, of the Treasurer, Dr. Saverio Petrillo, and of the Master of Ceremonies, Mgr. Fortunato Frezza. Also present were the President of the Legal Commission, lawyer Flavio Rondinini, Duke Leopoldo Torlonia, Knight Grand Cross Michael Scott Feeley, H.S.H. Prince Hugo Windisch Graetz, Professor Helene Lund, Professor Bartholomew McGettrick, President of the Commission for the Holy Land, and the CEO of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Sami El-Yousef.

In addition to the Grand Master, Assessor Mgr. Tommaso Caputo, Vice-Governor Tom Pogge, Knight Grand Cross Nicholas McKenna, Colonel Dominique Neckerbroeck, Professor Vincenzo Buonomo and Lady Grand Cross Mary O'Brien also joined the meeting virtually.

In his main address, the Governor General insisted on openness to dialogue with the Lieutenancies to support them in their work, especially in the different language groups. He then announced the meeting of the Lieutenancies of North America next June in Los Angeles, and that of the Latin American Lieutenancies the following November in San Paulo, Brazil. Delighted with the positive financial results from the Grand Magisterium, he also spoke of the work to draft the new internal Regulations of the Order, as well as the progress of the renovation works at the Palazzo della Rovere.

The members then listened to a recorded video message from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who warmly thanked the Order for its continued support and looked to the future with hope. For his part, the Lieutenant General announced the conclusion of the vital work of the Saint-Jean-Baptist Foundation, whose mission was to save the University of Madaba, in Jordan, from running a deficit. The final balance sheet for 2021 was then presented by Dr. Petrillo and approved, closing with a surplus

of 1,236,524.47 euros, almost entirely offsetting the deficit of 1,397,729 euros from the previous year, which had been caused by expenses relating to the solidarity made necessary by the Covid-19 crisis.

In his very comprehensive report, the CEO of the Latin Patriarchate showed how the Order's donations made it possible to help more than 20,000 people in difficulty during the pandemic; to pay some 2,000 employees of the diocese of the Holy Land, thus supporting many families; and to create jobs for young people, especially in Palestine and Gaza. He welcomed the enthusiasm shown by the Lieutenancies for small projects with a social and educational dimension.

The President of the Commission for the Holy Land, Bart Mc Gettrick, back from Jerusalem, testified to the high socio-political tension and despair that the local population would experience if the Order were not there to keep the torch of hope alight.

Chancellor Bastianelli, for his part, reiterated the Grand Master's words concerning the young people of the Order, proposing the constitution of an international network of young members, which could be led from Rome, to encourage local initiatives that would help rejuvenate the institution.

Vice-Governors De Glutz, Pogge and Mas opened a debate on the various questions raised during the talks, including that of the training of future members. On the same topic, the Grand Master, in his conclusions, emphasized the role that Priors and Grand Priors in the Lieutenancies play in the initial and continuing formations of Knights and Dames, a need to which he has been firmly committed in recent months through his spiritual teachings disseminated by the Order's various communication channels. He welcomed the resumption of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, first and foremost the one he will make from May 9th to May 14th, which will be marked by his solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre.



The Order and the Holy Land

FACES, PHOTOS AND BEAUTIFUL STORIES: THE WORK OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE THROUGH A SERIES OF VIDEOS

Through their mission of prayer and practical help, the Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre feel that they are truly close to the communities of the Holy Land.

Thanks to the coordination provided by the Grand Magisterium, the contributions received from the Order's different Lieutenancies and Magisterial Delegations, sent to the Holy Land, are allocated according to the various needs indicated by the Latin Patriarchate, for specific projects or fixed institutional expenses.

The Grand Magisterium's YouTube channel, has a series of short films that give a face and tell the stories of those who receive economic aid, allowing us to see, in pictures, how much of a difference this help can make.

The Order mainly supports the Latin Patriarchate's network of 44 schools, which welcome approximately 20,000 students.

Msgr Jamal Khader Daibes speaks of his time as Director General of the Patriarchate Schools in Palestine at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. "We faced many challenges during



Teaching in schools.

this period" he says speaking of his time as director general of the Patriarchate's schools in Palestine at the beginning of the Covid-19 emergency, "such as the online learning and the equipment in our schools to deal with these problems. However, we were able to secure all the technological tools and train teachers to meet the needs of online learning. It would not have been possible to address these challenges without the support of the Order."

<https://youtu.be/Lda8e4qdspA>

Another life-long beneficiary of the help given by the Order is the Seminary of Beit Jala. For more than 150 years, the Order has supported the fundamental work of training diocesan priests. Father Bernard Poggi, the



Forming priests in the seminary.

current rector, says that the seminary has benefitted from various improvements in recent years and that the Knights and Dames have supported certain projects such as the renovation of the library or the auditorium, in addition to their fixed contribution to expenses.

<https://youtu.be/C1iTRVNNOUE>

Like a diocese, the Latin Patriarchate of





Pastoral activities, particularly at the service of the youth.

Jerusalem works alongside parishes and local communities in the region, and organizes pastoral and liturgical activities in the Holy Land through its Liturgical Office, its Catechetical Office and its Pastoral Office. Thanks to the support of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, these three offices have been able to widen their field of action and organize numerous events and activities.

The Pastoral Office, founded in 2017, has for example created, thanks to funding from the Order, a game based on the Holy Scriptures entitled "In the footsteps of Jesus", which allows young people to discover the life of Christ in an enjoyable and stimulating way. "This game that you have supported has helped our community become more familiar with their land and sacred places," Father Ibrahim Shomali tells us.

https://youtu.be/Q3oTs_RSQB4



Welcoming the children of foreign workers and migrants.

The St. James Vicariate for Hebrew-speaking Catholics is another important project for the Order. The Order's assistance has made it possible to develop programs, purchase goods and materials to organize more activities for young people, as well as translate spiritual literature into Hebrew. Thanks to the contributions received, Father Piotr Zelazko, Patriarchal Vicar of the Saint James Vicariate, was also able to publish a book for members of the Vicariate who visit migrants in prison. Among the essential activities is also that of the Saint Rachel center, which welcomes the children of foreign workers, migrants and asylum seekers who are unable to look after them during the day.

<https://youtu.be/dPccu2Mvmaw>

In collaboration with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and a network of Catholic institutions, the Order also invests in the care and support of the elderly and orphans, as well as people with disabilities. Among the establishments that offer these services, without discrimination, living the Gospel in depth, is the retirement home of Beit Afram in Taybeh, which offers quality care to the elderly, encourages spirituality among its guests and its employees and enables them to interact with different church groups. In Jerusalem, at Saint-Louis, also called the French Hospital, terminally-ill patients are offered palliative care. "Here we have patients of all religions: Christians,



Support for people in need, such as orphans.



Muslims and Jews," says Sister Frida Nasser, who works there. "They are all treated the same way, and it is nice to see people coming here, especially relatives of patients who get to meet each other. When facing suffering, there is no difference: Jews can talk to Muslims, Palestinians, Christians. This is really important for us and we try to pursue our mission as best we can."

<https://youtu.be/phA2ff-Q8kA>

In Jordan, the Our Lady of Peace Center strives "to help the poorest of the poor, especially people with disabilities." Father



Help to the poor.

Shawki Baterian, director of the center, explains: "In Jordan, 13% of the population suffers from a disability. When the center started to receive funding in 2003, the idea was to provide a free service to all residents of Jordan, regardless of their religion or nationality." This organization has many needs and the Order has been helping it for a long time, through various projects.

<https://youtu.be/xwEsWXSH18>

Finally, there are also many activities related to humanitarian aid, especially in Gaza and the East Jerusalem region, where Christian families are often unable to cover their expenses. The Humanitarian Aid funding that the Order renews each year benefits those who need help with medication, school fees, and various other needs. Father Gabriel Romanelli, parish priest of Gaza, recalls that "Christians have lived here for more than 2,000 years, and we



Supporting hope in Gaza.

must protect this presence for the common good." <https://youtu.be/eufsuEiZFVM>

One way to do this is through the Order's funded project to create jobs for young people in Gaza. Sami El-Yousef, CEO of the Latin Patriarchate, explains; "The easy solution is to provide people with some kind of monthly financial assistance, like a charitable grant. But we have made a more



Job creation programs in the most disadvantaged areas of the Holy Land.

difficult choice that, in one way, is also more productive; namely to give people a job, depending on their specialization, by which they can really gain valuable experience and put it to use, so that they are potentially better equipped to find a job by themselves in the future."

https://youtu.be/LNZ1krg9_2U

Elena Dini



The Life of the Lieutenancies

THE KING OF SPAIN RECEIVED THE COLLAR OF THE ORDER FROM THE HANDS OF CARDINAL FILONI

The audience granted on April 1st at the Palace of Zarzuela by King Felipe VI of Spain to the Cardinal Grand Master and the delegation accompanying him was a very special moment. First for the ceremony itself, of course, which took place with the formal simplicity that characterizes the current Spanish monarchy; but also and mostly because it reaffirmed the historical ties between the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and the Royal House of Spain, as well as the personal devotion of the Sovereign to the Holy Land.

As a connoisseur of Spain, having lived in this country as an Italian ambassador, I am happy to share my impressions of my return to the Zarzuela Palace.

The King's residence is not a sumptuous palace, but a modern villa surrounded by a large park, on the outskirts of the capital. After passing the checkpoint, we passed through age-old evergreen oak woods populated by free-roaming deer and fawns grazing quietly.

We were admitted into the presence of the Sovereign, who was standing, waiting for us, wearing a facemask, in the center of the audience room, which I entered so many times as ambassador. Cardinal Filoni presented him with the Collar of the Order, recalling that among his historical titles is that of King of Jerusalem, which he obtained, over the centuries, through the Aragonese heritage, and which also represents, even if only on an honorary basis, the continuity of the bond between the Catholic Sovereigns and the Holy Land.



Governor General Visconti di Modrone had already met the King of Spain Felipe VI a few years ago, when he was Italian Ambassador to Spain.

The Sovereign himself, in response, jokingly recalled that during one of his visits to Jerusalem, he had been the subject of special attention precisely because of this honorary title, which the Israeli authorities themselves were quick to acknowledge.

Apart from these aspects evoking a centuries-old history, Don Felipe offered an attentive and particularly cordial welcome to the delegation that, apart from the Cardinal Grand Master and the Governor General, was composed of the two Spanish Lieutenants as well as the members of the Council of the two Lieutenancies. The meeting went on well beyond the half-hour provided for by the protocol. The King





The King of Spain receiving the Grand Master and high representatives of the Order last April, in Madrid.

wanted to speak to everyone, and he listened to the two Lieutenants describe their commitment to charitable works in the Holy Land, while commenting on their remarks.

José Carlos Sanjuan y Monforte, Lieutenant for Western Spain, thanked the Sovereign for his ongoing support to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and his particular attention to charities and projects in the Holy Land. Juan Carlos de Balle y Comas, Lieutenant for Eastern Spain, spoke of the exemplary role of the Royal Family and presented the Sovereign with a souvenir for Princesses Leonor and Sofia.

For my part, I wanted to express to the King how honored I felt to meet him as Governor General of the Order, now that he occupies the highest office of the State – all while reminding myself of our past conversations, when I was Ambassador of Italy and he was Prince of Asturias. Several years have passed and the expectations that the country then placed on the young Prince, heir to the throne, were largely confirmed during the eight years of his reign, which he showed he could manage with dignity, firmness and a sense of duty, creating consensus on a national and international level.

The King then accompanied us up the stairs to the garden for a souvenir photo. Once outside, we were able to take off our facemasks.

The cardinal was dressed in filettato and

his purple scarf shone in the sun, contrasting with our dark suits. Don Felipe wore a very well-cut grey herringbone suit and, over his lightly striped blue shirt, a patterned tie of the same color, as well as black moccasins. He remained alone with us the whole time: the staff, who had greeted us at the entrance to the villa, discreetly moved away.

Some members of the Spanish delegation wore green ties. In response to my questioning, it was

explained to me that it was a reference to the Italian patriots of the Risorgimento who, to sing the praises of Victor Emmanuel II, King of Italy, shouted "Viva Verdi" (hiding their faith in the unifying role of the Savoyard sovereign behind the name of the great maestro). In the same way, the Spanish delegation wanted to display their message of loyalty and devotion to the Sovereign by wearing their green ties ("verde" in Spanish): "V.E.R.D.E. = Viva El Rey De España" ("Long live the King of Spain" in Spanish).

The symbolic role of the King is followed closely in Spain, especially as part of the constitutional structure of the state. During the eight years of his reign, the Sovereign has been able to play this role with great stability and transparency, defending the Constitution, embodying a serious ethical reference for Spanish citizens and the keystone of complex political balances. For the Spanish Constitution, the King is the symbol of the unity and continuity of the country.

Among the members of the Spanish delegation was Daniel Berzosa y Lopez, Chancellor of the Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain, a renowned constitutionalist, who recently won a journalism prize for an article in which he explained the constitutional role of Felipe VI. "The philosopher, Hobbes," wrote Berzosa, "was the first, in *Leviathan*, to consider how to reduce the plurality of the voices of a people





Nataliya, a Ukrainian-born Dame of the Order, invites us to pray fervently and with confidence for peace in Europe.

destroyed Mariupol are unbearable to see. But we are aiming, with a fierce determination, to rebuild every devastated city, town and village, to recover their souls, to honor the dead and to restore life and happiness.

Yes, Ukrainian people around the world are grieving, but we have not given up on defending our beloved county by every means possible and with a strong faith in God's guidance.

Yes, they are working hard and doing everything they can to save innocent lives. Even in the darkest moments of intolerable pain, my people is driven by the power of love and by great confidence in God. No one

can dim this divine light that comes from within, no matter how much pain one has to endure because of this war. Because light always overcomes darkness.

It breaks my heart to see Ukrainian women who have been scattered, like pearls from a broken necklace, across neighboring countries. They stand in queues to get a bus or train, they cross borders in search for peaceful skies. While saving their children and praying for their men, these tired, tortured but strong-willed women remain resilient.

Recently, I have seen many images showing the incredible strength of Ukrainian women.

They do not give up, they do not cry, they do not complain. On the contrary, the power of their faith is stronger than ever. Even though they have lost their homes while escaping to safety with only a few spare clothes, even with faces emaciated due to constant lack of sleep and never-ending anxiety, their inner beauty still surpasses their outer appearance.

Ukrainian women scattered across the world are the embodiment of femininity, courage and bravery. Now their main task is to save their children, their parents, and pray for those among our people who are fighting. Everything else can come later.

Culture

THE ORDER'S CHAPTER HOUSE CHURCH IN FLORENCE

The Church of Saints James and Philip, located in the 14th century hospital complex, on the Via della Scala, is a symbol of the history of Florence. The first concrete information about it dates back to 1587; and concerns the concession, by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand I to

Vittorio di Pellegrino dell'Ancisa, of the building in which it is located. The objective was to found a hospice for pilgrims, in what had been a hospital under the patronage of the Michi, a prominent Guelph party family. In 1589, which was a year of poverty and famine, Messer Vittorio gave shelter there to



a young woman "whose honor was under threat." She was the first of many to whom he gave religious instruction and taught a trade, "away from the dangers of poverty." The "Congregation of Charity", as they were called, was housed in the convent, while the reception of pilgrims continued in the adjoining hospital, with great efficiency and in a spirit of charity; there, guests received food, shelter, and clothing.

The church was renovated in 1626-1627 at the expense of Archbishop Alessandro Marzi Medici, whose coat of arms, as well as those of the Michi family, can be seen in the building. Most of the original furniture and some paintings have disappeared, but the series of frescoes representing the corporal works of mercy recall the spirit of charity that has always graced these walls, as do the decorative motifs; heads of stone angels whose outstretched wings end in volutes, framing the portals on each side of the high altar. This altar is surmounted by a magnificent carved and gilded frame, which houses a ray of light with small silver clouds around the central niche. In the old choir can be found 17th century painting, from the Florentine school, depicting the Immaculate Conception; on the left wall of the altar, there is another from the same period, which can be attributed to an artist from Matteo Rosselli's circle, of the Virgin in glory with Saint Gherardo da Villamagna and Saint Sebastian. It is a beautiful work of art, with interesting details: for example, the holy martyr is sometimes depicted as a richly dressed young knight with an arrow in his hand, which is why one can identify in him the young man in front of the hermit.

In 1821, the church and the rooms in Via



In 1986, the Archbishop of Florence assigned the Church of Saints James and Philip to the Order.

della Scala were given to the Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, which emerged from within an older institution, the Society dedicated to Saint Francis of Paola. They were removed by Pietro Leopoldo in 1785 and then restored in 1792. The Brotherhood, thanks mainly to the Bargagli Petrucci family, carried out consolidation works on the building, then other works to repair the damage caused by the Arno in 1966. But, in 1986, due to the gradual decrease in the number of members and the consequent reduction in activity and therefore in the use of the premises, the Archbishop of Florence, Cardinal Silvano Piovanelli, decided to assign the chapel and the ancient large choir to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The attentive and loving care of our brothers and sisters has since written a new chapter in the history of this prestigious Florentine church.

