



# JERUSALEM CROSS

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

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## Editorial

### A HAND THAT REACHES OUT

#### *The self-awareness of the Order*

A decisive element in human evolution is the hand. Many actions are possible thanks to it, for example, we can write, play, caress, firmly grasp objects, build, and create. Each finger of the hand has its fundamental function, and together the fingers cooperate in an integrated manner, as St Paul reminds us in a broader sense in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Under the guidance of the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, during these years at the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, we have worked to ensure that our Pontifical Institution could increasingly become aware of its own aims. To assist this, we have been articulating them through a series of documents and initiatives that help us deepen our identity and constitute important elements in the life of the Order, much like the *five fingers* of the hand.

In 2020, the Holy Father approved the new

Constitution. The Cardinal Grand Master then worked during the COVID lockdown on a book about spirituality (*The House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume: A Spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre*). This text provided the Knights and Dames – along with the wider public and other institutions – with an important tool to reflect on the life project,

values, and choices that characterize the path of the Order. The next *finger* was the in-depth analysis and guidelines concerning the Ritual for celebrations, which offer the possibility, through the symbols that compose them, to delve deeply into the mission that defines us.

Subsequently, the 2023 Consulta focused on formation, and the Cardinal Grand Master worked on a final draft that incorporated the insights and experiences of the Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates on this topic, which was distributed during the summer. The last finger of our hand is the



*The biblical image of the small mustard seed planted in the earth, which grows to be a large tree, can illustrate the spiritual growth of the members of the Order, aided by the resources offered for their formation.*

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General Regulations, which is in the final stage of revision and will be made available soon.

Some might see all this as innovation or perhaps a change. In reality, the tools offered to us are a way to activate the participation in today's world of an Order with a long history.

There is a very significant biblical image. Jesus speaks of the mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is the smallest of all seeds; but once sown, it grows and becomes larger than all the plants in the garden and puts out such large branches that the birds of the sky can make nests in its branches (cf. *Mark* 4:31-32).

That small mustard seed contains the entire genetic makeup of the tree. When

watered, cared for, given time to grow, from that small seed, the great tree we know develops. In short, everything is already contained in the seed, all the characteristics are present in embryo, and are simply expressed in the concrete form that the Order takes today.

I appreciate the Cardinal Grand Master's support in the development of a clearer image of the *five fingers* of the Order's hand. In doing so, it allows us to act more consciously, and secure in our identity as Members, we reach out towards our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land to be close, and support them in prayer and charity.

**Leonardo Visconti di Modrone**  
*Governor General*



## The Order in union with the Universal Church

“THANK YOU FOR BEING THE FLAME OF HOPE WHERE IT SEEMS TO BE EXTINGUISHING!”

*Pope Francis received the fifteen members of the Conference of Latin Bishops of the Arab Regions (CELRA) in audience on Wednesday, August 28, during their plenary meeting. Remembering the “intense tension” in the Middle East that causes “thousands and thousands of deaths, with immense suffering”, the Pope urged the CELRA to be a “presence that nurtures words and gestures of peace.”*

**B**elow are excerpts from the speech delivered by the Holy Father to the members of the Episcopal Conference, presided over by Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. “The Middle East is experiencing moments

of very strong tension, which in some contexts lead to open clashes and outbursts of war. The conflict, instead of finding an equitable solution, seems to become chronic, with the risk that it will spread to ignite the entire region. This situation has caused



*A group photo taken at the end of the meeting with the Pope and the CELRA Bishops. The meeting was presided over by Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Grand Prior of the Order.*



thousands and thousands of deaths, enormous destruction, immense suffering and the spread of feelings of hatred and resentment, which prepare the ground for new tragedies.

Today I have the opportunity to express directly my closeness to you and to the Churches you represent. May the Lord always give you the strength to bear witness to faith in Him, also through respectful and sincere dialogue with everyone. May you

keep hope alight! Be yourselves, for everyone, signs of hope, a presence that fosters words and gestures of peace, brotherhood, and respect. A presence that, in itself, invites reason, reconciliation, overcoming with good will the divisions and enmities stratified and hardened over time, which are becoming increasingly inextricable. Thank you for being the flame of hope where it seems to have been extinguished!"

**C**oncerned the worsening situation in the Holy Land, on August 26, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem issued a statement once again imploring the warring parties to "quickly reach a ceasefire agreement" and inviting Christians and all men and women of good will to "promote a vision of life and peace throughout our war-torn region."

## RELIGIOUS HARMONY AND PEACE: POPE FRANCIS' APPEALS FROM GAZA TO INDONESIA

**P**ope Francis tirelessly reiterates his call for peace, and frequently emphasizes it during the Angelus, such as on September 1, after the escalation of hostilities in Palestine, the worsening situation for the population in Gaza, and the discovery of the bodies of some Israeli hostages. "Once again," said the Holy Father, "I turn my thoughts with concern to the conflict in Palestine and Israel, which risks spreading to other Palestinian cities. I appeal for negotiations to continue, for an immediate ceasefire, for the release of hostages, and for relief for the people of Gaza, where many diseases are also spreading, such as poliomyelitis. May there be peace in the Holy Land, may there be peace in Jerusalem! May the Holy City be a place of encounter where Christians, Jews and Muslims feel respected and welcomed, and where no-one questions the Status Quo

in the respective Holy Places."

The Holy Father's recent apostolic journey to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, and Singapore was an opportunity to speak more broadly about the need to seek social harmony everywhere and always. The meeting took place at the Istiqlal Mosque, which is the largest mosque in Asia, and unusually and prophetically connected through the Friendship Tunnel with the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption. Pope Francis referred to this underground passage as a symbol, stating, "this is an eloquent sign, allowing these two great places of worship not only to be 'in front' of each other, but also 'connected' to each other. Indeed, this passageway allows for encounter, dialogue and a real possibility for 'finding and sharing a 'mystique' of living together, mingling and encounter'."

Alongside Grand Imam Nasaruddin





*This image of the Grand Imam of the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, seen here embracing Peter's successor on September 5 in Indonesia, is an invitation to work for dialogue, which is the oxygen of peace, while creating interreligious friendships in the field wherever possible, aided by prophetic perseverance.*

Umar, the Holy Father signed the Joint Declaration of Istiqlal 2024 Fostering Religious Harmony for the Sake of Humanity, which emphasized the major crises of the moment, dehumanization, and climate change. "In it [the declaration] we take on the responsibility to address the serious and sometimes dramatic crises that threaten the future of humanity such as wars and conflicts, which are unfortunately caused at times by the manipulation of

religion," commented Pope Francis, stressing the need "that all, together, each cultivating their own spirituality and practicing their own religion, may walk in search of God and contribute to building open societies based on mutual respect and reciprocal love, capable of isolating rigidities, fundamentalisms, and extremisms, which are always dangerous and never justifiable."

From Gaza, Palestine, and Israel to the rest of the world, Pope Francis' call for peace and for finding ways to live in harmony in the societies we inhabit resonates strongly.

## THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF JERUSALEM IN THE PAGES OF A RENOWNED INTERNATIONAL AUTHOR

**I**n a time when pilgrimage to the Holy Land is not an everyday experience due to the difficult situation that land is currently facing, the experience of those who have journeyed as pilgrims and who, as they say, have "lived through events that radically changed my life," is a gift to be cherished.

Thus, Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt, the

internationally renowned Franco-Belgian writer, recounts at the Meeting 2024 in Rimini how one of his latest books, *The Challenge of Jerusalem. A journey to the Holy Land [La sfida di Gerusalemme: Un Viaggio in Terra Santa]*, published in Italian by LEV and E/O and in French by Albin Michel, came about. A phone call with the director of the Vatican Publishing House, the proposal to



spend a month in the Holy Land visiting Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, and the decision to go. "But I left with fear: the fear of not feeling anything on this trip, of not having new thoughts."

It certainly did not turn out that way, and the result can be read in the book, which is now available in French and Italian.

"When I wrote the book," confesses the Franco-Belgian author, "I thought it would be heavily criticized. But it wasn't. Perhaps because I wrote it in such a sincere, innocent and virginal way that everyone could recognize themselves in this book." "I am a person who was born far from Christianity but discovered it later. I



*In his recently published book, writer Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt highlighted the message of love that continues to resonate in Jerusalem, despite the cacophony of war.*



feel like the noble savage of the 18<sup>th</sup> century discovering Western civilization, and I believe that this perspective allowed even atheists to, so to speak, understand and embrace my journey," he continued.

Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt had visited the Grand Magisterium headquarters of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre upon his return from Jerusalem in November 2022, struck by the presence and interest of many Catholics around the world who choose to support the communities in the Holy Land and become Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre. That visit was an opportunity for the Grand Master of the



Order, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, to hear firsthand about his experience before reading it in the pages of his travel account.

Since then, unfortunately, the Holy Land has experienced particularly dramatic months, starting from October 7, 2023. When asked during the presentation of his book in Rimini about the title of his book and whether and how today the "challenge of Jerusalem" is different, Schmitt responded: "I believe that God first of all said 'Listen to me' in Jerusalem," referring to the Revelation received there. "I also believe", he continued, "that God's message has now changed and that He is saying to humans: 'Listen to each other and try to understand each other'. Jerusalem is a place that urges us towards brotherhood, but we are unable to rise to it."

Towards the end of his talk, Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt commented very clearly on his relationship with Christianity, which he defines as the most "paradoxical" religion. The author explained, stating, "To think that the Eternal becomes temporal, that God becomes man; to think that one dies but actually does not die, because after three days He rises... well, this is a

challenge, a paradox for reason. What I try to convey about my journey to Jerusalem is that this mystery, which is fundamental to Christianity, is not a mystery I can understand, but that I can indeed experience." The author experienced this in a particular way at the Holy Sepulchre: "At the Holy Sepulchre, I really had the impression of physically and sensorially grasping that reality of the mystery. My intelligence falters before the mystery, but I believe that this is precisely the interesting point: mysteries should not be explained but embraced and engaged with."

Just past the time limit, one last question was posed to Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt. After your trip to Jerusalem, what answer would you give to the question of who God is for you? "During the journey to Jerusalem, this God assumed a religious dimension, therefore absolutely and definitively tied to Christianity. In Christianity, there is something I had not experienced in my first mystical experience in the Sahara Desert, which is the concept of love. And my conversion to Christianity passes precisely through this concept of love."

**Elena Dini**





**GUGGIONE**  
SINCE 1975

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**Order of the Holy Sepulchre**  
**Papal Equestrian Orders**  
**Order of Malta**

**Italian Dynastic Orders and Orders of the Italian Republic**

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## The acts of the Grand Magisterium

# THE PUBLICATION OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE'S FORMATION DOCUMENT

### *Becoming and Continuing to grow as Knights and Dames*

Following the Order's Consulta in November 2023, where the *Instrumentum Laboris* on the "Formation" of Members was studied, the Formation Document was disseminated in the summer of 2024. This was the result of extensive reworking of the previous *Instrumentum*.

The Formation Document - available on [www.oessh.va](http://www.oessh.va) in the Grand Magisterium section - is the guideline for the admission of new Candidates as Knights and Dames, as well as for the ongoing formation of Members. It will ensure uniform preparation while not limiting the important local contributions tailored to individual needs and situations.

The document is divided into two sections, each addressing the most significant aspects of formation. The first part provides the conceptual framework, which focuses on the theological dimension of the identity of the Knight and Dame, the ecclesiological dimension of the Order, what it means to adhere to and participate in the Order's mission, and some specific content of the formation. The second part

goes into more detail on the practical implementation of formative aspects, reflecting on the specifics of initial formation (which prepares for entry into the Order), ongoing formation for current Members, formation for those holding responsibilities within the Order, and for clergy, as well as religious men and women. This second part also offers some insights into how to experience key moments in a Member of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre's life, such as the Vigil, the Investiture Ceremony, and pilgrimage.

"The reflection on formation was a topic we have had particularly at heart for a long time," stated the Grand Master, who personally worked on the text, listening to and valuing the reactions and contributions received from Lieutenants and Grand Priors. "This document comes from the request of many who have approached us over the years seeking a text to guide them in the service they provide regarding the formation of Knights and Dames. One does not simply become a Knight or Dame, but becomes and continues to be one, and the path of growth never ends."





## THE AUTUMN MEETING OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

*The meeting of the Grand Magisterium was held in Rome on October 8, 2024, around the Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, and the Assessor, Msgr. Tommaso Caputo, Archbishop of Pompeii, the day after the day of fasting and prayer desired by Pope Francis for the intentions of peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East.*

**D**uring the opening Mass, celebrated in honour of Our Lady of Palestine, Patroness of the Order, the Grand Master commented on the reading from the Book of Revelation, which prophesies the "new Jerusalem", indicating that this long-term vision requires the cooperation of the Knights and Dames, "little workers who are not afraid because Christ, the architect of Peace, is risen."

The Governor General introduced the proceedings and led the meeting, stressing in particular in his speech that the contributions of the members of the Order have doubled in favour of humanitarian aid in the Holy Land. Though it is necessary not to forget the monthly aid of almost a million dollars sent to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem which supports its vital structure (its institutional expenses for schools and parishes particularly). He welcomed the success of the dissemination of the new documents of the Order in several languages (a book on spirituality, the statutes, the ritual and a text on formation), announcing the imminent publishing of the

Regulations which are currently being translated.

Regarding the expansion of the Order worldwide, the Governor General spoke of the creation of new Magistral Delegations in Malaysia and Slovakia, and of promising contacts in India, Africa (Congo, Tanzania, Ivory Coast) and South America (El Salvador, Honduras, etc.).

The Patriarch of Jerusalem, who was hindered from departing from the Holy Land, addressed the participants via video message, thanking the Order for all its moral and spiritual support – "we need your prayer" – also referring to the beautiful letter from the Pope to the Catholics of the Middle East, published on October 7, in



*The Patriarch of Jerusalem, who was hindered from departing from the Holy Land, addressed the meeting participants through a video message, thanking the Order first and foremost for its moral and spiritual support.*



which the Holy Father invokes the Queen of Peace and declares that "prayer and fasting are the weapons of love that change history."

In line with the agenda, the floor was given to the Treasurer, Saverio Petrillo, who presented the 2025 budget. With the expected income (fifteen and a half million euros) the objective is to confirm the commitment of the Order to support the life and projects of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whose faithful are facing a terrible financial situation, due to the war. The Treasurer stated that the operating expenses of the Order will soon be covered by the rental of part of *Palazzo della Rovere* to a private hotel company.

The debate revealed a problem with donations from members who have distanced themselves from the Order. The Grand Master intervened to ask for vigilance and transparency of management at all levels, so that Knights and Dames can be informed precisely, in particular about the institutional expenses of the Patriarchate which are less publicised than humanitarian projects, and therefore raise less generous donations.

In the absence of Sami El-Yousef, the Patriarchate's CEO, who was not in attendance for health reasons, the president of the Holy Land Commission, Bartholomew McGettrick, commented on the report received from him. He emphasised the deficit of schools (especially in Israel where the State is mobilised by the war effort, no longer provides school subsidies).

He described the expenses related to food coupons for the population in financial difficulty, and for the psychological support centres set up to help traumatised people, following the bombings and deaths.

Regarding the work of the Commission, the president recounted the four days of virtual meetings that were organised with

about twenty local institutions (in the educational, pastoral and humanitarian fields), showing how these "conversations on the Holy Land" are important so that the actors of solidarity acting on the ground feel supported and accompanied at a global level. Following these discussions, each of the Vice-Governors spoke. For North America, Tom Pogge spoke about the fundraising initiative for the Patriarchate's schools, which, in addition to restructuring the establishments, helps families who are unable to pay school fees and also helps reduce unemployment by allowing the hiring of staff in these establishments. For Europe, Jean-Pierre de Glutz proposed a meeting of the Lieutenants in Pompeii, the first to be held after the pandemic. For Latin

America, Enric Mas described his work in various countries to establish the Order and the need to build relationships of trust with local bishops. For the Asia-Pacific region, John Secker welcomed the development of the Order in Malaysia and the

upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its presence in Australia, which the Governor General will attend in the spring 2025.

At the end of the meeting, the Chancellor gave reassuring statistics, stating that the number of Knights and Dames (29,470 members) is rising after the difficult years of the pandemic, with admissions exceeding promotions this year. He also outlined the program of the Order's Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome, which will take place from October 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, with nearly 3,000 people due to attend. A pilgrimage of young people from the Order is also being considered.

The members of the Grand Magisterium, at the conclusion of the meeting, signed a message of solidarity to Cardinal Pizzaballa, before setting the next date for their meeting for April 15, 2025.

**François Vayne**

**“ Prayer and  
fasting are the  
weapons of love that  
change history ”**  
*(Pope Francis)*



## THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN LIEUTENANCIES: A MOMENT OF COMMON REFLECTION

**W**hen I assumed the role of Governor General, I observed that – except in rare cases – the “horizontal” dialogue between the Lieutenancies was quite limited. Each Lieutenancy referred to the central leadership in Rome and generally did not share experiences or engage in dialogue with other Lieutenancies. As a consequence, this has resulted in a sort of self-referentiality within each local entity of the Order, which, in its autonomy – and sometimes in its isolation – has occasionally developed customs and procedures that are entirely different from those adopted by other Lieutenancies.

By attending various ceremonies, I gradually noticed some differences that did not contribute to a unified image of the Order; instead, these instances seemed to highlight a somewhat “regionalization” of the rituals. Moreover, alongside these formal ceremonies, there were no planned moments for broader meetings, reflection, and dialogue with a common framework.

I therefore considered it appropriate to raise the issue within the Presidency of the Grand Magisterium and – having received favorable support – propose to the Grand Master to activate new methods aimed at encouraging “transversal” dialogue. The main goal

was to promote meetings between similar Lieutenancies that share common problems or, due to distance or size, need to collaborate with larger Lieutenancies. Additionally, there was a growing awareness that meetings based on continental geographic areas (especially in the case of Europe) were too large to allow for effective debate, let alone dialogue between participants. All of this has led me to promote sectoral meetings among similar Lieutenancies. Thus, within the European area, meetings were organized among Iberian, French-speaking, Italian-speaking, English-speaking, German-speaking, Nordic countries, and Central and Eastern European Lieutenancies. Similarly, regional meetings are regularly being held among North American, Latin American, Asian, and Pacific Lieutenancies.

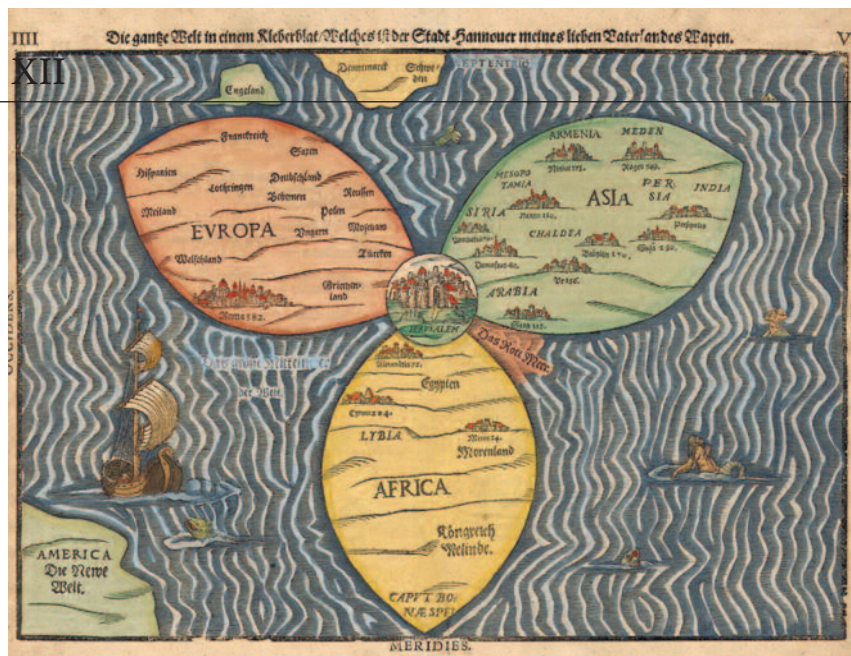
A significant communication effort has been made in this regard over the past few years, thus promoting greater uniformity in behavior and a stronger sense of belonging to the Order. Small self-referential “fiefdoms” have disappeared, while fostering the development of a large family where dialogue and sharing are the norm.

This process has especially benefited medium and small Lieutenancies, or those geographically more



*The Governor General in Santo Domingo. The photo was taken last spring upon the foundation of the Order in the Caribbean.*





*The relationships between the various continental entities of the Order have been at the center of the Governor General's activities over the past seven years. His goal has been the promotion of harmony through dialogue and consultation amongst the 30,000 Knights and Dames. The love for Jerusalem is at the heart of their focus and mission, as illustrated by this medieval map of Christendom, with earthly Jerusalem at the center of the world.*

isolated, which have drawn lessons, support, and inspiration by aligning themselves with the experience of more structured Lieutenancies with greater international outreach. Thus, we have seen interesting experiences, such as shared ceremonies between several Lieutenancies from the same geographic area, meetings and roundtables, joint pilgrimages to the Holy Land or other inspiring places of worship. In some cases, "transcontinental" invitations have brought Lieutenancies from distant areas closer together in both form and spirit, which has enhanced their sense of belonging to the Order. During the 2023 Consulta, there was a deliberate effort to compose working groups that would bring together representatives from distant Countries.

The custom of exchanging invitations between Lieutenants has developed to such an extent that it warranted the creation of certain general guidelines (already largely followed by the Lieutenants, and which I repeat here for the benefit of all) to guide its regulation on a managerial and administrative level.

The following are some guiding principles, approved by the Cardinal Grand Master:

1 - Each Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate is free to invite representatives to attend their ceremonies from other Lieutenancies with whom they wish to maintain a special

dialogue. This allows for the sharing of experiences and issues that can be jointly addressed, offering participation in social events and covering some logistical expenses. However, it is customary that travel and accommodation expenses generally remain the responsibility of the guests.

2 - The expenses to cover a spouse, friends, or family members accompanying the Lieutenant are of a private nature and must be covered by those individuals.

3 - In selecting Lieutenancies to invite - while maintaining the welcome relationships of proximity and often friendship that may develop - it is also advisable to consult the Governor General or the Vice Governor General. They, having an overall view of the issues affecting the area in question, can provide appropriate suggestions aimed at fostering truly useful dialogue. Ideally, such invitations should not be repetitive but, rather, as varied and innovative as possible to allow for the dissemination of experiences.

4 - Any Lieutenant invited to the ceremonies of another Lieutenancy may delegate a member of their Council to represent them. In this case, the treatment received by the delegate will be equivalent to that of the Lieutenant's.

5 - When the invitation concerns an Investiture ceremony conducted by the



Cardinal Grand Master, it is appropriate for the invited Lieutenancies to have the opportunity to attend every meeting, discussion, or debate organized for the occasion.

6 - It is advisable that each Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate inform the Governor General of any invitation to particular Authorities or the organization of special events related to their ceremonies.

7 - In the case of side events associated with an Investiture ceremony or sectoral or regional meetings of Lieutenancies, I wish to emphasize that the participation of guests or

relatives who are not members of the Order should be carefully considered. Such participation should not alter the pedagogical nature of the meeting and should not preclude or interfere with a calm discussion among actual members. These meetings, far from being social or convivial in nature, should serve as moments of common reflection, discussion, and commitment, which are not well suited to the presence of non-members, even if they are family members.

**Leonardo Visconti di Modrone**  
*Governor General*

## THE GRAND MASTER OF THE ORDER AT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> JERUSALEM DAYS IN MIECHÓW, POLAND

**C**ardinal Fernando Filoni, in the presence of Father Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land, was invited to preside over the Jerusalem Days in Miechów, held in the Polish city near Krakow, from September 13 to 15, 2024.

Miechów is home to the famous Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, which houses a replica of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem dating back to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. For centuries, it has been a destination for faithful pilgrims eager to proclaim and praise the Risen Christ. Next to the Basilica is the monastery that served as the main seat of the Order of the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem from 1163 to 1819. Since 2010, it has been the spiritual and historical center and chapter church of the Lieutenancy for Poland of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, established in Poland on December 8, 1995.

The Jerusalem Days are celebrated in conjunction with the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This celebration is



*The reproduction of the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre in Poland, which dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is the focal point of a major pilgrimage that takes place every two years.*





*The Mass at Miechów presided over by the Grand Master of the Order.*

and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (*John 12:24*)."

The Jerusalem Days in Miechów, which commenced 14 years ago, serve

especially dear to the members of the Order and this year was presided over by Cardinal Filoni. At the beginning of his homily, he said, "For centuries, the Basilica of Miechów has been a sacred place that invites reflection on the mystery of our Redemption; it is a permanent meditation on the mystery of the Lord's Death and Resurrection, and, liturgically speaking, even more so on the day when the Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross." Also gathered for the occasion were members of the Polish Lieutenancy of the Order and all other participants in the Jerusalem Days. The event has been held biennially in Miechów since 2010 with the special intention of praying for the Holy Land. The Grand Master went on to say, "Since the faith in the Risen One, the Son of God, was preached in this noble land of Poland, God Himself has cast His benevolent gaze upon those who dwell here. Historically, with the spread of veneration for the Holy Sepulchre in 16<sup>th</sup> century Miechów, there was a desire to replicate the Aedicule of Christ's Tomb. In reality, the Lord's Holy Sepulchre does not represent just one of the many, albeit significant, places in the life of Jesus, but the symbolic place that encompasses the mystery of His painful Passion and glorious Resurrection; the place where the entire mission of Christ found its fulfillment, as Jesus Himself said, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth

as an important bridge between the Holy Land and Poland. One of the reasons for organizing this periodic event is to promote aid to Christians in the Holy Land, particularly through the activities of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. These activities include humanitarian assistance, medical aid, scholarships, and pastoral care for the disciples of Christ in the Holy Land. Each edition of the Jerusalem Days features a charity collection for the orphanages of the *Homes of Peace* on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and in Bethlehem, run by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth.

On September 13, during this event, a special exhibition was inaugurated at the National Museum in Krakow. The exhibition showcased masterpieces and valuable works from the Treasury of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the *Terra Sancta Museum*, which had been donated by Polish pilgrims to the Custody of the Holy Land.

During this spiritual gathering in the "Polish Jerusalem" of Miechów, progress on the second phase of conservation and restoration work within the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was presented and discussed. The work there includes the renovation of the flooring, protective interventions on the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre, support for archaeological excavations, and the study of the materials that have been discovered there. These contributions are all thanks to the work of





the Centro per la Conservazione ed il Restauro dei Beni Culturali (Foundation Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage) "La Venaria Reale" in Turin and the Department of Antiquity Sciences of "La Sapienza" University in Rome.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, celebrated on September 14, 2024, marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonical legal status granted to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem by Pope Pius XII, through the Apostolic Letter *Quam Romani Pontifices* on September 14, 1949.

Andrzej Sznajder, the Lieutenant of the Order for Poland, is a key figure in the

*The Knights and Dames of the Order were well represented during the recent Jerusalem Days in Poland, particularly at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14.*

organization of Jerusalem Days in Miechów, alongside Canon Franciszek Siarek, priest of the Parish of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów, and Stanisław Osmenda, President of the Organizing Committee. He emphasized, "Gathered together, we asked God for peace and reconciliation for all those who live in the Land of Jesus, which once again finds itself at the center of a grave political and military crisis, overwhelmed by an unprecedented wave of violence."

## Together for the Holy Land: The Polish Lieutenancy and the Catholic Weekly Niedziela

In collaboration with the Catholic weekly "Niedziela", the Polish Lieutenancy has organized a support campaign for Christians in the Holy Land, in light of the dire situation that is making daily life increasingly difficult for our brothers and sisters in the Land of Jesus. The agreement between the two entities was signed in February 2024, and the campaign was launched at the beginning of Lent when the appeal was disseminated through the weekly paper, which published materials and news describing the situation in Gaza, as well as more broadly in Palestine and Israel. On March 23, a special free supplement titled *The Land of Jesus in Need* was published, and 70,000 copies were distributed.

This fruitful cooperation between a Lieutenancy of the Order and the broader Catholic community to raise awareness about the ecclesial dimension of support for the Holy Land has borne abundant fruit. Approximately \$50,000 USD was sent to the Grand Magisterium, which was promptly forwarded, according to the donors' wishes, to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. "It was a great surprise, because we did not expect such a large response and such generosity," commented Andrzej Sznajder, the Lieutenant for Poland, with joy. Lieutenancies, through their local presence, can serve as spokespeople for the Holy Land, and act as ambassadors for its needs.



## The Order and the Holy Land

# CULTIVATING THE VIRTUE OF HOPE AMIDST TRAGEDY

*Spiritual keys proposed by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*

During the inaugural conference at the Rimini Meeting 2024, Cardinal Pizzaballa, interviewed by Bernhard Scholz, president of the Foundation Meeting for Friendship among Peoples ETS, provided the audience with a deep understanding of the current challenging situation in the land that has been his home for more than half of his life.

### LIVING THROUGH THE CONFLICT TODAY

"Since October, there have been difficult moments for our diocese." Violence, conflict, anger, and the hardening of positions have made daily life increasingly tense. A passage from Scripture that has accompanied Cardinal Pizzaballa during these months and which he shared for reflection during the Rimini Meeting is Isaiah 47:8, where the prophet makes Babylon speak, symbolizing human power attempting to replace God. Babylon says, "I and no one else". Pizzaballa comments, "I and no one else is also the name of God, 'You shall have no other gods before me.' 'I and no one else,' said Babylon. I have the impression that what is being said now is 'I and no one else,' rejecting the existence of the other, with a language of rejection of the other that has become

daily matter, which is felt on social media and so on, and it is truly dramatic." This is the context in which one lives in the Holy Land, amidst a lack of communication and rejection.

In this regard, Cardinal Pizzaballa is often asked what the Church can and should do in this situation. His honest and pragmatic response helps us all to position ourselves, "Let's be honest, no one expects the Christian community to solve the problems. Politically, we are more or less irrelevant, if I may say so. [...] The first thing is to be there, to be present. Not to fall into the temptation of wanting to forcefully play a role in these situations, but to be able to speak a word [...], a word of truth about what is



Cardinal Pizzaballa spoke about the situation in the Holy Land during the Meeting for Friendship among Peoples, which took place in Rimini this summer.





happening, where people can find themselves, without becoming part of a conflict. I believe this is the role the Church can play."

Finally, the Patriarch looks within his small flock, which is also present in four nations – Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Cyprus – and must deal with different affiliations. "A Christian from Israel is Israeli, a Palestinian Christian is Palestinian in every way. And maintaining unity has not been easy. I wanted to say that it is clear that you belong to your people, but there is also a belonging to Christ that should help you have a different perspective."

#### **FORGIVE? HOW?**

When forgiveness is trivialized, we lose sight of the divine nature of this act. Cardinal Pizzaballa offers us guidance through the two important dimensions within a conflict that are, personal forgiveness and communal forgiveness, both of which must not be ignored.

"The Christian faith," he began, "is an encounter with Christ, and that encounter is one that saves and forgives. Meeting Christ, meeting God, the first experience you have is being a sinner. But this awareness of being a sinner is not a condemnation; it is an announcement of salvation. [...] At a personal level, forgiveness and justice are almost synonymous. Jesus on the cross did not wait for justice to be done before forgiving. He forgave."

The Patriarch continued: "At a communal level, the dynamics are different. In the public and communal sphere, the community is also based on other principles: dignity, equality, which are essential to the life of a community. Thus, forgiving without dignity and equality is not an act that brings dignity and equality but rather means justifying an ongoing evil. So forgiveness

must be present, but the dynamics are completely different, requiring time, a process of healing, first of all, of welcoming and recognizing the wrong and injustice committed, and also needing a word of truth about what is happening. Because if you do not speak the truth, if you do not say things clearly, what are you forgiving?"

"It is not simple," he concluded, relating this dynamic to the concrete situation in his diocese. "As a pastor, I always find myself in this difficult situation. Forgiving today, for a Palestinian, means justifying what is happening; they cannot do it, they must wait. But as a pastor, I cannot but say, 'Look, it is true that

you need to seek justice, but remember that justice without forgiveness simply becomes recrimination, putting the person in a corner.'"

#### **IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING: FAITH NOT AS AN ANSWER, BUT AS A RELATIONSHIP**

Before bidding farewell, Bernhard Scholz, President of the Foundation Meeting for Friendship among Peoples ETS, asked the Patriarch one last question: "We see children without water, without food, orphaned, traumatized. Is there an answer to this suffering of the innocent?"

"Recently," replied Cardinal Pizzaballa, "it seems that we have sometimes reduced faith to a kind of cure-all, a faith that solves all problems, a belonging to the Church as if it were a perfect community, and so on. That's not the case." Tragedy remains even if we are Catholics. The reason for evil, he stated plainly, is "the wickedness of man who commits these acts. It makes no sense for God to account for what we do."

But above all, he concluded by reminding us that "faith is not an answer to all questions. Faith is a relationship in which all questions find space."

**“ Faith is not an answer to all questions. Faith is a relationship within which all questions find space ”**



# GENEROSITY BIRTHS HOPE AMID THE DESPAIR OF WAR IN THE HOLY LAND

## *Job creation beneficiaries' testimonials*

Since October 7, financial hardships have increased for numerous Christian families, especially in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Families struggle to make ends meet, worrying about their future and their children's future in their beloved homeland. Since the beginning of the war, the Palestinian Authority has been unable to pay the salaries of around 180,000 public employees, many of whom are Christian and haven't been paid since October 2023. Many companies have adopted a budget cut to ensure their continuation amid this war. Additionally, the suspension of many permits to cross the border has resulted in the sudden loss of jobs for over 100,000 individuals who worked in Israel, leaving them to face the difficult task of finding new employment in the West Bank, where job opportunities are extremely scarce. Many Christian families working in the tourism sector have also been extremely affected due to the complete halt of tourism-related businesses, with over 3,000 Palestinian Christians losing their jobs.

However, with the assistance of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has directly employed and supported 173 people from various Latin parishes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since October 2023.

In fact, as Sami El-Yousef, CEO of the Latin Patriarchate explains, "since the start of the war in Gaza, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has received from the Lieutenancies, via the Grand Magisterium, about \$2.2 million destined for the emergency fund for both Gaza and the West Bank. Gaza has always been the priority,

given the level of destruction, human loss, and lack of any basic commodities and infrastructure with most funding provided to secure the daily livelihoods. In the West Bank, after the concentration in the first months of the war on pure humanitarian interventions such as food coupons; rental support, tuition support, utilities support, medical expenses, etc., given the major spike in unemployment, several hundred thousand dollars of the funds received were invested in job creation and income-generating projects."

This support has alleviated many financial burdens for those who have been unemployed, lost their jobs, or were at risk of becoming unemployed, providing financial relief and hope for a more stable future for many Christian households in the



*Paid internships for young people in the Holy Land are funded thanks to the support of the Order.*





*Unemployed people in the West Bank are finding work thanks to aid sent by the Grand Magisterium of the Order to the Latin Patriarchate, on behalf of Lieutenancies from around the world.*

Holy Land.

The Job creation fund was divided into different programs created to support different cases. First, paid internship to help unemployed fresh graduates. Second, 4-6 months job opportunities, targeting those who have lost their jobs. Third, grants of 2000\$ for struggling businesses or start-ups. To note, 370 applications were received for the grant, but the funds could only cover 11 businesses. Fourth, short term hands-on employment, this supported construction workers who have lost their jobs due to the cancellation of permits.

*Below are heartfelt testimonies of how generosity has impacted the life of many individuals and families during these times of war*

**N.A.**, the sole breadwinner in her family, was born in Gaza and is now 30 years old. She moved with her family to **Ramallah** in hopes of a better life prospect. She has three unemployed younger siblings who couldn't complete their education due to financial constraints. Her older sister, who is 33, was unable to continue her studies beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> grade due to being a slow learner and lacking the necessary support after their move to Ramallah. Previously, she received assistance at the Holy Family School in Gaza. N.A.'s father is 60 years old and suffers from numerous health issues, which prevent him from working. He has completely lost his sight due to high blood pressure, and currently suffers from lung infections, living on a constant supply of oxygen. He requires daily assistance and care, hence, N.A.'s mother is a stay-at-home who supports the family through her care for her husband and the father of her children.

N.A. was fortunate enough to complete her studies and earn a Diploma in Business and Project Management. Yet, despite earnestly searching for a job, she couldn't land one. When the war in Gaza began, N.A.'s financial situation became worse than ever,



struggling to provide necessities for life, due to the destruction of their house and family shop in Gaza, which were their only source of income before the war. They faced a dire situation up till the Latin Patriarchate stepped in and provided N.A. with a temporary job through the job creation program. She was employed as a secretariat in the Christian Education Office of the Latin Patriarchate in Ramallah. N.A. expressed her gratitude for this opportunity, which has been life-pivotal, saying: "The reemployment project has been life-changing for me. **It has helped ease my daily worries and struggle of providing life necessities for me and my family in these devastating times.** The war significantly hurt our finances. I thank God for this opportunity and hope to keep advancing in my career to be able to continue supporting my family."

■ **The Antonian Charitable society in Bethlehem** has been significantly impacted by the recent war, disrupting its operations, and affecting the well-being of both residents and staff. The situation has led to a decrease in the institute's budget due to receiving fewer donations and project funds. In addition, many families of elderly residents at the elderly house of the society could no longer afford the residency fees and medical expenses. Additionally, the elderly house helped accommodate 7 new homeless individuals in these times of war, two of whom are a mother and a father from Gaza. This increased the strain on the resources and heightened pressure to meet the needs of the residents and maintain the services offered.

Thanks to the financial support the Antonian Society received from the Latin Patriarchate, it was able to recruit 9 unemployed individuals from Bethlehem: four Nurses, a physiotherapist, a cleaner, a nutritionist, a maintenance worker, and an accountant. They were also able to maintain the existing employees' salaries.

Offering these jobs through the job creation funds has helped ensure the continuation of the facility, and changed the financial state of many families, **the following are short testimonies from some of those who were employed at the Antonian Society:**

**D.S.** works as a nurse, and her salary has been essential for covering her family's rent and utilities. **N.K.**, also a nurse, has used her income to support her children's education and provide for their daily needs. **S.K.** found that her job helped maintain her household's financial stability by meeting daily expenses and necessities. **S.S.**, the maintenance worker, provided for his family when he could not ensure their basic needs were met.

■ **T.A.** is a divorced woman **from Jerusalem**, aged 54 years old, who currently lives with her mother and sister in a rental house. Her mother is retired. T.A. was laid off



*Thanks to donations from members of the Order, new jobs are being created in the Holy Land, including in the field of social assistance.*



from her job at the beginning of the war due to financial constraints faced by the institute she worked at. She spent 3 months without any stable income to sustain herself. The whole household lived off the small amount received from her mother's retirement plan. T.A. has previously received support through **the LPJ Women Empowerment Program**, which helped her enroll in an online course that taught her how to make simple beauty products. This small business has been a great source of help for her yet with the war's constraints many stopped purchasing. Faced with an increase in living expenses due to the war, and no hope for a job opening, she felt helpless...until the Latin Patriarchate was able to secure her with a job through the job creation program and employed her as a secretariat at the Patriarchate's social department.

■ **M.S. from Beit Jala**, with a visual impairment disability, received an internship at Bethlehem Arab society for Rehabilitation for the period February – May 2024, after he lost his work as "religious souvenirs street vendor" since the start of the war in October 2023. He shares: "The **AFAQ** Project helped connect unemployed people with employers, including people with disabilities and providing them with income."

■ **N.M. from Taybeh** testified that from the paid internship opportunity he was able to contribute to the household expenses and supported his family because his father and sister lost their jobs during the war. He said: "The opportunity I received through the **AFAQ** project served as a cornerstone of support for both me and my family."

To note, the Internship project has helped around 9 interns allocate a permanent job.

■ **Zayyan Band, from Beit Sahour**, consists of 36 young men and women who perform traditional shows and songs at weddings and public events. They received a grant to help sustain and grow their business.

**E.H., from Zayyan Band, shares:** "Your support is more than just a financial donation; it is an expression of trust that enhances our ability to create positive change in our society. We have seen firsthand how your cooperation in supporting Christian youth with small grants can significantly impact their lives, especially as we develop our musical and artistic business."

■ **K.A. from Ramallah** was unemployed for a month and a half before being assigned to supervise a short-term project renovating old buildings, such as schools and offices, for the Latin Patriarchate in Ramallah. This project provided employment for seven construction workers who had lost their jobs due to Israel's halation of all Palestinian construction-worker's permits. As their



*The solidarity of the Order permits young people to engage in their own activities. Here we see a music group that performs at weddings and public events.*



supervisor and the one who helped allocate them, K.A. testifies that this opportunity has alleviated the financial stress of these fathers, who have children to feed and care for. Although the payment is neither permanent nor as much as they used to receive in their work in Israel, it makes a significant difference in these unprecedented times. This gave them something to do, rather than sit and wait for things to get better. Similar projects were also conducted in Aboud, Beit Sahour, and other parts of the diocese, providing temporary financial relief for many construction workers, who remain unemployed awaiting the end of the war, relying on God's mercy and grace amid socio-economic difficulties and political tension in the Holy Land.

**Miral Atik**, *Media Officer at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem*

## PLANTING SEEDS IN DIFFICULT GROUNDS: THE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE ORDER WITHIN THE ROACO FRAMEWORK

**"D**ear representatives of the Agencies, thank you for what you do: you are evangelizers, participants in the mission of the Church, bearers of Jesus' love. Over the years, how many people have received the fruits of your generosity! You are sowers of hope, witnesses called, in the style of the Gospel, to work with meekness and without fanfare," said Pope Francis warmly to the participants of the 97<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of the Reunion of Aid for the Oriental Churches (ROACO) to which the Order participates, during the audience granted to them on June 27, 2024.

For years, in addition to the monthly contributions and projects that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre supports through the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the

Knights and Dames have been involved through the Grand Magisterium in contributing to some initiatives indicated by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches within the ROACO framework. In 2024, the Order adopted nine projects. Four of them directly benefit educational institutions linked to religious entities or congregations. These include: the installation of classrooms and restrooms at the school of the Discalced Carmelites in Haifa (Israel); the reconstruction of the fence for the nursery of the Combonian Sisters in Bethany (Palestine); the renewal of the electrical

system at the Greek-Catholic Melkite school for boys in Zarqa (Jordan); and the maintenance of classrooms and stairs at the Dar Al-Lutf school in Aqaba (Jordan). Other projects concern churches that need significant

*The renovation of the beautiful Church of Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant in Kiryat Yearim, Israel, is one of the nine ROACO projects supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.*



renovation work to better accommodate local communities. These include: at the Greek-Catholic Melkite church of Our Lady of the Dormition in Arrabeh (Israel), the pews will be replaced; in the complex of the church of Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant in Kiryat Ye'arim (Israel), a contribution has been given for the redesign of the irrigation system; finally, work will continue on the insulation and maintenance of the roof of the Greek-Catholic Melkite cathedral of the Annunciation of the Virgin in the Old City of Jerusalem. The last two projects involve more direct renovation work on buildings of religious congregations, such as the Monastery of the Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady of Calvary in Jerusalem and the guesthouse of the priests of the Incarnate Word located at the monastery at the Baptism of the Lord Sanctuary in Bethany, Jordan.

Local communities are always involved and contribute part of the funds for these

*"You are sowers of hope, witnesses called to act, as the Gospel tells us, with kindness and discretion."*

*(Pope Francis to the members of ROACO)*

works, which makes these projects even closer where the Order is called to "fill in" the missing part of an economic commitment that starts from the base and shows the interest, involvement,

and love of local communities for their own structures and activities.

At the end of his speech to the participants in the ROACO plenary assembly (where the Order was represented this year by Dr. Petrillo, Treasurer of the Order, who replaced the General Governor who was unable to attend), Pope Francis specifically mentioned the Holy Land among those Oriental Churches who "are bearing a heavy cross and have become 'martyr Churches'" and they "carry the marks of Christ's wounds." He encouraged the participants by reminding them that, "The seeds you plant in fields poisoned by hatred and war will surely blossom. They will be a prophecy of a different world, one that does not believe that might makes right, but in the non-violent power of peace."



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## The life of the Lieutenancies

### NEW LIEUTENANTS OF THE ORDER

The Grand Master has appointed Knight Camilo Manrique Santamaría as the Lieutenant of the Order for Colombia. Born in 1953 and married to Elena Gamboa Isaza, Lieutenant Manrique holds a degree in architecture.

In France, Knight Grand Cross, Christian Piotre has been appointed Lieutenant by the Grand Master. Born in 1956 and married to Sophie Sevilla, he has worked in particular as a senior official at the French Ministry of Defense. We entrust the first term of these two new dignitaries of the Order to Our Lady of Palestine and thank their predecessors, Dame Grand Cross Adriana Abondano Mayol and Knight Grand Cross Jean-Marie Faugère, for their dedication in service to the Mother Church of Jerusalem.



*The Lieutenant of Honor for France was awarded the Golden Palm in Rome by the Grand Master, in the presence of the Governor General.*

### THE FOUR GOSPELS IN LUXEMBOURGISH PRESENTED TO THE GRAND MASTER

During the Investiture celebrations in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Lieutenant Jacques Klein presented a copy of the four Gospels in Luxembourgish to the Cardinal Grand Master. A group of translators, including the Lieutenancy's ecclesiastical Master of Ceremonies, Canon Claude Bache, along with members Françoise Biver-Pettinger and Abbot Jeannot Gillen, has been meeting for over 30 years, at the request of the Archbishop of Luxembourg, to translate the biblical texts of the New Testament from the original Greek into

Luxembourgish. Initially, the four Gospels were published in separate booklets, followed by an illustrated publication of all four Gospels in Luxembourgish that appeared in 2023. The group is currently working on the translation of the Acts of the Apostles. Canon Bache dedicated the book offered to Cardinal Filoni with the biblical

phrase from the Gospel of John (12:3), which reflects the title of the Grand Master's publication on the spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre: "And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume". (Dat ganzt Haus war voll vum Geroch vum Ueleg).





## FORMATION: A PRIVILEGED MOMENT

The moment of entry into the Order is always a unique experience for the Knights and Dames. Before the Investiture, formation requires at least a year, during which time the awareness of what it means to be a Member of the Order grows, accompanied by a dedicated life of faith, as well as knowledge of the Holy Land to which the future Knight and Dame are directed.

Jan Zahálka, who is a candidate from the Magistral Delegation for the Czech Republic, wrote the following after attending an Investiture ceremony about how this moment was particularly significant in his formation process. "The ceremonies are simply beautiful. If I had to choose some moments that particularly touched me, they would be: the words of Archbishop Graubner on duty, the reading from the Letter to the Ephesians (I especially like the concept of the 'sword of the Spirit'), and the connection between the Order's tradition and the Czech tradition of Saint Wenceslaus.

Overall, I believe that having attended the Investiture greatly strengthened my motivation to continue my path of formation."

Formation is a topic that the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, together with all the Lieutenants, Magistral Delegates, and Grand Priors, has reflected upon extensively since the Consulta meeting held in November 2023.

The final Document on Formation was recently shared over the summer with all local groups of the Order to support this important process of growth and awareness that prepares for entry into our Pontifical Institution.

When Cardinal Filoni, Grand Master, presides over the Vigil and Investiture ceremonies, he always schedules a moment

to meet with the candidates to answer their questions. This is an extremely appreciated moment as it allows for the deepening of important themes and a chance to hear the opinion and advice of the Grand Master of the Order directly. Jan recounts, "We were asked to prepare a question for His Eminence the Grand Master. Mine was 'How do you see the role of a Knight in the digital age?' In the end, I did not ask my question because part of the answer had already been given regarding another question that had been posed to the Cardinal about the right approach to educating and

motivating young people. His Eminence's answer, as I paraphrase and understand it, was that the life of a Knight is itself a Catholic testimony, that a Knight is a bearer of light, 'I am here and if you are attracted to what I have to say and support, follow me.' This is a fully relevant answer to my question as well and shows me how the values of the Order are valid in any situation."



*Jan, a young Czech candidate, here testifies to the spiritual fruitfulness of his path of formation in the Christian life.*



## A MODEL OF HOLINESS CLOSE TO YOU!

*The Knights and Dames of the Order do not lead a separate Christian life; instead, they are deeply embedded within the ecclesial life of their dioceses, as the Cardinal Grand Master likes to remind us. We received this text from the Lieutenant for Belgium who had participated in the ceremony of the translation of the relics of Blessed Eugénie Joubert to the church of Saint-Gilles in Liège, an important event for the local Church.*

**"N**or do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (*Matthew 5:15-16*).

This was the theme of the ceremony presided over by Monsignor Jean-Pierre Delville, Bishop of the Diocese of Liège, held on June 30 at the church of Saint-Gilles.

"She" was hidden in plain sight, with her relics finally returned to the parish where "she" had died and placed in a chapel for all to ask for her intercession. Who are we

talking about?

Well, of a "little nothing", to use the expression of a Saint (Mariam Baouardi, Palestinian) born only 30 years before her. This "little nothing" is Blessed Eugénie Joubert, born in 1876 in Haute-Loire, who answered Jesus' call by joining the Sisters of the Sacred Family of the Sacred Heart at the age of 19. Life's circumstances (tuberculosis) brought her to the parish of Saint-Gilles in Liège, in a working-class neighborhood.

She was entrusted with catechesis for young children, particularly those considered "difficult", i.e. noisy, disadvantaged, or poorly educated. She



*This photograph shows the transfer of Blessed Eugénie Joubert's relics to the Church of Saint-Gilles in Liège. The Knights and Dames of Belgium demonstrated the Order's commitment to the local Church's religious events.*



excelled because the children were struck by this "little sister" who loved and understood them, for she had experienced similar circumstances in her youth. Sister Eugénie instilled in them a love for the Holy Virgin, the rosary, and intimacy with Jesus, a sentiment that she first experienced deeply, with trust and humility.

Two aspects seem to best reflect Sister Eugénie's personality:

- Total trust in surrendering to Jesus;
- Humility, being aware of her weaknesses, of being "little with Jesus", but also the understanding that it is in the small things of everyday life where love must be practiced and transmitted.

When she died, a large number of people came to pray at her tomb, which was originally located in the cemetery next to the

church. Those gathered were aware that they were addressing a model of union with God in small things.

This feeling of speaking to the humblest among us, being in this simplicity a link between heaven and earth, was strongly felt during my visit to the church of Saint-Gilles. Moreover, to have carried it on my shoulders, to have felt the weight of her relics as a call to greater humility and surrender struck me significantly.

The last message to remember from Blessed Eugénie is the importance of transmitting our faith to the young through catechism and personal testimony. It should come as no surprise that she has become a model for catechists!

**Damien de Laminne**  
*Lieutenant for Belgium*

## AFRICA AND THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE: A SMALL PRESENCE THAT IS GROWING

**O**n September 14, 2024, and coinciding with its 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Lieutenancy for Southern Africa

welcomed 16 new Members. Magistral Delegate Juan Luis Cabral joyfully shared this event, and took the opportunity to reflect on the history of this Magistral Delegation, which remains the only one on the African continent to date. Although physically distant from the other Lieutenancies, Southern Africa is clearly close in spirit and mission to the Lieutenancies of other continents. In addition, it joins the European English-speaking group for meetings of dialogue

and exchange between like-minded Lieutenancies, which is strongly encouraged by the Governor General.



*The Magistral Delegation of the Order in Southern Africa contributes to the Church's efforts in the service of universal fraternity.*





*"The bestowal of the Cross, on which the nailed Christ made Himself vulnerable in the face of the powers of this world, is among the most significant moments of the Investiture ceremony. The Knight and the Dame look to Christ who offered Himself as a sacrifice for all, even to death on the Cross, to give them life in abundance. The Jerusalem Cross is therefore the sign of the new member's dedication to supporting the Holy Land."  
 (From the Ritual for Celebrations of the Order)*

"The Order in South Africa was established in 2010 with a few members, and a larger group joined in 2015," began the Magistral Delegate. The Covid era had a negative impact on the strengthening of this young local reality of the Order, as was the case in many other regions, with the added difficulty of the worsening health conditions of the Ecclesiastical Master of Ceremonies of the Magistral Delegation. "We realized that it was necessary to find a new Master of Ceremonies. On July 28, 2023, Father Robert Bissell was Invested and became our new Master of Ceremonies." Thanks to this renewed presence, the Magistral Delegation was able to organize the induction of new candidates into the Order and prepare the training course that led to the Investiture of the 16 members who were welcomed on September 14.

When he spoke about the importance of formation, Cabral explained, "Regarding formation, we initially developed our own document. Then, when we received the much-anticipated Formation Document from the Grand Magisterium, we were pleased to notice that we had followed the same line. In our formation efforts, we had incorporated content from His Eminence's book *The House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume*. As we look ahead, the Magistral Delegate adds, "We have taken

seriously the exhortation of the Holy Father and of our Cardinal Grand Master regarding the initial and ongoing formation of members. We are already training some new candidates who could be invested in May 2025, while we are continuing to develop the formation for those who are already members."

The Investiture is a decisive moment, a moment of public choice and personal commitment before God and the community. "One of the most touching moments for me was during the Vigil when the Dames raised the jar of oils. This evokes the image of Mary of Bethany with her devotion and service, which resonates with the teachings of the Cardinal Grand Master and embodies the commitment of our Order in the Holy Land. Witnessing the Investiture of 16 new Knights and Dames of such high caliber was another deeply moving moment, signaling a promising future for our Order in Southern Africa."

In addition, the future brings possibilities for expanding the presence of the Order in the region, concludes the Magistral Delegate, "We also hope to expand beyond Cape Town, initially to nearby cities, and as soon as possible, to begin moving toward Johannesburg and Durban. We are also discussing presences in Port Elizabeth and even in Gaborone."

