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The Grand Master's message

MAY THE ORDINARY BE EXTRAORDINARY

We are living through the liturgical period after Pentecost. For many, this is a time to rest and dedicate themselves to relationships and their family; a time in which every habit keeps us moving towards the goal.

Liturgically speaking, we are living in the "ordinary time", which describes the fact that in these weeks there has not been a particular event of the Christological mystery that has been celebrated. Instead, we are taken by the hand to follow Jesus along the roads of Galilee. Let us not be misled by this "ordinariness" as if it were inferior

Cardinal Fernando Filoni - pictured here in Oslo Cathedral at the Investiture of new members of the Order from the Nordic countries - invites the Knights and Dames to make their vocation and mission known through the witness of their lives, particularly during this summer, in the spirit of what Benedict XVI said about passing on the faith: "The Church grows not by proselytism, but by attraction."



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to what we consider major liturgical seasons; for example, Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Rather, this is the time of discipleship (Sunday, July 21); a time to meet Jesus around the table as in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Sunday, July 28); it is the time when we ask ourselves who Jesus is and our question is answered that he is the bread of life (Sunday, August 4). However, it is also the time of mission (Sunday, July 14), a time when we are called to get involved and proclaim the Good News, to treasure what we have received as we make our journey of faith and to reflect upon that light which illuminates every creature so that those around us may feel like beloved sons and daughters of God.

We experience this time accompanied in particular by the intercession of two women:

Mary, whose Assumption we celebrate on August 15, and Saint Helena – the mother of Constantine –, whom we celebrate on August 18. Saint Helena is one of the patrons of the Order and to whom we owe the construction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

Life in the Holy Land continues to be deeply troubled and the routine nature of the news might make us lose sight of the great suffering of these peoples. May our attention always be vigilant and our gaze turned towards the Land of Jesus, while as Knights and Dames we continue to support the communities that are facing dark times there through our prayer, our offerings, and our closeness.

Thus, ordinary time will be an occasion for extraordinariness.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni



The Order in union with the Universal Church

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

On May 9, Pope Francis presided over the moving reading and delivery of the Bull of Indiction for the 2025 Jubilee entitled *Spes non confundit*. The event took place before the Second Vespers prayer on the Solemnity of the Ascension, in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, which is scheduled to be opened December 24, 2024.

Among the numerous Cardinals, Archbishops, and clergy, the Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Cardinal Fernando Filoni was also present.

In the Bull, Pope Francis writes, "May the light of Christian hope illumine every man and woman, as a message of God's love addressed to all! And may the Church bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world!" He continues by inviting us "to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind."

The Order embraces this message completely with its particular focus on the Holy Land. On May 13, in the decree

outlining the norms for granting indulgences during the Jubilee published by the Major Penitentiary, Cardinal Angelo De Donatis indicates the specific pilgrimage destinations. "The faithful, pilgrims of hope, will be able to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence granted by the Holy Father if they undertake a pious pilgrimage: to any sacred Jubilee site [...], in Rome [...], in the Holy Land, by visiting at least one of the three basilicas: the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, or the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth; in other ecclesiastical areas [...]."

Thus, the connection with the Holy Land in the upcoming 2025 Jubilee remains at the heart of the entire Universal Church. For the Knights and Dames of the Order, in addition to the open invitation to experience the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which is a central and transformative experience, there will also be the opportunity to come together for the Jubilee pilgrimage in Rome in October 2025.



In St Peter's Basilica on May 9, Pope Francis read the Bull of Indiction for the 2025 Jubilee, in the presence of the Cardinals, including the Grand Master of the Order, announcing the opening of the Holy Door for December 24, 2024.



THE HOLY LAND: DEAR TO THE HEART OF POPE FRANCIS

The Holy Land continues to be at the centre of Pope Francis' concerns, who never tires of renewing his call for peace, so that life may prevail over death in this strip of land that is suffering so much at this time and is so dear in everyone's heart. In recent months, Pope Francis has repeatedly called for the presence of Israel and Palestine at his side.

On May 18, in Verona, during the meeting "Arena of Peace - Justice and Peace Will Embrace" scheduled as part of the Holy Father's pastoral visit to the city, an Israeli and a Palestinian from the association *Parents Circle*, which for years has brought together relatives of those killed in the conflict in the Holy Land, briefly shared their experiences. Maoz Inon is an Israeli entrepreneur who strives to work for peace. His parents were killed by Hamas on October 7. Aziz Abu Sarah is Palestinian and his brother was killed by Israeli soldiers. "Our pain and suffering have brought us closer together, led us to dialogue to create a better future," said Maoz and Aziz before being interrupted by the long applause of all those gathered in the Verona Arena on the occasion of Pope Francis' visit. "We are entrepreneurs and we believe that peace is the greatest undertaking," they said before going together to embrace Pope Francis who addressed them with words of encouragement. A few days later, on May 25 and 26, the first World Children's Day was held at the Vatican. On this occasion, a small group from Jerusalem and Bethlehem also had the joy of participating. The group was received personally by Pope Francis along with other children from war zones. Despite the difficulties encountered by these young people,

their presence is a source of hope. The children of Gaza joined the event spiritually by sending a short video.

Finally, it was deeply touching to see Pope Francis again on June 7, 2024 in the Vatican Gardens, ten years after the historic invocation for peace in the Holy Land. Francis recalled the event in these terms: "the late President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, and the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, accepted my invitation to come here to implore from God the gift of peace. Some weeks prior to that, I had been a pilgrim in the Holy Land and had expressed a great desire that these two leaders might meet, in order to carry out a significant and historic gesture of dialogue and peace." The current situation seems to plunge us even deeper into darkness than in the past, and Pope Francis, in his speech delivered in the presence of the ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, in



Before the Pope in Verona, Aziz and Maoz bore witness to the desire for peace that lives in the hearts of the Israeli and Palestinian inhabitants of the Holy Land.



An olive tree of peace was planted in the Vatican gardens in 2014, after Francis' pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A celebration presided over by him took place in the same place ten years later, to renew this prophetic dream.



particular those of Israel and Palestine, and of several members of the College of Cardinals, continued with these words: "Every day I pray that this war will finally end. I think of all who suffer in Israel and in Palestine: Christians, Jews and Muslims. I think of how urgent it is that from the rubble of Gaza a decision to stop the weapons will finally arise, and therefore I ask that there be a ceasefire."

Ten years ago, an olive tree was planted in the Vatican Gardens on the occasion of this prayer for peace. The Holy Father concluded, "This evening, then, we wish to

renew our intercession, once again raising to God our prayer for peace, as we did ten years ago. We wish to ask the Lord to give continued growth to the olive tree we planted on that day, which has already become strong and flourishing because it has been sheltered from the wind and watered with care. Likewise, we must ask God that peace may spring forth in the heart of every person, in every people and nation, in every corner of the earth, protected from the winds of war and nourished by those who daily strive to live in fraternity."

Elena Dini

A "GOLDEN THREAD" BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND ROME

Having come to Rome to take possession of his titular church, the Patriarch of Jerusalem pleaded for a pastoral ministry of peace that has only the Gospel as a reference point.

As we already reported in the latest edition of our Newsletter, on May 1, His Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch and Grand Prior of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, took possession of the title of *Sant'Onofrio al Gianicolo*. This church is historically linked to the Order since it was granted by Pius XII by *Motu proprio* on August 15, 1948, as the spiritual seat of the

Order.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master, and Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect Emeritus of the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches, concelebrated, joining in the Patriarch's gratitude for this moment of ecclesial life that unfortunately falls in a complex period for his diocese.

In his homily, Cardinal Pizzaballa said: "We would all like peace treaties to lead to





In his titular church, Sant'Onofrio al Gianicolo, as he took possession of it in Rome on May 1, the Patriarch of Jerusalem was greeted by the Grand Master, present with the authorities of the Grand Magisterium and of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy. This church has been the spiritual seat of the Order since 1948, by the will of the Venerable Pius XII.

something important and great," but, he continued, "the Kingdom of God does not grow like this. It grows in the community, with the gestures of the community, peacefully, little by little." Then he concluded: "As the Church of the Holy Land and of Rome, we are called, in union, to be this seed."

Indeed, it is good to think of this close bond between Jerusalem and Rome.

"The Church has its roots in Jerusalem, in the Holy Land, where revelation was manifested, incarnated and then spread throughout the world. But the Church is not complete without Peter. And this is something that we must always keep alive and present in our meditation and prayer," Cardinal Pizzaballa commented. "Being a cardinal," he continued, "is not only a title, an honour, it is above all a responsibility. And being a cardinal for Jerusalem is a responsibility for the Church of Jerusalem to remember the profound union with Peter and the vocation to universality."

At the end of the ceremony, the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, took the floor to thank Cardinal Pizzaballa for the welcome he gives to thousands and thousands of Knights and Dames who

come to the Holy Land because they feel a deep connection with this region of the world that is at the heart of their faith. The Grand Master then insisted on this "golden thread" between Jerusalem and Rome: "It is wonderful that the Holy Father thought that the Patriarch of Jerusalem should be a cardinal. Thus this golden thread, this spiritual bond, that today unites Jerusalem, the Holy Land, the Patriarchate, to the Church of Rome is consolidated."

The Order, of which the Patriarch of Jerusalem is the Grand Prior, recognises as its patroness the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, who is particularly venerated in the Shrine of Deir Rafat, in Israel, and of whom we have an icon in the offices of the Grand Magisterium. The Grand Master drew attention to the fact that in the apse of the small church of *Sant'Onofrio* one can admire an image of Mary Queen crowned with Jesus at her side: a further sign of closeness and communion in the name of Mary Queen. "There is almost a spiritual bond between the Holy Land, where the shrine of Our Lady of Palestine is located, and this place entrusted to her".



The acts of the Grand Magisterium

THE NORTH AMERICAN LIEUTENANTS' MEETING WAS HELD IN CANADA THIS YEAR

The Governor General, Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, took part in the North American Lieutenants' annual meeting held in Quebec City, Canada, from June 6 to 8.

That was a critical encounter for the internal coordination of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, as 15,000 of the 30,000 Knights and Dames worldwide reside in North America.

After a meeting with Cardinal Cyprien Lacroix, Archbishop of Quebec and Grand Prior of the local Lieutenancy, the Governor General addressed the Lieutenants in a

major speech. He emphasised, for example, the importance of Members' personal contributions that are the basic foundation for the Order's solidarity activity towards the Latin Catholic diocese of the Holy Land. Indeed, unlike other organisations, the constant commitment, both spiritual and material, of each Member marks the specificity of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre as a Pontifical Institution.

The meeting, chaired by the Vice Governor General for North America, Thomas Pogge, in the presence of the Vice Governor General for Latin America, Enric



At the meeting of Lieutenants from across North America, held in Canada, the Order's Lieutenant for Quebec, Mireille Éthier, whose term of office was coming to an end, was warmly thanked by the Governor General, Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, and by the Vice Governor General for North America, Tom Pogge.



Mas, continued with numerous exchanges between the Lieutenants and the Governor General, especially on current issues related to the situation in the Holy Land and the aid provided regularly and discreetly by the Order.

After that meeting, the participants prayed during a mass celebrated in Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix (Our Lady of Peace) Cathedral, on the

occasion of the jubilee of the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the diocese of Quebec, the second diocese created in America after that of Santo Domingo. The Lieutenant for Canada-Quebec, Mireille Ethier, who organised the event, was warmly thanked by the Governor General – on behalf of everyone – for her work at the head of the Order in that part of the world.

A new Lieutenant for Quebec

Claude Saucier, married, aged 58, Director of the Municipal Housing Office of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, was appointed Lieutenant of the Order for Canada-Quebec by the Grand Master, effective from June 24, 2024. He succeeds Mireille Ethier, who becomes Lieutenant of Honor and whom the authorities of the Grand Magisterium warmly thanked for her dynamism in the service of the spiritual formation of the members and for the fraternal spirit that she helped to bring to the Lieutenancy in active and regular collaboration with the other French-speaking Lieutenancies in the world.

A REFLECTION ON THE FUTURE OF THE ORDER IN MALAYSIA

Upon his visit to Rome, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang (Malaysia), was bestowed the presbyteral title of Santa Maria Causa Nostræ Lætitiæ on May 12. On May 13, he was welcomed by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master of the Order, and by the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, at the offices of the Grand Magisterium.

In the Penang diocese, there are approximately fifty Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem who, since 2014, have been integrated as a Section of the Lieutenancy for Western Australia.

During the pleasant conversation, the transformation of the current extensive Order Section into an autonomous Lieutenancy was discussed. Cardinal Francis



Cardinal Francis, Bishop of Penang, was received in Rome by the Grand Master and the Governor General.



accepted becoming the Grand Prior of the future Lieutenancy, henceforth the process for identifying the Lieutenant will begin.

At the end of their conversation, Cardinal Francis, who wore a simple wooden pectoral cross ("I love simplicity"), stated, "I feel at home because I have returned to the Mother Church of Rome, and here we have talked about the Mother Church of Jerusalem. It is always the same Mother. We live in a spirit of solidarity and universality. The Holy Spirit blows in Rome, in Jerusalem, in Malaysia, everywhere."

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre experiences a unified dimension that Knights and Dames breathe internationally whenever they meet brothers and sisters from other nations. The mission and calling are profoundly and fully shared. Contemporaneously, the Knights and Dames of the Order are first and foremost members of their local Churches, which are

often in very contrasting situations and contexts.

While reflecting on the fascinating Malaysian reality, Cardinal Francis commented, "We want to be a Church – in Malaysia, in Jerusalem, and in Rome – inclusive and bridge-building. The Knights and Dames of the Order hold the Mother Church of Jerusalem dear while living in Asia. In Malaysia, there is a slogan used in tourism marketing, which is 'Malaysia, Truly Asia.' In Malaysia, there is a microcosm of all the religions and various ethnicities present throughout Asia, including Chinese and Indians as well as Malays and indigenous populations. There is truth in this advertising slogan, but not only for tourism. Malaysia has the potential and the capacity too to harmoniously bring together all the Malaysian values, cultures, and religions. We have the potential to turn this dream into reality."

A Tribute to Fabio Mancini, a Grand Magisterium staff member

It is with great sorrow that we announce the loss of Fabio Mancini, who has passed away following a heart attack at the age of 54. When celebrating a Mass for him in Rome one month after his death, on July 2, Grand Master Cardinal Filoni, prayed that his soul may rest in peace. In addition, he paid tribute to Fabio as an example of integrity and dedication as he performed his role as the Grand Magisterium's head of administration. At the funeral Saturday, June 1, the Governor General of the Order, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, read a special message from the Patriarch of Jerusalem in honor of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre's faithful servant, who had been appreciated by everyone for his abilities and kindness. Fabio will always remain alive in our hearts.



"You will know them by their fruits." This was the Gospel (Mt 7:16-20) proclaimed at the Mass for Fabio Mancini, one month after he passed away. Fabio had been the Grand Magisterium's head of administration. The Mass was presided over by the Grand Master, Cardinal Filoni. In his homily in the presence of Fabio's family, Grand Magisterium staff, and some friends, he affirmed, "I like to think of Fabio both as a dedicated administrator here at the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for many years, and that through his works, his kindness, and his availability, we came to know who he was."



The Order and the Holy Land

GAZA: NOT NUMBERS BUT PEOPLE

The Order alongside the population with the Latin Patriarchate

The numbers fail to do justice to what is taking place in the Holy Land. It is not a matter of numbers, whether it is the tens of thousands of deaths in Gaza, the people killed on October 7 in Israel or the hostages. This is about people, of whom there are an infinite number, unjustly too many. Nevertheless, the numbers exist, and they are chilling.

Since October 7, we have received constant updates from the Holy Land. At the end of May, Sami El-Yousef, Chief Executive Officer of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, relayed the terrible situation in Gaza as follows: "The statistics issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are devastating including 35,500 Palestinians killed and 80,000 injured with 60% in both categories being elderly, women, and children; 1.7 million people (75% of the population) who are internally displaced

with 60% of residential units damaged as well as 80% of all commercial facilities; 1.1 million people reached catastrophic levels of food insecurity; lack of any electricity, sewage, water or communication networks."

To this, the destruction of schools and the general disruption of services must be added, not to mention, "17,000 children who are unaccompanied as they were separated from their parents and are most likely orphans", Sami El-Yousef sadly recounted.

After seven months of complete closure, finally on May 16, His Beatitude, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa (accompanied by Father Gabriel Romanelli, the parish priest of Gaza who had been stranded in Jerusalem since the beginning of the war), managed to enter Gaza and visit the Christian community that has gathered in the only Catholic church in Gaza.

This is the Church of the Holy Family, where those gathered there have been living



The Patriarch of Jerusalem observing the destruction, during his first visit to Gaza since the start of the war.



Father Gabriel Romanelli, the parish priest of Gaza, reunited with the faithful of his parish after several months' absence (he was in Bethlehem on October 7 and had not been able to return to Gaza since then).



since the start of the attacks. In a video message that was circulated worldwide, the Grand Prior of the Order stated, "The purpose of this visit is first and foremost to be with them, embrace them, support them, assess their conditions, try to understand what can be done to improve their situation, and help them in every possible way."

The Patriarch stayed for a few days during which he experienced the difficult – and sadly now daily – life in Gaza, with rationed food and electricity, and the constant sound of bombs exploding.

Unfortunately, the news from the Gaza Strip shows there are no signs of improvement there. On the morning of July 7, a raid on one of the Catholic schools in Gaza (located a few kilometers away from the Latin parish where the small Catholic community has sought protection) was reported, with news mentioning several civilian casualties. The press release issued by the Latin Patriarchate, reads as follows, "While property of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Sacred Family School has, since the beginning of the war, been a place of refuge for hundreds of civilians. No religious personnel reside in the school. The Latin Patriarchate condemns in the strongest terms the targeting of civilians or any belligerent actions that fall short of ensuring that civilians remain outside the combat

scene."

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre draws near to all these needs and tragedies, and the Knights and Dames have not withheld their generosity. To date, support of over one and a half million euros has been sent in aid, which is in addition to the regular contributions sent each month from the Grand Magisterium to the Latin Patriarchate.

This additional help primarily serves the daily sustenance of a thousand people in Gaza, all of whom are being hosted in the complex of the Church of the Holy Family, Muslims located nearby, and assistance throughout Palestine, where the situation is extremely complicated.

In fact, with unemployment reaching a record high at 45% in the West Bank, it is increasingly necessary to invest in job creation and humanitarian support for the most severe situations. This can be achieved through food vouchers, medical aid, and economic contributions for tax and bill payments that have thus far benefited over 12,000 people.

To imagine a future continues to be difficult. For now, the focus is on maintaining the dignity of life on a day-to-day basis for all those people who are entrusted to us as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre.



LECTIO MAGISTRALIS BY CARDINAL PIZZABALLA AT THE LATERAN UNIVERSITY

"**W**hat is happening in the Holy Land is an unprecedented tragedy. In addition to the seriousness of the increasingly deteriorating military and political context, the religious and social context is also deteriorating. The dividing lines between communities, and the few but important contexts of interreligious and civil coexistence are gradually disintegrating. Instead, an attitude of distrust is growing progressively by the day. A bleak landscape. There is certainly no lack of elements of hope among the many people who still, despite everything, want to work for reconciliation and peace. But we must realistically recognize that these are niche realities and that the overall picture remains very worrying," stated the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem during his *Lectio magistralis* at the Lateran University in Rome, May 2.

He then addressed the theme of "Characteristics and criteria for a pastoral care of peace" based on his experience as a pastor in the Holy Land. He emphasized the

centrality of peace for the Church's life and its action in the world. In this regard, he insisted on the need to look at the face of God while being aware of our weakness. "There is a passage in the book of Genesis, which I always like to recall, indicating how one recognizes God's face. I refer to the well-known episode of Jacob in his struggle with a mysterious personage on the banks of the Jabbok, on his journey to meet his brother Esau, with whom a reckoning is coming. In that singular struggle, Jacob recognizes the face of God, so much so that he calls the place of struggle 'Peniel,' the 'face of God.' From that troubled night he emerges limping, but confessing, 'I have seen God face to face!' (*Gen. 32:31*). He emerges defeated but victorious, limping but leaning on God. Only by limping can Jacob go to meet his brother-enemy: Esau embraces him and the two weep. At this point, Jacob addresses Esau with one of the most beautiful phrases in the Bible, sometimes inadequately translated and which I, therefore, render literally: 'To see

After his fight with the angel, from which he emerged limping, Jacob - having become aware of his own fragility - emotionally found his "brother enemy" Esau and humbly reconciled with him.



R. BOTTALLA - "MEETING BETWEEN ESAU AND JACOB" (DETAIL)



The life of the Lieutenancies

FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Catholic faithful worldwide feel the call to be close to Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, the place that witnessed the Resurrection and is so central to the Christian faith. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre, as an organism of the Church, has been mandated by the Popes to support the Church in the Holy Land, the territory in which the Order arose. Knights and Dames of the Order have responded to this call and today are present in some forty countries. At the end of May, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, presided over the celebrations for the installation of the Order's 65th local reality, the first in the Caribbean, the Magistral Delegation for Santo Domingo.

"Having received from this fervent community the request to become part of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre a beautiful link opens up between this island home to the first church in America, Rome, the heart of the Universal Church, and the Mother Church of Jerusalem," Cardinal Filoni stressed when meeting the Dominican press.

On May 23, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, accompanied by the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, the Vice Governor General for Latin America, Enric Mas, the Master of Ceremonies of the Grand Magisterium, Monsignor

Adriano Paccanelli, and the head of the Communications Office, Dr. François Vayne, was received by the President of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader, in the presence of the main local authorities, including Carolina Majia, Mayor of Santo Domingo.

The meeting allowed the Dominican Head of State, a few days before his meeting with the Holy Father in the Vatican, to be updated on the Order's initiatives in the Caribbean area and, in particular, on the creation of the Magistral Delegation in Santo Domingo. From a family originally from Lebanon, the President showed great interest in the Order's activities in the Holy Land and, in particular, in the peace education initiatives, which are so necessary throughout the Middle East.

Over the next two days, the striking Primatial Cathedral of America, a sign of the evangelization of the entire continent from



Governor General Visconti di Modrone surrounded by the Magistral Delegate and the new Members of the Order in Santo Domingo.





Investiture of the new Members of the Order in Santo Domingo by the Grand Master, in the primatial cathedral, which was the first church built in the Americas after Christopher Columbus arrived in the continent.

Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, was the setting for the Prayer Vigil and the Investiture of the Order's new Knights and Dames.

The Grand Master invested the Metropolitan Archbishop of Santo Domingo, Msgr. Francisco Ozoria Acosta, who took on the office of Grand Prior, and the new Magistral Delegate, Juana Josefina Domínguez de Jesús, together with eight other members (4 Knights, 3 Dames and an ecclesiastic). Among the various authorities present at the ceremonies was the Lieutenant of the neighboring Lieutenancy for Mexico Guillermo Macías Graue - who assisted and accompanied the formation process of the new Knights and Dames in Santo Domingo.

"Santo Domingo represents the first concrete step in the growth of this Pontifical Institution in Caribbean America, - commented Governor General Visconti di Modrone - and strengthens the ties in this region of the world thanks to the closeness

and fraternal support received from the Lieutenancy for Mexico, which accompanied the process of founding the Magistral Delegation in Santo Domingo and is already broadening its horizons with the presence of the first Guatemalan Knight who was invested."

The visit ended with a Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday May 26 in the shrine of Our Lady of Altagracia in Santo Domingo. At the end of the Sunday Mass, the Governor General presented the new members with their diplomas, before a moment of community prayer next to the reproduction of the Marian image displayed high behind the altar. The original image, deeply loved by the people of Santo Domingo, who in Higüey, in the east of the island, built the country's first shrine in 1572 to house it, is one that takes us directly back to the Holy Land: Mary in Bethlehem in recollection before the Child Jesus showing us the way.

A new Lieutenant for Argentina

The Grand Master, in agreement with the Governor General, and after consultation with the Presidency of the Grand Magisterium and local ecclesiastical authorities, has appointed a new Lieutenant for Argentina. The appointee is Attorney Gustavo Arigós Calderón, while the title of Lieutenant of Honor has been conferred to Juan Francisco Ramos Mejía at the end of his eight-year term. This change follows a series of contacts between the Grand Master, the Governor General, and the Vice Governor General Enric Mas, aimed at identifying the most suitably qualified candidate to hold the position and improve the Order's relations with local authorities after a period of difficult dialogue. Gustavo Arigós Calderón then proceeded, in accordance with Article 28 of the Constitution, to submit a new Council of Lieutenancy to the Presidency of the Grand Magisterium.



RECENT INVESTITURES IN THE PRESENCE OF THE AUTHORITIES OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

Geneva (June 14-15, 2024)

The Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, participated in Geneva in the Investiture ceremonies of the Lieutenancy for Switzerland and Liechtenstein presided over by the Grand Prior, Mgr Charles Morerod, Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg. The celebrations were marked by the extraordinary participation of representatives of other Lieutenancies with which bonds of friendship have been created. In addition to the two Vice-Governors General de Glutz and Mas, Knights and Dames from Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, England and Wales, Germany, Poland, the United States, as well as four Italian Lieutenancies and Malta, came to the shores of Lake Geneva for the occasion. In his speech at the gala dinner, the Governor General, thanking the organising Lieutenant,



Donata Maria Krethlow-Benziger, underlined the importance of this collective commitment in the Holy Land, hoping that the European example of fraternal dialogue, exchange of invitations and participation will also be shared in other geographical areas where the Order is present.

Oslo (June 20-23, 2024)

While in Oslo from June 20-23, Cardinal Fernando Filoni proceeded in the Investitures of new Knights and Dames of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. The Lieutenants for Malta, for Eastern Spain, for Switzerland, for Scotland, for Northern Italy and for the USA Middle Atlantic were present at these celebrations, during which the Vice Governor General for Latin America, Enric Mas, represented the

Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, who was detained in Rome for health reasons. During this stay organised by the Magistral Delegate for Norway, Huan Ngoc Nguyen – in conjunction with his predecessor in this role, Helene Lund, now a member of the Grand Magisterium – the Grand Master met with the leaders of the Order from the Nordic countries, including Latvia, the Apostolic Nuncio in this region





of Northern Europe, Msgr. Julio Murat, as well as several local bishops including the bishop of Helsinki, who became Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for Finland, and the Bishop of Reykjavik, Iceland. A Sunday thanksgiving Mass was celebrated by the Grand Master in St Olav's Cathedral in Oslo, in the presence of the local Bishop, Msgr. Bernt Ivar Eidsvig, Grand Prior for Norway, who welcomed the event of these Investitures in his diocese with great enthusiasm and generosity.

A new Lieutenant and a new Grand Prior for Finland

Mikael Paul, 60, married and a father, Senior Partner of Deloitte & Touche, was appointed Lieutenant of the Order for Finland by the Grand Master, during the Investiture for the Nordic countries which took place last June in Oslo. During these celebrations, Msgr. Raimo Goyarrola, new Bishop of Helsinki since November 2023, took up his duties as Grand Prior for Finland. Both will continue to work for the collaboration of the various Lieutenancies located in the region of Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea, where the faithful of the Catholic Church are few in number but make up small, welcoming and joyful communities of living faith.



THE CLOAK OF THE ORDER: BEYOND A SIMPLE APPEARANCE

A passage from Sacred Scripture states, "If I can just touch his cloak, I will be healed" (*Matthew 9:20-22*); another passage reads, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing" (*Psalms 22:19*).

These are powerful expressions. The first represents a profound act of faith: a woman who trusts the Lord so much that merely touching his cloak would heal her. The second expression, however, is driven by human greed. Despite being aware of the "greatness" of the Lord, people cast lots for his cloak. Therefore, membership in our beloved Order should prompt reflection on these two human sentiments. The first sentiment represents complete reliance on the Lord, which makes us instruments for the good of the Holy Land and its people. These same people, who trust in our "wearing the cloak," hope to find relief from God through us, much like the woman in Matthew's Gospel.

Unfortunately, at times, membership in the Order becomes a mere source of pride due to human frailty and the desire to excel in society – despite the teachings of Jesus – similar to the soldiers who cast lots for his garments beneath the cross.

For me, membership in the Order is a mission primarily focused on supporting the Holy Land and defending the Faith and the Catholic Church through deeds and

example. Simultaneously, I am acutely aware that this membership should help all of us, both Dames and Knights, to strive for the holiness to which God summons us. How can we experience this path? By living out our charism every day and by not assuming that merely donning a cloak during official ceremonies will lead us to our goal.

On April 30, it was an honor for me to organize the presentation of the latest book by the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, titled *Episcopal Conferences: A Modern Institution of Ecclesial Communion*. The event took place at the *Fides et Ratio* Institute of Religious Sciences in L'Aquila, where I have served as Secretary for nearly twenty years. Membership in the Order extends beyond official ceremonies, for it should permeate our daily lives, including the workplace and family sphere, which

allows us to bear witness to our faith with those we encounter.

I firmly believe that the Order is a life experience. Recently, I conveyed my best wishes to a dear friend who received the Investiture last December in Rome with the following words, "Let yourself be imbued with the Order; you will discover its deeper meaning and overcome the natural human temptation of mere externals associated with the cloak and the rosette."

Giancarlo Della Pelle

Knight of the Delegation of L'Aquila (Italy)



INTRODUCING SCHOOLCHILDREN AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO THE ORDER

The experience of the Lieutenancy for Ireland

On April 17, 2024, during the Easter Octave, the Communications Officer for the Lieutenancy for Ireland, Thomas Kilduff, visited four National Schools in the Parish of Kingscourt in the Diocese of Meath.

The invitation of the local Parish Priest, the Very Rev'd Gerard MacCormack, ecclesiastical member of the Order, was to meet with the students and teachers to discuss the humanitarian aid distributed by the Order to the Christian communities in Gaza and the Holy Land.

The visits were in spiritual preparation for the students to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the topics included the Holy Land, the Christian communities who live there and the suffering of the inhabitants arising from the current conflict.

"The most touching aspect of the school

visits – shares Thomas Kilduff – was the innocence of the youngest infant school children (4-6 years) who had knowledge of Jesus and the Holy Land, having received excellent religious instruction from their teachers. The older school children (7-12 years) were very aware of the current conflict in Gaza; they understood the suffering of all those affected and demonstrated their eagerness to help by organising a charitable collection of money."

Indeed the students decided to raise funds, by means of a uniform-free 'fun day' at each school and collected a substantial sum of money for them of over €700 which they chose to donate to three specific beneficiaries, including: the Holy Family Latin Parish Church in Gaza; and the St Vincent's Daughters of Charity *Crèche* and the *Hogar Niño Dios* where children with

Testimony of an Irish Knight in a school: this missionary experience may inspire similar initiatives in other Lieutenancies.





special needs are hosted both located in Bethlehem. The sum they collected was sent to the intended beneficiaries via the Grand Magisterium.

Separately, the parishioners of Kingscourt donated an additional sum of €1,700, which in total amounted to a very generous donation of €2,400, which will benefit

the 'living stones' who are most in need at this current time.

Thomas Kilduff visited each of the four National Schools to give an age-appropriate PowerPoint presentation to the school children, who ranged from 4 to 12 years old. Both the school children and teachers expressed great interest in learning both about the Order and also about the Holy Land. The Communications Officer for the Lieutenancy for Ireland continues, "It was a very humbling experience to witness the awareness, enthusiasm and love that such young school children have for their Christian faith and indeed for their less fortunate brothers and sisters in Christ."

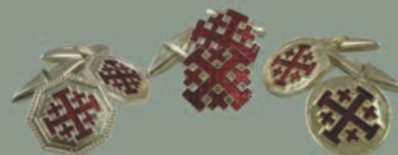
Owing to the success of this initiative, the Lieutenancy intends to follow up with more school visits, both at a National and Senior level. The involvement of members, both lay and ecclesiastics, will be encouraged to ensure the most successful outcome to raise the profile of the Order; the existence of the Christian communities in the Holy Land and to raise awareness of the importance of prayer, daily remembrance and financial aid to support the 'living stones' at this time of most need.



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A QUESTION OF PERSPECTIVES: NOT “THE ONLY ONE” BUT THE FIRST KNIGHT IN GUATEMALA

Julio Menchú and his family were a lovely and warm presence at the Investiture that took place on May 25, in Santo Domingo. Julio, who is Guatemalan, is a teacher at a Catholic-inspired high school, and has always wanted to serve the Church as much as he could. “I had requested to be ordained as a permanent deacon, but when the Archbishop of Guatemala passed away in 2018, the project was interrupted.” Since then, Julio, who has remained profoundly moved by this desire, remained open to other possibilities of serving within the Church.

Julio recounts, “I wrote to the Lieutenancy for Spain and asked them if they could provide me with more documents and information about the Order. After a few months, I received an email introducing me to the Lieutenant for Mexico.” Shortly after, he began the formation process in preparation to join the Order. “Due to the pandemic and because the Knight and Dame candidates were spread throughout Mexico and the Dominican Republic, I was fortunate that the training was conducted online, which allowed me to join without any further issues. Even though I am here in Guatemala, the journey alongside others and the guidance of Lieutenant Guillermo Macías Graue has allowed me to feel connected to the Order, its Members, and the other candidates.”

However, Julio’s challenges were not over. He was supposed to join the group receiving Investiture in Mexico in December. “Due to immigration procedural issues, it is not straightforward for a Guatemalan to receive permission to enter Mexico. We tried every which way, but my request was denied,”



Julio, his wife and their three children, including the youngest Rocío, came from Guatemala to Santo Domingo, during the first Investitures presided over by the Grand Master in the Caribbean.

Julio recalls. He is a husband and father of three children, including little Rocío, who captivated all the participants during the Investiture ceremonies. “I was truly devastated, but I told myself that God always knows why He does things and does them for the good. Therefore, I called the Lieutenant for Mexico, who, after a moment’s silence, came up with the solution. He said, ‘Come to the Dominican Republic.’ What an emotion!”

Thereafter, Julio joined the first group of Knights and Dames for their investiture by Cardinal Filoni, the Grand Master, in May in Santo Domingo, coinciding with the



establishment of the Magistral Delegation for the Dominican Republic. When he reflects on these years of approaching the Order, Julio confesses, "I have experienced a personal conversion journey, while discovering more of myself as I drew closer to God through the Order." The dimension of service is fundamental for Julio and his entire family, who have played a central role in his decision to become part of the Order. "My family belongs to the ancient indigenous noble families of Totonicapán here in Guatemala. My older brothers serve in local government, and they pay to do it because to serve the people is an honor. The issue is not about the title (especially here in America, where the term 'Knight' or 'Sir' sounds almost anachronistic). What excites me and makes me happy is being part of an Order, an Institution of the Catholic Church that serves the first diocese in the world, the land where Jesus was born." Julio concludes emotionally, "The contribution I can offer, no matter how small, is precious to me and fills my heart with pride because it can help other Christians in the Holy Land."

At the Investiture in Santo Domingo, everyone already knew about the existence of the "Guatemalan Knight" and his story. "'Julio, we've talked about you,' the Governor General said to me. 'What joy that you're here for your Investiture'. This welcome made me feel very close to everyone, and from here in Guatemala, I share my experience and seek other candidates for the Order so that this beautiful reality can grow."

Julio concludes his Investiture account by mentioning an exchange he had with Cardinal Filoni. "At the post-Investiture lunch, Cardinal Filoni asked me, 'Julio, you're from Guatemala. How many Knights are there?' I replied that I was the only one, and he said, 'If you say you're the only one, there won't be any others. But if you say you're the first, others will come after you - others you may never know.' Therefore, I am not the only one but the first Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Guatemala, and that both motivates me and makes me happy."

Elena Dini

History and Culture

A BOOK ON THE CHURCH OF SANT'ONOFRIO IN ROME

After Cardinal Pizzaballa took possession of his titular church, we chose to shed light on this historic place of worship, dear to the heart of the Order

Sir John Paul Sonnen, KHS, has written a fascinating account of the history of the church of Sant'Onofrio al Gianicolo, the spiritual centre in Rome for the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. This sometimes forgotten church is, in the words of the author, one of Rome's "best kept secrets."

He first visited the church at the age of nineteen as a young pilgrim to the Holy City. At that moment Sant'Onofrio instantly became for him, in a city of churches, a personal favourite. Later after he moved to Rome for graduate studies at the Angelicum his affinity for Sant'Onofrio grew with his knowledge and passion for Renaissance art



and architecture.

A member of the Order since 2014, the author finished writing the book during the COVID-19 lockdown in the early months of 2020. The content of the book was assembled from bits of papers and notes he had kept while he was a history teacher and tour guide offering walking tours of Rome and the Vatican. The book was written and laid out with the pilgrim in mind, offering a self-guided tour with a map and illustrations, especially for members of the Order.

Sant'Onofrio has an illustrious history that goes back to its construction in the late fifteenth century, a fascinating time that coincided with the High Renaissance in Italy, an exceptional period that experienced some of the most magnificent artistic production imaginable, especially in Rome. Baldassare Peruzzi, the same architect who built Palazzo Massimo in Rome, is attributed as the painter of the most prominent images in the apse of Sant'Onofrio.

The designation of Sant'Onofrio as the Roman chapel of the Order dates back to the days of Venerable Pius XII. The honour was bestowed in direct response to the growing needs of the Order, which the Pope providentially foresaw would continue to expand in the postwar years. On August 15, 1945, the Pope issued a *Motu Proprio* decree (an official act taken without a formal request from another party), that was signed by him granting to the Order "for perpetuity" the use of the church of Sant'Onofrio together with its adjoining monastery and Torquato Tasso Museum.

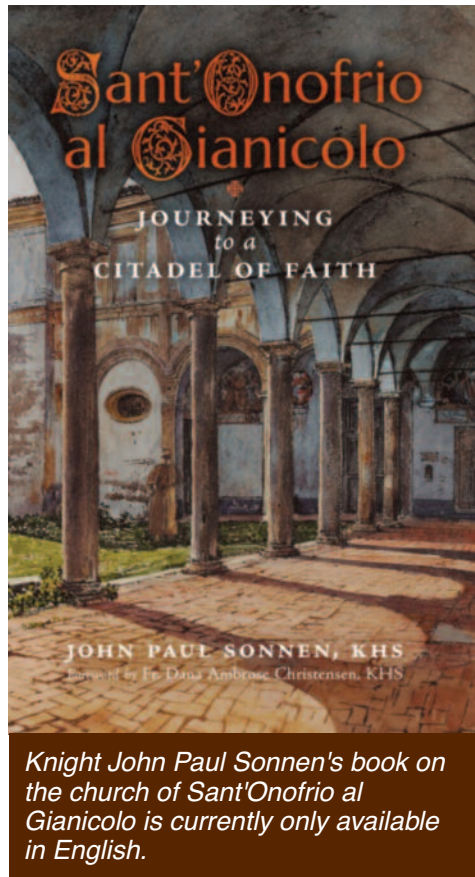
Over the years having Sant'Onofrio under the care of the Order has proven a tremendous grace for its worldwide members, giving them a convenient meeting place in the centre of Rome for carrying out religious ceremonies and works of charity in a spirit of unity and mission.

The special reason given by Pius XII for the designation of Sant'Onofrio was because the Order did not yet have its own Roman church. He desired to grant one which would not only be proof of the Roman Pontiff's benevolence toward the Order, but also one that would be especially fitting and have a particular significance for the Order's members.

Needless to say, this was because inside Sant'Onofrio lay the tomb and final resting place of Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), the greatest bard of the conquest of Jerusalem. He was a famous Renaissance poet who lived his last months at the adjoining monastery and died there at the age of fifty-one. Tasso's immortal work was entitled "Jerusalem

Delivered," an epic poem that sang of the arms and mercy of the captain who freed the glorious sepulchre of Christ, Sir Godfrey of Bouillon, ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and winner of the First Crusade.

In the words of Pius XII: "In this church, in fact, there still lives the memory of Torquato Tasso, illustrious poet, who sang in exquisite verse the deeds of the Crusaders who struggled to restore freedom to the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem: and there, too, is an ancient monastery, which – after the





The apse of the church of Sant'Onofrio al Gianicolo in Rome, is a pure marvel that evokes the heavenly peace into which the liturgy of the Mass plunges us, even in this life.

legitimate cessation of the Order of Hermits of St. Jerome [the monks who initially inhabited the site] – can fittingly accommodate this Equestrian Order and can provide it with a convenient centre for the carrying out of its religious ceremonies and its acts of piety and works of charity.”

The Church’s universality is seen and felt nowhere else as it is in the city of Rome. Since Sant’Onofrio al Gianicolo is a historic church in Rome, it has been for hundreds of years a crossroads for people from all over the world. There they still gather to visit and pray in such a picturesque setting, elevated above the city on the Janiculum Hill. In front of the church there is a small grassy mound with a splashing fountain and

benches overlooking the city.

The gardens of Sant’Onofrio were a favourite gathering place for St. Philip Neri who during his lifetime led gatherings here for many years. Further, the outdoor Renaissance cloister attached to the church is well-known for its charming and peaceful atmosphere, topped by a portico-style gallery balcony – an enchanting place to visit, especially on a rainy day.

The Torquato Tasso Museum (known as the *Museo Tassiano*), is housed in the upper floor of the old monastery where the Lieutenancy for Central Italy is lucky to have its offices. Visits to the museum are by appointment only. The museum, although small, contains some interesting artefacts related to Tasso’s life and death. Visitors enter the room where he passed away and admire original copies of his books. Tasso remains a prominent Renaissance figure and is considered the greatest poet of that period, described as the link between the fading classical and medieval

culture and the new Christian culture that was born in the wake of the Renaissance.

In the book readers are reminded that for the Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Sant’Onofrio is forever their spiritual home in Rome – their own special church in the shadow of the Vatican. Indeed, the cupola of St. Peter’s Basilica can be seen from the attached convent and gardens, where a gentle breeze is sometimes felt amid colourful oleanders, magnolias and rhododendrons in full bloom in the summer months.

The author concludes by extending to everyone, especially members of the Order, a personal invitation to visit Sant’Onofrio as pilgrims on their next trip to Rome.

