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Reflections of the Grand Master

DEAR KNIGHTS AND DAMES OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

This *Newsletter* is a special issue to report on an important moment in the life of the Order: the Consulta, which by the Constitution is celebrated every four years. On this occasion, I also invited the Grand Priors; 21 were present. It was opportune for them to acquire a wider knowledge of the Order and its commitments.

The Consulta was a time of fraternity, sharing and prayer, for which we give thanks to God.

For all of us, having knowledge of the life of our Order is a way of becoming part of it, and this is the reason for our special issue. It is not a matter of looking with detachment at what "others" do, but of perceiving that "that doing", that "saying", those "encounters", belong to me too. This is

the idea and purpose at the basis of this Newsletter Special edition. It is my desire that no one feel extraneous nor that the life of the Order be perceived as something distant.

The Knight and Dame, who take the time to



The icon of Our Lady of Palestine, Patroness of the Order, was blessed by the Holy Father on November 9, during the audience he granted to the participants of the Consulta.

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read the contents of these pages, will perceive many aspects that can help further their understanding that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a living Institution, rich in charity and with a special sensitivity towards the Land of Jesus, whose Church we perceive as the Mother of all Churches.

In presenting the icon of Mary with the profile of Jerusalem on her knees to the Holy Father Francis and asking for it to be blessed, I commented: "You see, Holy Father, it seems to me before this image that I can say that Mary had 'two children': one Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit; the Son of God to whom she contributed in giving him a bodily appearance according to the Flesh; and a daughter, also born through the action of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Church. Mary, as the Second Vatican Council says, is the Mother of the Church

and, at the same time, the first member of it, having the Apostles around her."

The Holy Father commented that this idea pleased him.

To Mary, Queen of Palestine, we entrusted ourselves in those days of terrorism and violence, asking for the gift of peace and reconciliation in justice and truth. As a seal, we had a pilgrimage to the Marian Shrine of "Divine Love".

You will also find in this issue the important words of the Holy Father to our Order, greeting each of those present at the end of the meeting; the Pope thanked all those who contribute to the support of the Holy Land and participate in the Order, extending His Blessing to all of you.

My cordial greetings to you all.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni
Grand Master





THE ORDER'S CONSULTA WAS HELD IN ROME, UNDER THE GAZE OF OUR LADY OF PALESTINE

This year the Grand Priors were exceptionally invited to the quadrennial meeting of the Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates, organized around the Grand Master and the Governor General

"**M**ay the Virgin Mary, invoked by you as Queen of Palestine, always assist you in your mission," said Pope Francis as he received the participants of the Consulta of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre gathered in Rome on November 9 for their statutory general assembly, the theme of which was the formation of Knights and Dames.

Before blessing all the members of the Order and their families, the Holy Father turned his thoughts to the Holy Land, gravely declaring: "We are sadly witnessing a tragedy unfolding in the very places where the Lord lived, where he taught us through his humanity to love, to forgive and to do good to all. And instead, we see them torn apart by terrible suffering that affects above all so many innocents, so many innocent

dead. That is why I am spiritually united with you, who certainly live this meeting of the Consulta sharing the great sorrow of the Mother Church of Jerusalem and imploring the gift of peace".

It was in this extremely worrying context for the Holy Land that around 150 leaders of the Order from some forty countries prayed and worked from November 6 to 10, around the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, and the Governor General, Ambassador Visconti di Modrone.

Each day of the meeting began with morning Mass, during which the members of the Grand Magisterium and the Grand Priors, Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates, spiritually guided by the Grand Master, kept the faithful of the diocese of Jerusalem in their prayers, particularly during the





Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Grand Prior of the Order and Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, spoke live online during the Consulta, thanking the Knights and Dames for their particularly important support during this period of war in the Holy Land.

Eucharist celebrated in honor of Our Lady of Palestine on November 8, presided over by the Assessor of the Order, Archbishop Tommaso Caputo.

As soon as the Consulta opened, after the words of welcome from the Grand Master and the Governor General, the eyes of the participants turned to the Holy Land, with the online intervention of Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, broadcast live, during which he described the terrible situation being experienced by the entire population, reaffirming his desire to work for unity and pronouncing words of hope in the midst of a deep spiritual night. He warmly thanked the Order for its regular and generous support, which is more necessary than ever.

Father Flavio Pace, Under-Secretary of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, was one of the key speakers. He suggested that the Order could expand by welcoming non-Latin Catholics from other continents as members, in the spirit of the collaboration that exists within ROACO (Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches), where the Order contributes materially to

projects in the Holy Land involving Catholics from other Churches, in particular Melkites and Maronites. "The whole Church has a moral duty to support the Mother Church of Jerusalem, because this is rooted in the apostolic tradition, ever since the Apostle Paul called the Christian communities he founded to this solidarity with their brothers and sisters of the Holy City," commented Cardinal Filoni, during a lively debate on formation, with members also having to deepen the biblical sources of their commitment.

After the inaugural session, the first two days were devoted to unique and valuable bilateral meetings between the Grand Master and the Governor General with the Lieutenant and Grand Prior of each Lieutenancy, and to exchanges in language groups on the basis of a draft document, in



The daily Mass opened each day of the Consulta, allowing the Lieutenants, Grand Priors and members of the Grand Magisterium to pray together intensely for the intentions of the inhabitants of the Holy Land.





The Grand Master, the Assessor and the Governor General guided the work of the Consulta during several plenary sessions enriched by the interventions of representatives of the Holy See.



fading in the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, continuing to burn and kindle brilliant sparks of peace and flames of good."

The four Vice-Governors - Tom Pogge, Jean-Pierre de Glutz, Enric Mas and John Secker - used the summaries of the international working groups to provide the Grand Master with indications and input to consider as he draws up the final document on the formation of Knights and Dames, in addition to the new Regulations and Ritual that accompany the new Constitution of the Order signed by Pope Francis.

"It is not intended to answer every question, but to refocus us on the nature of the Order, its specificity, which concerns the death and resurrection of Christ. Our Order is lay, chivalrous in the noblest sense of the word, and its members are called to nobility of heart, which is expressed in their concern for the Holy Land," Cardinal Filoni summarized. The Grand Master also announced the forthcoming creation of a commission of historians whose task will be to clearly establish the origins of the Order, which are mainly linked to the great renewal of the Church initiated at the beginning of the 13th century by Saint Francis of Assisi during his historic pilgrimage to the holy places of the Christian faith.

Latin called an "Instrumentum laboris", centered on the theme of this Consulta.

The debates, enriched by the presence of the Grand Priors, touched on many aspects, against the backdrop of the ecclesiological urgency of embodying the chivalric ideal today by responding personally to the universal call to holiness launched by the Second Vatican Council, since every member of the faithful received in baptism an outpouring of royal blood.

The plenary session on the third day was marked by the presence of Monsignor Roberto Campisi, Assessor of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, who, informed of the work of the groups, highlighted that it is essentially a question for the members of the Order of experiencing an indispensable formation of the heart, by putting the Gospel into practice, to progressively acquire "a heart that sees", according to the expression of Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Deus caritas est*. "May you be encouraged to live the present moment, which the Holy Father has termed 'dark nights of conflict', like 'lamps of charity' that stop hope from





The Pope encouraged the Order to convey the concern of the universal Church towards the Mother Church of Jerusalem.

On the fourth day, after the pontifical audience in the morning, the meeting of the Grand Magisterium was held, with the live online participation of Sami El-Yousef, Director of Administration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, who gave an update on the status of the projects supported by the Order in 2023, thanks to more than 12 and a half million euros in donations from the Knights and Dames sent to the Holy Land this year. In his report, the Governor General spoke of the contributions being received for humanitarian aid in Gaza, and then highlighted the Order's development efforts, particularly in Asia and Africa, opening up prospects for greater participation by

"friends of the Order" in the future, people who should find ways of becoming more involved in the life of the Pontifical Institution, perhaps by means of a foundation recognized as being of public utility.

On the final day, a pilgrimage was organized to Saint Paul Outside the Walls, followed by the Grand Master's concluding Mass at the Marian shrine of Divine Love. Before leaving, the participants in the Consulta personally signed a letter to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, assuring him of their prayers for his diocese and of their affectionate closeness at this very difficult time for all the inhabitants of the Holy Land.

François Vayne



The Consulta concluded with a pilgrimage to the pontifical basilica dedicated to Saint Paul, then to the Roman Marian sanctuary of Divine Love.



INTERNATIONAL MEDIA COVER THE CONSULTA

A major press conference presenting the Consulta of the Order was held on October 31 in Rome, in the Holy See Press Office, moderated by its Vice Director, Cristiane Murray.

After the interventions of the Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, the Assessor, Msgr Tommaso Caputo, and a Lieutenant from the United States (Usa Middle Atlantic), Valencia Yvonne Camp, the many journalists present asked questions, particularly relating to the situation in the Holy Land.

Repeatedly questioned on how to create solidarity with the inhabitants of the Holy Land, Lieutenant Camp responded that it is above all a question of giving a face to the Mother Church of Jerusalem through the experiences of local life that are capable of highlighting the human reality hidden behind the global news broadcast by the media.

In Gaza in particular, despite the ravages of war, Christians continue to pray, participate in mass, educate their children, and hope to one day rebuild their destroyed homes.

The Governor General underlined that in Gaza the parish church welcomes several hundred refugees - Catholics and Muslims - and explained that the Order, in direct contact with Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, seeks to give the Latin Patriarchate the means to meet the urgent needs of these people.

Donations are constantly arriving but it will take time to carry out a precise needs assessment.

Regarding the commitment of the members of the Order, mainly lay people, Cardinal Filoni explained the importance of spiritually accompanying their generosity, in



Many journalists were present at the press conference presenting the Consulta which was held on October 31 in the Holy See Press Office.

order to give it a deep, biblically rooted meaning.

In this he supported the intervention of Msgr Caputo, during which the Assessor spoke of the necessary ongoing formation of Knights and Dames with a view to an ever more authentic and coherent Christian life.

The Grand Master of the Order then showed the importance of mobilizing the universal Church in the service of Christians who live in the territories where Christianity was born, at this historic moment when they are fleeing this region due to the conflicts that are taking place and multiplying there.

He recalled that Christians represented 30% of the population in the Middle East a hundred years ago and that they are now only 1%, showing the urgency of advocating for their fundamental rights, in the very name of that same God which believers of the three Abrahamic religions worship together.

**You can watch the entire press
conference on YouTube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKnZijqNTEk>

THE CLOSENESS OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE MISSION AND ACTION OF THE ORDER

“A Heart that Sees”

Extract from the intervention of the Assessor of the Secretariat of State, Msgr. Roberto Campisi

«I was struck, reading the *Instrumentum laboris*, by the attention that in this particular situation you wish to reserve for the spiritual formation of the Members. It is beautiful that your spirituality is, borrowing a theological expression, “Christocentric”: at the heart of your Christian sentiment there is in fact the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, source and summit of the faith. Approach it not only with devotion, but with docility and participation, so that it inspires in you the concreteness of charitable action. Benedict XVI, in the Encyclical he dedicated to charity, spoke of an indispensable “formation of the heart”, of the need to lead those who dedicate themselves to Christian solidarity “to that encounter with God in Christ which arouses in them love and open their souls to others, so that for them love of neighbor is no longer a commandment imposed, so to speak, from the outside, but a consequence deriving from their faith which becomes operative in love.” Then he admirably summarized “the Christian’s program”, stating in four words what it consists of: “a heart that sees” (*Deus caritas est*, 31).

Dear ones, your readiness and sensitivity towards the Holy Land represents the beating of this heart that sees. But what does it see nowadays? Scenes of death

and destruction, resurgences of hatred and violence, in a conflict that claims innocent victims and impoverishes the Holy Places, leaving dismay and even arousing the feeling of a certain resignation in the face of the nefarious power of evil.

Yet, while war rages, the Christian’s gaze, as Pope Francis reminds us, is called to *see peace* and to work towards it with determined obstinacy. I can assure you, from this point of view, that the Holy See is sparing no effort in this regard. We need to draw the deepest reasons for peace in Christ, for, says St. Paul, “He is our peace”, and he is precisely so, continues the Apostle, because he has destroyed enmity and reconciled all things with God “through the cross” (*Eph 2:14-16*). Therefore, amidst the crosses of the world, we are called to find consolation and strength in Jesus Christ, and in this crucified One (cf. *1 Cor 2:2*).

Yes, the coordinates of the peace we seek



Seated to the right of the Assessor of the Order, Msgr. Tommaso Caputo, Msgr. Roberto Campisi came to speak to the participants of the Consulta on behalf of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See.



and promote are exactly those of the cross: its height invites us to ground every gesture of reconciliation in the mystery of God's saving forgiveness, which has reconciled Heaven and earth; its breadth calls us to the charity to be exercised towards our brothers and sisters in faith, as well as towards all those who inhabit the same common home; the depth of the pain and above all of the love that exudes from the Holy Wood invites us to that closeness, compassion and tenderness that, the Holy Father reminds us again, constitute God's style and characterize Christian mercy.

Dear brothers and sisters, let this be your heart that sees. And if faith constantly exhorts us "to the here and now", one can only think how timely it is at this time that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

who generously provided for the needs of the Church in Jerusalem: "he who sows with abundance will reap with abundance [...] for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:6-7).

Thank you, therefore, because with breadth and joy you support, in the pastoral, educational and charitable spheres, the presence and the role of believers in the Holy Places. Proof of this was the extraordinary collection you made during the pandemic to make up for the absence of pilgrims. May these days encourage you to live the present time, which the Holy Father has called the "night of conflicts" (*Prayer at the conclusion of the hour of prayer Pacem in Terris*, 27 October 2023), as "lamps of charity" that do not let hope fade but, in the spirit of St Francis of Assisi, continue to burn.

"Every structure for formation, every home for the sick, orphans, the disabled, the elderly, every school of the Catholic community in the Holy Land constitutes a precious piece of hope and light that cannot be obscured"

Extract from the intervention of the Undersecretary of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, Father Flavio Pace

"**T**he invitation that the Grand Master wished to extend to the Curial Institution that I represent here expresses a profound bond that stems precisely from the birthplace of our Christian faith, as is well recalled at the beginning of the *Instrumentum Laboris*: "our unifying nucleus is Christ dead and risen: from the Empty Tomb Jesus reached every man and woman. The Empty Tomb is the element that ideally unites us together with that Land that welcomed the earthly life of Jesus and whose living stones we support today....". The Eastern Catholic Churches are also indebted to the proclamation of salvation that resounded from Jerusalem two thousand years ago and

travelled the earth, thanks to the apostles and their successors who, in the first centuries of the Christian era, illuminated Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Seleucia-Ctesiphon and from there all those communities that later structured themselves to constitute the Churches in the East and in the West. We can all say of Jerusalem with the Psalmist: 'all my springs are in you'.

That is why our hearts are gripped in sorrow these days, and from them we raise heartfelt supplications, joining in the Holy Father's appeals for peace in the Land of Jesus. We are involved on a threefold level: that of diplomacy and negotiation, that of





Father Flavio Pace, seated to the left of the Governor General, represented the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches during his presentation at the Consulta.

concrete solidarity with all those who suffer and are tried by the violence and poverty aggravated by the conflict, and that of the deepest conversion and outlook of faith to live with Christ even in these dark pages. (...)

Even more so today we feel called to support the presence and the effort of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Pastor, whom the Holy Father wanted to create Cardinal: with all the Catholic realities of the Holy Land they are called to be a presence of Christ's charity and a prophecy of the peace and justice that He inaugurated with His Passover. Every structure for formation, every home for the sick, orphans, the disabled, the elderly, every school of the Catholic community in

through its presence in the world: we cannot forget Jerusalem! In this sense, the content of the *Instrumentum Laboris* that will guide the work of this Consulta is very much appreciated.

The Dicastery is also grateful for the daily work of collaboration through the reality of ROACO (Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches), the Order has always been present and active through the Governor General and over the years it has guaranteed its generous support to aid projects in the Middle Eastern contexts followed by our Curial Institution presided over by the Prefect Cardinal Gugerotti, who apart from being President of ROACO, has always been present and active in the Middle East as a member of the Order (...)."

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A CONSTANT AND ABIDING CONSULTA APPOINTMENT

The Consulta cannot take place without being accompanied by the prayer of the participants. Thus, each day of the General Assembly of the Order's leaders began with a Eucharistic celebration that invited the members to entrust themselves to the Lord through certain anniversaries dear to our Order, such as the memory of the Holy Cross and the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine.

leads us to the Empty Tomb. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up," we heard in the Gospel. 'It is necessary that'...: how harsh this verb is when we think of Jesus' passion and death. But we cannot and will not limit ourselves to this. This phrase is followed by a 'why', a salvific why for each of us: 'that whoever believes in him may have eternal life'. The real 'need' is the one felt by a Father who loves us to the point of giving His only-begotten Son for us. The true 'need' is that of the salvation that wants to be given

On the opening day of the Consulta, November 6, the Cardinal Grand Master welcomed the participants during his homily in the Mass Church of the Holy Spirit with these words: "It is very significant and, I would say, very beautiful to begin the 2023 Consulta with this liturgical celebration that gathers us all, the Order's central authorities, Lieutenants, clergy and various co-workers, in which Christ makes Himself sacramentally present. In this way we can say with certainty, He participates in our Consulta: "Behold, I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). These are words of consolation and encouragement, so that in our journey our trust in Him and in that mission which the Church has entrusted to us will not fail."

On the next day, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was celebrated. Cardinal Filoni invited participants to live the Cross as an instrument of salvation that



The Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, reading the prayer of the Knight and Dame at the end of a mass celebrated during the Consulta, in the hotel where the international assembly of the Order took place.

to us, and let us not, I pray you, be constrained and locked in the tomb."

On the third day, the homily was delivered by Msgr. Caputo, Assessor of the Order, who celebrated the mass in honor of the Order's patroness Our Lady Queen of Palestine entrusting all hopes and efforts to her. The icon of the Queen of Palestine was displayed during the Eucharistic celebrations





During the Mass in Saint Peter's Basilica, representatives of the Order from all over the world spiritually renewed their commitment of fidelity to the successor of the Apostle Peter for the service of the Church in the Holy Land.

and accompanied the members of the Grand Magisterium, the Grand Priors and the Lieutenants to their audience with the Holy Father so he could bless it. "We ask her to intercede with gifts of grace and peace for the 'Holy Land, in which the infinite love of her Divine Son accomplished the sacred mysteries of the Redemption.' We entrust to her the path of renewal of the Order, called to announce the joy of the Gospel and to support the Church in the Holy Land," prayed Msgr. Caputo. The Assessor continued by inviting the members to learn from the Mother and Disciple of the Son: "And we, looking at Mary, are called to be her presence together, because God's entry into history always needs a womb that

welcomes the seed of divine life, generate it and make it become a principle of novelty, beauty and hope."

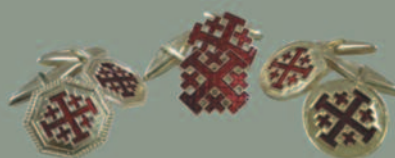
On Thursday November 9, on the feast day of the dedication of the Lateran Basilica, Cardinal Filoni was the main celebrant of the mass that took place at the Chair of St. Peter, a few minutes before meeting the Holy Father. "Today's holiday – he explained on that occasion – is very dear to the Church of Rome because it recalls the Dedication or Consecration of the Cathedral of this city to Christ the Savior; we Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre feel we have a particular bond because from here, from the Papal Chair, the Pope expresses his 'concern' for the whole Church."



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ACCOMPANYING AND SUPPORTING: THE ROLE OF THE GRAND PRIORS OF THE ORDER

For the first time the members of the Grand Magisterium and the Lieutenants were joined by the Grand Priors during the Consulta. Their presence is not normally foreseen in the work of the Consulta but the Grand Master Cardinal Filoni, strongly desired their participation which was a source of great sharing and coordination between the lay and ecclesiastical component of the Order.



The Grand Priors present at the Consulta spoke with the Grand Master about the spiritual life of the members of the Order.

On the first day of the Consulta, the Grand Master invited the Grand Priors present to a moment of meeting and



Cardinal Fernando Filoni and Msgr. Tommaso Caputo surrounded by the Grand Priors of the Order who participated in the Consulta.



exchange. "As Grand Priors, we do not replace lay people but accompany them in the service they offer and this is very important. The Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates do their job well and we are rightly there to support them," began Cardinal Filoni by speaking about the role of the Grand Priors and mentioning in this regard his daily relationship with the Governor General, lay head of the entire Order, with whom the fruitful collaboration is an example for life in the Lieutenancies.

The importance of the spiritual aspect was at the center of the conversations: "Already in 2018 the Holy Father reminded us of the role of ecclesiastics: we are called to assist our Knights and Dames from a spiritual point of view and at the same time we have a moral and ethical responsibility in the field of education."

The discussion then continued by underlining how the Grand Prior can, in his role, foster the relationship of the local Churches with the Mother Church of Jerusalem. "It is a relationship that has its roots in the Sacred Scripture itself and the care we reserve for the Holy Land is for a

place that in some way spiritually 'belongs' to us."

"We must not forget – continued Cardinal Filoni – that the members of the Order are first and foremost members of their local Churches who in this way participate in the Holy Father's concern for the Holy Places."

The pilgrimages – which the Grand Prior, the Priors and the chaplains are invited to lead when possible – are therefore a central moment for the members of the Order in their formation process and in their life of faith because they allow not only the meeting with sacred places but also with the local Church, with the living stones of the Holy Land.

The last point touched by the Grand Master, before leaving room for a fruitful moment of exchange with the Grand Priors present, was that of the difficulty that sometimes occurs in communicating the mission of the Order to the local Churches. On this, Cardinal Filoni asked the Grand Priors to act as spokespersons within their respective Episcopal Conferences to promote greater knowledge of our pontifical institution.

Msgr. Joseph Naumann recounts the Consulta to the plenary session of the US bishops

Returning from the Consulta, the Archbishop of Kansas City Joseph Naumann, Grand Prior for the USA Northern Lieutenancy took advantage of the November plenary assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to report his experience as a participant in the Consulta of the Order. "I was ignorant about the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and I was invited, or rather I would say I was asked to join the Order. And it's been a blessing and a privilege in my life." Archbishop Naumann then continued by acting as spokesperson for Cardinal Filoni who asked to thank the bishops in the episcopal conferences for the support they already offer to the Order in their dioceses and to encourage those who are not yet involved in the Order to grow this beautiful reality in their dioceses.



Msgr. Dominique-Marie David: “The spirituality of the Order is a true treasure for the Church”

During the Consulta, Msgr. Dominique-Marie David, Archbishop of Monaco and Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for the Principality, joyfully experienced the internationality of the Order, exchanging in particular with Grand Priors from distant countries on the key theme of common training of members. “The commitment of Knight or Dame is not honorary, but a true vocation which corresponds to a mission linked to the Holy Land and which is embodied



in daily life as well as in the life of the local Church,” as he testified, emphasizing the importance of his collaboration with the Lieutenant for the spiritual formation of members and that of candidates preparing for the Investiture. “The spirituality of the Order is a true treasure for the Church, which Pope Francis and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem confirmed during the Consulta, a meeting which will certainly bear much fruit.”

Msgr. Francis Leo and Colin Saldanha: a shared experience

During the work sessions, as well as during informal meetings, the Grand Priors and Lieutenants had the opportunity to spend time together and collaborate on the topic of formation and, more broadly, to share the beauty of being members of the Order at the service of their own Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations. Colin Saldanha, Lieutenant for Canada-Toronto,



says: “it was my first Consulta and for our Grand Prior, Archbishop Leo of Toronto, too; we learned a lot from our colleagues, the lessons were important and stimulating. I am sure that all of us left the Consulta well informed and committed to ensuring that Christians in the Holy Land are accompanied by our unconditional support.” Being part of the Order – explained Archbishop Francis Leo of Toronto, recently appointed Grand Prior – “is an enriching experience for me because it offers me the opportunity to tell people about Jesus, the Gospel and the Land from which he comes” and thus, “establish a link between parishioners and the Holy Land of today and that of Jesus’ time”.



DISCUSSING THE *INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS*: THE WORKING GROUPS OF THE CONSULTA

In addition to the plenary sessions, during the Consulta the Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates were divided into working groups to be able to compare and discuss the theme of this general assembly of the Order – training – and thus be able to subsequently share their suggestions in the final meeting and reflections on the *Instrumentum Laboris* which was intended to be a starting point for the discussion.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* was presented as a document of about a hundred articles divided into two parts: one more centered on the theological and ecclesiological dimension of belonging to the Order and on

the elements that characterize it (ecclesial life, spirituality and prayer, mystery of charity, Holy Land, life of the Order and the path towards holiness); and a second which aimed to provide food for thought regarding the training sectors and the different declinations depending on the level (candidates for entry into the Order, ongoing training, training of official positions and clergy) as well as some particular aspects such as the Vigil of prayer and the Investiture or the pilgrimage.

Four groups met for three working sessions: two English-speaking groups, one Spanish-speaking and one multilingual.



Each of the four Vice-Governors led a working group around the theme of formation, based on an *Instrumentum Laboris* written by the Grand Master on the basis of reports received from all Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations.



Among the various recommendations that emerged, attention to spirituality, accompanied by a clear sharing of practical information regarding the life of the Order, was recurrent. Some focused on the process of approaching and the invitation to join the Order and the selection of candidates, others on the need to work on a communication strategy that can make the Order and its mission more widely known as to be able to prepare fertile ground to nurture potential members to become Knights and Dames.

Everyone underlined, taking up what was shared by the Cardinal Grand Master in the document that had been sent previously precisely to allow everyone to arrive ready

for the working sessions with some points already identified, the centrality of training as a constant element that must never fail during the life path as a Knight and Dame. Another aspect taken up is that of the many possibilities that pilgrimage offers as a training tool both at the level of faith and in that the Holy Land that is supported becomes in that experience a concrete reality with faces and needs that can be touched first hand.

Taking advantage of these contributions and insights, Cardinal Filoni, Grand Master will be able to draw up a final document in the coming months which will be available to all the Knights and Dames of the Order.

THE GRAND MASTER MEETS THE LIEUTENANTS AND GRAND PRIORS

The series of bilateral meetings that the Grand Master, assisted by the Governor General, had with the Lieutenants or Magistral Delegates present in Rome, (many of them accompanied by their respective Grand Priors) enabled him to close the circle of direct acquaintances with all the heads of the Order's territorial structures.

During the three days of work, at the incessant pace of about twenty minutes for each, each Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate (and the respective Grand Prior when present), was able to illustrate their programmes, current activities and difficulties encountered. It was a unique opportunity to get an overview of the issues of the Order's territorial structures.

Particular attention was paid to newly appointed Lieutenants such as Michael Peter Greene of Australia Queensland, David Francis McCabe of Australia South, and Kevin Christopher Bailey of Australia Victoria, who began their terms in 2023, and were thus attending their first meeting with

the central authorities of the Order. They had the opportunity to get to know the extended family of brothers from other parts of the world, finding an immediate welcome in an atmosphere described by all as 'fraternal'.

Among the newcomers, the presence of Michael La Civita was also important. He had been appointed at the investiture in New York the previous week, and is now at the head of the largest Lieutenancy in the United States, that of USA Eastern, which does not only belong to the city of New York, but extends to many states on the Atlantic coast.

Particular attention was paid – as is normal – to those who came from further afield, and for whom opportunities to meet were less frequent, such as Kevin Susai, Lieutenant of Western Australia and also responsible for the important Penang Delegation in Malaysia, Justice Kunc of Australia New South Wales, Carleen Anne Blucher of New Zealand, Rodney Jacob of Guam, José Cuisia of the Philippines, Juan Luis Cabral of South Africa, Joseph Lee of





A personal meeting with the Grand Master and the Governor General allowed each Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate, accompanied by the local Grand Prior, to address particular questions linked to their cultural and territorial context.

Taiwan, Maria Adriana Mayol de Rojas of Colombia and the two Brazilian Lieutenants, Isis Cunha Penido of Rio de Janeiro and Manuel Tavares de Almeida of São Paulo. There was also an interesting conversation with the Lieutenant of Mexico, Guillermo Macias Graue, who is collaborating with the Grand Magisterium in the training of candidates with a view to opening a Magistral Delegation in Santo Domingo.

The Asian and Pacific Lieutenancies met in turn in a separate session, led by Vice Governor John Secker. The Latin American Lieutenancies also had the opportunity to present, assisted by Vice Governor Enric Mas, the issues of the upcoming changes in top positions and the prospects of an area meeting in 2024. Unfortunately, the political situations in Argentina and Venezuela prevented the respective Lieutenants from attending the Consulta.

The Cardinal Grand Master was also able to again meet the Lieutenants of North America (nine Americans and five Canadians) whom he had met last year in Pasadena (Los Angeles) during their annual meeting and who make up almost half of the Order's size, both in terms of number of members and amount of contributions.

They were accompanied by the Archbishop of Kansas City, Msgr. Joseph Naumann, who a few days later was able to report extensively on the outcome of these meetings to the US Bishops' Conference. For Canada, Archbishop Francis Leo of Toronto, Archbishop Christian Lépine of Montréal and Archbishop Brian Joseph Dunn of

Halifax were present, while for Puerto Rico, Archbishop Rubén Antonio González Medina of Ponce was present. The North American Lieutenancies, coordinated by the Vice Governor Tom Pogge, will meet again next year in Québec hosted by Mireille Ethier, head of that small but active Lieutenancy.

In some other cases the meetings were able to focus on plans for future visits, such as for Jacques Klein who will receive the Cardinal on July 13-14, 2024 in Luxembourg on the occasion of the celebrations of the XXX anniversary of the creation of that Lieutenancy, or as for the Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden-Denmark, Finland, Latvia) whom the Cardinal intends to meet on the occasion of the investiture in Oslo on June 22, 2024 and who were accompanied by the Bishop of Oslo Bernt Ivar Eidsvig, Bishop Czeslaw Kozon of Copenhagen and Archbishop Zbignevs Stankevics of Riga.

Similarly, in a conversation with the Lieutenant of Scotland, Joseph d'Inverno, accompanied by Archbishop Leo William Cushley, Archbishop of St. Andrews, the plans for the visit and investiture in Edinburgh scheduled for April 10-14 were examined. In other instances, the Cardinal Grand Master revisited recent talks such as those with representatives of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Russia) many of whom he met in September in Prague, when he was the guest of Archbishop Jan Graubner, also an active participant in the Consulta's dialogues. The conversation with Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Archbishop of Warsaw, was of particular interest. He was accompanying the Polish Lieutenant-Lieutenant Andrzej Sznajder, following the reorganization of that Lieutenancy, which began in recent months. Discussions with Abbot Raimund Schreier, who was accompanying the Austrian



Lieutenant were also of note.

There was great cordiality in the meetings with the European Lieutenants, with whom occasions to meet have been repeated in numerous recent

Investitures, most recently in Brussels, Prague and Barcelona, as well as with the Italian Lieutenants, or the Italian-speaking group, who, thanks to their proximity, have more frequent opportunities to visit the Cardinal Grand Master in Rome. The Italian ecclesiastics included Cardinal Paolo Romeo, Grand Prior of Sicily, who has always been very fond of the Order, Msgr. Giuseppe Satriano, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bari-Bitonto, and Msgr. Maurizio Malvestiti, who in the past also held the position of Regent of the Northern Italy Lieutenancy, of which he is still Grand Prior.

France, in the absence of Lieutenant General Faugère, shortly to be replaced, was represented by Chancellor Christian Piotre, candidate to succeed him, accompanied by Grand Prior Msgr. Bernard-Nicolas Aubertin. The European Lieutenants, coordinated by the Vice Governor Jean-Pierre de Glutz Ruchti, also had the opportunity to exchange experiences in the sectoral meetings, from the Iberian area (the two Spains and Portugal), the English-speaking group (England and Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Gibraltar and South Africa), the French-speaking group (France, Belgium, Switzerland, Monaco and Luxembourg), the Central European group (Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia) and the already mentioned groups from the Nordic countries and the Central and Eastern European countries, as well as the Italian-speaking group that met in Valletta in the week following the Consulta. For the Netherlands, Msgr. Cornelis Van den



An official photo immortalized the bilateral meetings, as here with the Lieutenant for Colombia.

Hout, Bishop of Groningen, was also present with the lieutenant, while for Western Spain, Msgr. Francisco César García Magán, Auxiliary Bishop

of Toledo, was present.

Unfortunately, Germany and the USA Southeastern Lieutenants were absent for understandable health or other reasons, in addition to the already mentioned Lieutenants of Argentina and Venezuela.

On the whole, there was no difference in attention or welcome for the small-territory Lieutenancies, such as Gibraltar, Monaco, Malta, Guam and Puerto Rico, and the large-territory Lieutenancies, such as Russia, although the existence of different organizational and communication problems was recognized. For Gibraltar, in addition to the Lieutenant, Bishop Carmel Zammit was present, while Archbishop Dominique-Marie David of Monaco accompanied the Principality of Monaco's Lieutenant.

In each meeting, the Cardinal Grand Master recommended particular attention to the formation of candidates, which was one of the dominant themes of the Consulta, to be carried out in close collaboration with the ecclesiastical component, but he also listened attentively to his interlocutors' comments on the problems that had emerged of a different nature within the various Lieutenancies, with particular regard to the General Rules, the text of which was distributed for initial examination on the eve of the Consulta, the problem of youth recruitment, the drop in contributions, but also the concern that characterized all the discussions over the deteriorating political situation in the Holy Land.

Leonardo Visconti di Modrone
Governor General





POPE FRANCIS' ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE ORDER'S CONSULTA

On November 9, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

Cardinals, Dear brothers in the Episcopate, Members of the Grand Magisterium and Lieutenants, Brothers and sisters!

I welcome you all, Knights, Dames and Ecclesiastics representing the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. I address a particular greeting to Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master of the Order, extending my sentiments of gratitude and respect to all the members of the Order throughout the world.

You are gathered in Rome for the Consulta, which involves the meeting of the Lieutenants, the Magistral Delegates, and this year also the Bishops Grand Priors, to discuss the theme of formation. A formation necessary for candidates aspiring to enter the Order; an ongoing formation for those

who already participate in its life and mission; and furthermore, the formation of those who are called to hold roles of responsibility, with two elements: the spiritual, in the awareness of the high moral commitment assumed before the Altar; and that related to the organization of activities and resource management, to meet the needs of the Holy Land continually and adequately.

Initial and ongoing, practical and spiritual formation: they are four guidelines that we can see represented in the sign of the Cross, which stands out clearly on your mantles and inspires your spirituality. With its horizontal arm, it reminds you of your commitment to ensure that your dedication to the crucified and risen Christ embraces your entire life, and in charity makes you



close to every brother and sister; while its vertical arm, firmly planted on the ground and pointing to heaven, reminds you of the inalienable complementarity, in your journey, between a life of prayer and service to your brothers and sisters, attentive, qualified, and well rooted in the realities in which you operate, aimed at the total good of the person (cf. *Eph* 3:17-19; Saint Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, III, lect. 5).

In this regard, the Constitution I have approved constitute the high road on which to travel as a lay Order, with a purpose that was already well foreseen by Blessed Pius IX and then confirmed by his successors: to associate men and women who are committed to a fuller participation in the life of the Church, starting from that "Mother" Church in Jerusalem, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul (cf. *1 Cor* 16:3), and opening up to the whole world. With this universal outlook, you are called to be an Order that, strong in its own identity, participates in the mystery of charity in the most beautiful way, open and available, ready to take on those services that the Lord requires through the needs of our brothers and sisters: from the education of children in schools to concrete solidarity with the most fragile categories, such as the elderly, the sick, and refugees. Let us remember here, always, I would say the "refrain" that the Lord makes all the prophets say in the Old Testament: the widow, the orphan and the stranger. This care we must have.

The empty Sepulchre, whose special custodian you have by vocation committed yourselves to be for centuries, is in this sense above all a sign of the boundless love of the Crucified One, who keeps nothing for himself and who therefore cannot be held back by the snares of death; it is a sign of

the victory of the Risen One in whom we too find life (cf. *Rom* 6:8-9) and of the power of the Mystery of his Body and Blood that unites us all as his members (cf. *1 Cor* 10:17).

To form and to be formed, at the beginning of the journey of Investiture and throughout life. Formation is lifelong. Formation is a universal and inclusive charity. Studying the history of your Order from this point of view and, in a context of listening and prayer, applying yourselves to acquiring the skills to respond to the needs of your neighbour: this is a great service you can offer to the Church and the world today.

In every age, even in ours, marked by the technocratic paradigm, there is a great need for people who practice charity with intelligence and imagination. I therefore urge you to continue your work in this style, and to transmit it faithfully in the various phases of formation.

Before concluding, I would like to join you in thinking of the Holy Land. We are sadly witnessing a tragedy unfolding in the very places where the Lord lived, where he taught us through his humanity to love, to forgive and to do good to all. And instead, we see them torn apart by terrible suffering that affects above all so many innocents, so many innocent dead. That is why I am spiritually united with you, who certainly live this meeting of the Consulta sharing the great sorrow of the Mother Church of Jerusalem and imploring the gift of peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Virgin Mary, invoked by you with the title of Queen of Palestine, assist you always in your mission. I bless you all from my heart, I bless all the members of the Order and their families. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

**“ Dear brothers
and sisters, may the
Virgin Mary, invoked
by you with the title
of Queen of Palestine,
assist you always in
your mission ”**



FROM ST PETER TO ST PAUL TO MARY: THE CONSULTA MEMBERS' PILGRIMAGE IN ROME

At the end of the Consulta, which ended with a meeting with the Holy Father, who addressed words of encouragement to us, and after the meeting of the Grand Magisterium that took place on the same Thursday afternoon, the participants of the Consulta were invited to experience a pilgrimage within Rome.

After having had the joy of celebrating Mass on Thursday at the Chair of St. Peter, thus also remembering the first of the Apostles and the first Christian community of Jerusalem, on Friday it was the turn to visit the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. There the Cardinal Grand Master and the entire group were warmly welcomed by the Archpriest of the Basilica, Cardinal James Michael Harvey.

"To all of you I extend my most cordial welcome to this magnificent Basilica which the very first Christians, moved by love for Christ and his Church, erected with such care, in the desire to worthily preserve the sacred and venerated remains of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles," began the Archpriest as he met Cardinal Filoni, the authorities of the Order and all the pilgrims outside the Basilica. With his thoughts turned to the Holy Land, St. Paul's homeland, he continued: "Today we will have the opportunity to gather in front of the Tomb of St. Paul, to pray for peace, for



Gathered before the tomb of the Apostle Paul, the leaders of the Order asked the missionary saint to intercede for the Christian communities of the Holy Land and to arouse the generosity of all the Churches in their favor.



all our brothers and sisters in those beloved places and to reflect on how we can be more and more an expression of the embrace of the Universal Church."

Then entering the stupendous basilica – since the 1st century a place dear to the Christian community of Rome and always a place of pilgrimage for Christians from all over the world – Grand Master Cardinal Filoni and Archpriest Cardinal Harvey led the delegation to Paul's tomb for a moment of prayer. There, in front of the Apostle's tomb, Cardinal Filoni reminded the members of the Order how much we are indebted as the Church of the Gentiles to this great apostle: "Paul invited the communities to help the needs of the Holy Land. Saint, man, evangelizer and apostle of Christ, he taught us love for the Holy Land."

After prayer and a visit to this magnificent basilica, the group moved on to its last stop: the ancient chapel of the Sanctuary of Divine Love, a place of pilgrimage so dear to the Church of Rome. The story goes that in this place in 1740 a pilgrim on his way to St. Peter's Basilica got lost and was attacked by a pack of dogs next to a ruined castle. On the tower of the castle was an icon of the Virgin and Child that the pilgrim invoked to be saved. Immediately the dogs ran away and from then on, the place became a place of pilgrimage. A pilgrim in 1740, therefore, paved the way for us, the pilgrims of 2023, in entrusting ourselves to Mary's protection.

Mass was celebrated, presided over by Cardinal Filoni, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Image and Mother of the Church, with the beautiful Gospel of the Wedding at Cana. "We have come here," said the Grand Master, "to place our reality in the hands of Mary: we ask for that wine, that grace, that Holy Spirit that is given to the nascent Church. We too, Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, are invited to the wedding, and to us too Mary says 'do what he tells you' and accompanies us with prayer." Just the day



The Virgin Mary was invoked by the participants of the Consulta at the Roman sanctuary of Divine Love, so that she continues to guide the Knights and Dames of the Order to live the Gospel on the path of holiness to which each of them is called.

before, presenting the Holy Father with the icon of Mary Queen of Palestine who honors the offices of the Grand Magisterium with her presence, Cardinal Filoni spoke with Pope Francis, just as this Mass reminded us, of Mary's double motherhood: she is the mother not only of Jesus but also of the Church, she who is the mother of God and our mother, she has both a Son (Jesus) and a Daughter (the Church).

From St. Peter to St. Paul to Mary: the pilgrimage of the members of the Consulta to Rome had a profound taste of the Holy Land (guided by these three figures of faith and of that Land so dear to us) and of ecclesiality in the round. In our mission as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, in the service that members of the Grand Magisterium, Grand Priors and Lieutenants offer, we place ourselves under the protection of the two Apostles whom the Church remembers together on June 29 and who are both fundamental to the Church of the first century, and of Mary who, as a loving Mother, accompanies us on our journey towards her Son.

Elena Dini



THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONSULTA SIGNED A LETTER TO CARDINAL PIZZABALLA

On the first day of the Consulta, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, was unable to attend the meeting in person due to the conflict in the Holy Land, but was virtually present at the meeting of Lieutenants, Grand Priors and the Grand Magisterium. Cardinal Pizzaballa gave alarming news of the Catholic community in Gaza, which is totally isolated and destitute (two-thirds of the houses have been destroyed), but also in great difficulty in the Palestinian territories in the West Bank, where Jewish settlers are behaving very aggressively. He spoke of the unemployment affecting Palestinians working in Israel, as well as the problem of refugees from villages at the border with Lebanon who have come near Nazareth, half of whom are Christians. Tensions between the Arab and Jewish populations are extreme, he stressed, shedding light on

the overall reality of a context that the Western media's insistence on Gaza does not allow to fully emerge. Jordan is also affected, since a large part of its population is of Palestinian origin. The Patriarch thanked the Order for its support in the face of the humanitarian emergencies that the war and its consequences are causing far beyond the Gaza Strip.

Donations from members of the Order will therefore be very useful in helping the Christian population of the Holy Land as a whole. In a letter signed by all the Lieutenants and Grand Priors, the Grand Master and the Governor General assured Cardinal Pizzaballa of their faithful prayers for the intentions of the Mother Church of Jerusalem, reaffirming now more than ever their desire to support the Latin Patriarchate, in the name of the Holy Father and the universal Church.

