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# JERUSALEM CROSS

ANNALES ORDINIS EQUESTRIIS SANCTI SEPULCHRI HIEROSOLYMITANI



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*United in love  
for the Holy Places*

*Grand Master of the Equestrian Order  
of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*  
**Cardinal Fernando Filoni**

*Governor General of the Equestrian Order  
of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*  
**Leonardo Visconti di Modrone**



ANNALES ORDINIS EQUESTRIIS SANCTI SEPULCHRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

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*On the cover*  
Drawings from students in Palestine's Latin Patriarchate schools on the theme  
"The Holy Places."  
For more details, see dedicated article on page 50

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# Looking to the future of the Holy Land through children's eyes

**W**hat does one remember of a year? Memory belongs to a time and events that have passed. However, their evocation allows us to keep aspects of life that have concerned us while alive. In this way, it is possible to recall them and also stimulate our feelings that would otherwise be destined for oblivion.

The Order's annual magazine, the *Jerusalem Cross* 2022-2023, collects the most significant moments of our life that concern the Church, the Holy Land, and our Lieutenancies. However, the cover also tells us something else. It tells us that there are people, indeed boys and girls, who are specifically beneficiaries of our action, who have sent in their drawings of how they see and feel the Holy Land. They come from the schools that the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre supports, and they represent one of the most beautiful aspects of our support for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. These students are the future of coexistence among those who live in the Land of Jesus; a Land that has no need of violence, hatred or discrimination. Their drawings invite us to reflect and allow us to take a look through their eyes, united in love for the Holy Places. The simplicity of these drawings, the immediacy, the imagination, highlight the beauty and sacredness, the history and mystery that each of the places drawn entails for its author.

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre continues its journey with simplicity and faithfulness to its vocation and mission. If our spirituality binds us deeply to the mystery of Christ, the generosity of its members, in all its forms, it allows us to keep alive the bond of friendship and esteem, because the Holy Land is not only the place of our pilgrimage, but also what the Church asks of us: to participate in a concrete way in the solicitude of charity towards the men and women who live there. Each of us yearn to retrace the steps of Jesus because it is the path that leads to an encounter with the mystery of God and to the authentic meaning of our lives.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**



*A dialogue of the Grand Master of the Order with children of the Holy Child Program in Bethlehem (see page 48).*

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## A word from the Chancellor

In this issue of our annual magazine, in communion with the universal Church, the Order first of all pays homage to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who, in his goodness, is now interceding in heaven for us all. The issue then gives ample space to the activities carried out in the service of the Mother Church in Jerusalem, in the Holy Land. Two years on from the cruel pandemic, pastoral life in the Holy Land has resumed with enthusiasm, as have the projects supported by the Order. We also give voice to our members, who bear witness to the Gospel lived in their lives, trying to bring the light of the Resurrection to the heart of everyday realities. May this magazine, published in Portuguese, Spanish, German, Italian, French and English, be widely distributed, so that the Order's mission be better known and new vocations of Knights and Dames kindled!!

Alfredo Bastianelli, *Chancellor*



## A Master for our Times

*A reflection by Cardinal Filoni  
on Benedict XVI*

There are people of high and noble spiritual and cultural value who by their actions mark the era in which they lived, leaving an indelible impression on all those who knew them.

Pope Benedict XVI profoundly marked the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A man of high human, cultural and moral virtues, he combined a simple personality with an innate reserve. Spiritually he was a captivating person and dialogue with him was always enriching.

Ecclesially, he was a true man of God. He loved to say of himself that it was enough to be a 'simple laborer in the vineyard of the Lord', but his immense theological and philosophical production places him among the giants of our time.

It is not daring to compare him to, indeed to call him, the 'Augustine' of our time. Just as Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., had an impressive cultural production and was a beacon of light in the very difficult times of the end of the Roman empire and the barbarian invasions. So too has Benedict XVI been a beacon of the Church and culture in the last sixty years; years full of ethical and social changes, of technologies and political realities that have emerged after the Second World War, years that have seen the fall of Nazism and the collapse of communist systems and, at the same time, the rise of new economic and financial systems.

Benedict XVI has been a beacon of our times, never forgetting that if society loses God it is doomed to self-destruction, disoriented from its own capabilities. In this he had a lofty prophetic vision, but like all prophets in history, they are not always listened to.

To those who have listened to him, Benedict



*Cardinal Filoni was a close collaborator of Pope Benedict XVI.*

XVI has given a chance to revive, to reinvigorate a weak faith and to give

meaning and direction to their lives.

Intelligence, humanity, a man of simple and profound faith; it is no coincidence that Benedict XVI died saying the simplest and most beautiful prayer of a Christian: "Lord, I love you!"

This was the commitment of his entire life as priest, bishop and pope.

In an Allocution a few years ago he said: "Pray also for me, that I may always offer the People of God the testimony of sure doctrine and hold with meek firmness the helm of God's Holy Church."

And he was certainly a master of sure doctrine, amalgamated with the vision opened up by the Second Vatican Council, never drifting, nor seeking consensus or media attention: a meek and firm Pastor, not only for the Church but also for society, which was enriched by him through his profound knowledgeable culture.

In his autobiography *My Life*, he wrote that the Church has a mission in the world, and in his service to this, Benedict XVI sought to put the 'truth' on which everything else depends, at the center.

His resignation from the papacy was also a devastating gesture of respect for the truth, because of his strengths that were failing due to an age that

he considered no longer adequate for his mission and, at the same time, because of that inner freedom that bound him not to power but to the service to which he knew he had been called by God: “After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God,” he wrote in the act of renunciation, “I have come to the certainty of this gesture.”

We bow our heads before this man who, with his intelligence, spiritual life and moral greatness, once again sat in the chair as an authoritative Master, teaching the true meaning of existence with respect for all convictions and every enlightened conscience.

He was thus a high master of theology, but an even higher master of life. ■

## Benedict XVI and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem



On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2008 Pope Benedict XVI received the members of the Grand Magisterium and the Lieutenants who had participated in the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, accompanied by the Grand Master, Cardinal John P. Foley and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Fouad Twal, in the Clementine Hall in the Apostolic Palace.

It was a cordial meeting and the Pope expressed his “deep appreciation especially for the initiatives of fraternal solidarity that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem has been promoting for so many years in favor of the Holy Places.”

He recalled that “the value of a constant witness of faith and charity towards the Christians living in those lands” is worth much more than the force of arms, and emphasized that “the ancient and glorious bond” with the Holy Sepulchre “constitutes the central fulcrum of your spirituality”, exhorting you to be guided by the redemptive prophecy of the Risen One by living in

*Benedict XVI receives the Order's leadership in 2008, on the occasion of the Consulta.*

“depth the mission that you are called to carry out”.

It is worth recalling these words of the

Pontiff who in the same year visited the Holy Land, also becoming a pilgrim in the Land of Jesus and retracing the footsteps of the first Pope, Peter.

During these years when Pope Francis entrusted me to accompany the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, I had the consolation of meeting Pope Benedict several times in the monastery to which he had retired after his resignation from the Papal throne. It was a unique gesture, dictated by the desire that the Church would continue to have a Shepherd physically stronger than Him.

Sometimes I would bring him our publications (annual magazine and newsletter) or have them delivered to him. He said he read them with pleasure and spoke to me of them, appreciating our Order's commitment to the Holy Land and to the formation of Members. At Easter 2021, I had also



*"My heartfelt thanks for the latest issue of the magazine The Cross of Jerusalem (...) I see with joy how you lead the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem," Benedict XVI wrote to Cardinal Filoni on the occasion of Easter, in a letter dated 19 April 2021 that accompanied his greeting card.*



Santa Pasqua 2021

Il Pontefice emerito Benedetto XVI ringrazia per i graditi Auguri inviati in occasione delle festività pasquali e delle Sue personali ricorrenze e li ricambia di cuore con un fervido auspicio di Pace e di Speranza, che accompagna con la preghiera al Signore risorto e con la Sua Benedizione.

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sent him best wishes in the name of our Order. The Pope Emeritus thanked me with the card which we publish here, and added in his own handwriting in typical tiny calligraphy: 'Thank you for the word of the Großmeister and many Easter wishes. Yours in the Lord, Benedict XVI'.

The word *Großmeister* (Grand Master) was intended to be not only a personalized touch of His greeting, but above all an affectionate reference, in

consideration of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. A spiritual bond that has never failed and that now, in death, is elevated to a deeper spiritual bond in God.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

## A very significant Consistory for the Order

*On the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, a delegation of about 150 Knights and Dames gathered at Palazzo della Rovere, led by the Governor General, before departing in procession to St. Peter's Basilica to attend the Consistory celebration during which His Eminence Fortunato Frezza, at that time Master of Ceremonies of the Grand Magisterium, was created Cardinal*

**T**he new Cardinal sent a message of thanks to the Knights and Dames gathered in Rome that day, saying in particular: "My [receiving] the scarlet red is only an occasion of our sense of communion with each other, with the

Pope, for the Church of the risen Lord Jesus, whom we love to worship at his empty tomb". During the Consistory celebration, the Holy Father insisted on the "fire that Jesus came to 'cast upon the earth', and that the Holy Spirit also kindles in

*The procession of Knights and Dames led by the Governor General, towards St. Peter's Basilica on the occasion of the Consistory in which five members of the Order were created cardinal, His Eminence Fortunato Frezza, then Ceremonial Officer of the Grand Magisterium, ordained Bishop on July 23, 2022 in St. Peter's Basilica, His Eminence Arthur Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, His Eminence Robert Walter McElroy, Bishop of San Diego, His Eminence Oscar Cantoni, Bishop of Como, and His Eminence Arrigo Miglio, Archbishop Emeritus of Cagliari.*







*His Eminence Fortunato Frezza is congratulated by Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone on behalf of all members of the Order.*

the hearts, hands and feet of those who follow him, the fire of Jesus, the fire that Jesus brings.” “Dear brother Cardinals, by the light and in the strength of this fire walk the holy and faithful people from whom we were taken – we, taken from the people of God – and to whom we have been sent as ministers of Christ the Lord,” he said, encouraging them to love the Church “always with that same spiritual fire, whether dealing with great questions or handling everyday problems, with the powerful of this world – which he often has to do – or those ordinary people who are great in God’s eyes.” During the courtesy visits in the Hall of Blessings of the Apostolic Palace, the Lieutenant General, the Governor General, the Vice-Governors for North America, Europe and Latin America, as well as members of the Grand Magisterium, numerous Lieutenants and many members of the Order, surrounded His Eminence Cardinal Frezza, assuring him of their communion in thanksgiving, before moving on to warmly congratulate the other four Cardinal members of the Order. ■

## The Ecclesiological significance of support for the Holy Land

*The Grand Master of the Order has written a reference text to explain the profound significance of the mission of the Knights and Dames in the universal Church*

*“The Order, with its structure and activities, participates directly in the Roman Pontiff’s solicitude for places and Catholic institutions in the Holy Land [...] In particular, the link with Jerusalem, which is specific to the Order, requires responsibility for its Holy Places (cf. Gal 4:26).” (Constitution, Introduction).*

Reflecting on these expressions, a Knight and Dame of the Holy Sepulchre understand that, in addition to the necessary practice of the evangelical virtues (spirituality of the Members), they undertake a task entrusted to them by the Holy Father in the name of the Church. It is a true ecclesial task, not a task left to the goodwill of a few; it is much more. It is an assignment that

belongs to the Church because of the responsibility it has towards the Places of Jesus and in particular towards the Church in Jerusalem, so that those Places do not become sites of religious archaeology, and that the Church does not remain devoid of vitality.

To offer one’s support to the Temple of Jerusalem, as it appears in the passage from the Gospel of Mark on the offering of the poor widow (Mk 12:43-44), was a duty very much felt among the Jews of the Lord’s time; the affluent and the poor, who upon entering the Temple used to make their offering for the worship and maintenance of the majestic building. Jesus, observing those who made their donation, points out that some emphasised their offering by throwing in many

coins, while the poor widow, almost furtively, let slip “two small coins worth a few cents”, that is, all that she had. The difference, Jesus notes, lies not so much in the quantity of the giving, but in the difference between those who give “*what is superfluous*” and those who give “*all she had, her whole livelihood*”; the humbleness of the gesture is elevated to a supreme ethical value. Even Jesus, on his part and that of the Disciples, contributed to the sustenance of the Temple (cf. *Mt 17:24-25*).

Contributing to and supporting the Church in Jerusalem therefore belongs to Christians the highest sentiments of responsibility towards the Holy Land. For a Knight and Dame, the undertaking of this specific commitment is part of a life choice. In fact, they do not join the Order out of an empty desire for social elevation, nor to enhance their public profile, but out of a sense of high and noble responsibility as ‘sons and daughters’ towards what is considered the ‘Mother’ Church and towards those places where Jesus spent his life, preached, performed miracles, and offered His life on the Cross as a ransom for us. St Jerome recalls that; blessed is he who carries the holy places

*The offering of the poor widow is brought as an example by Jesus because she gives all that she has, not what she has leftover. (Mark 12:43-44). A painting by François-Joseph Navez, 1840. Oil on canvas – Private collection.*

and events of salvation within himself: “*Happy is he who bears in his breast the cross, the resurrection, the place of Christ’s Nativity and the place of the Ascension. Happy is he who has Bethlehem in his heart, the heart in which Christ is born daily*” (*Hom. in Ps. 95*).

Some may ask: Is it really an ecclesial duty to contribute to and support the Holy Places? How can we support the Church in those Places, when all around us, in our dioceses and parishes, there is already so much poverty, perhaps even more, and we do not have sufficient financial resources? These questions have been asked by lay people and clergy alike.

Yes! Supporting the Holy Places and the communities living there is a true ecclesial responsibility. It does not belong to the solitary generosity of a few benefactors, but to the duty of all the children who cherish the memory of and affection for that ‘paternal/maternal home’ where the first apostolic community was born and raised, the places where the Lord’s life and death are preserved, and where it is possible to return to the roots of our faith. Caring for the Church of Jerusalem is therefore much more than preserving its historical and archaeological memory; the Apostles had already urged the charity of the early Christian communities of Antioch, Greece, Galatia and Macedonia to remember the ‘*saints*’ in Jerusalem and to hold collections, which they later

described as generous, indeed ‘*beyond their means*’ (2Cor, 8:3-4). We therefore perceive, in this common endeavour, that we have one of ‘our characteristic traits’, which allows each member of the Order to exercise their spirituality through “*a marked generosity*” drawn from their “*own material resources*” (cf. *The House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume*, EWTN Publishing 2020, pp. 73,74). St Paul himself also teaches us how to perform this gesture of dutiful generosity: “*so that in this way it might be ready as a bountiful gift and not as an exaction. [...]. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver*” (2Cor 9:5b. 7).

The Apostle Paul saw helping the







Mother Church of Jerusalem in times of calamity, persecution and famine as a true ecclesiological gesture that went beyond human solidarity. The Holy Land belongs to everyone (Jews, Christians and Muslims) because it is the place where the monotheistic religions have their roots in the one, compassionate and merciful God. It is the place that speaks to us of God's presence among us, almost a 'touching' of Christ again, according to the felicitous expression of Francis of Assisi.

This task, in itself, belongs to the entire history of relations between the Holy Land and Christians scattered throughout the world; the continuous pilgrimages, the initiatives to ensure a presence in the most significant places, the preservation of environments, the construction of basilicas and churches to preserve the sacred memory, even unfortunately the struggles to defend, conquer and hoard the Holy Land are the testimony of this perceived ecclesial responsibility since time immemorial. It should never be forgotten that those Places are alive because of the presence of communities of believers and that we all, even more so as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, direct our primary attention to them.

Precisely because of the importance that the Holy Land has in the life of the Church, the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre do not show an occasional interest in it, but do so in a stable and generous way, convinced of their noble

*Support for the Church in Jerusalem is about the mystery of faith, like the gesture of Mary of Bethany (John 12:8).*

and splendid responsibility.

It is not infrequent that even some ecclesiastics either do not understand this ecclesial 'duty', or are disinterested in it; there is even a certain prejudice against the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, seen as an anachronistic institution; there are even those who consider this ecclesial duty extraneous to the local Churches, either because of limited economic resources, or because of the presence of many poor people, reducing it to a private and extemporary gesture. There is a fundamental error in this way of thinking: there is a tendency

to marginalise or downgrade that ecclesial duty that the Popes have always considered to be of high sensitivity and common responsibility in the Church. Some Supreme Pontiffs even kept the office of Grand Master of the Order for themselves, before delegating it to a Cardinal.

I am heartened by the gestures of some Bishops who, and many do, include among their duties, the pastoral care of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, whose Members do not only belong to an Entity recognised by the Apostolic See, but are first and foremost their faithful, understanding that they can be a concrete expression of a work that belongs to the local Churches. Through the presence of the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, in fact, it is the same diocesan ecclesial reality that in some way participates in the duty to permanently (and not only occasionally) support the Mother Church of Jerusalem and those Places where, not infrequently, Bishops lead pilgrimages, preserve indelible memories and send lay people and priests for in-depth biblical-theological studies and intense inter-religious experiences.

Supporting the Mother Church of Jerusalem is an act of high nobility of spirit and genuine charity. When Judas Iscariot commented negatively on the gesture of Mary of Bethany who, in his view, wasted money by anointing the Master's feet, Jesus replied concisely: *'Leave her alone! Her gesture takes nothing away from the poor for "you always have the poor with you" (John 12:8), but concerns the mystery of faith, of his person and of his resurrection.*

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**



# “Every Christian is a citizen of the Holy Land”

*Interview with Margaret Karram*

**Originally from the Holy Land, in 2021 Margaret Karram was elected president of the Focolare Movement, founded in 1943 by Chiara Lubich and which today has over two million members. Her father, Boulos Asaad Karram, was a member of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. “Following in the footsteps of my father, Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, I try to be a servant of the light of love that illuminates the night of humanity,” she says in this interview.**

**M**argaret Karram, what is your Palestinian family history in a nutshell?

I was born in Haifa, Galilee, on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1962. My parents, Palestinians and Catholics, named me Marguerite-Marie in honour of the visionary of Paray-le-Monial, who helped make the Heart of Jesus known and loved. My father was from Nazareth and my mother from Haifa. They married in the 1950s. I have three siblings: Marie-Thérèse, Anna-Maria, Antoine-Joseph. We received Israeli citizenship at birth. Members of my paternal family who had fled to Lebanon in 1948, when the Jewish state was created, could not return. So we did not get to see our relatives much, but we enjoyed listening to our grandparents and parents telling us our family history and leafing through photo albums. This reality of separated families in the Holy Land is very hard, it is a painful experience, and there is a strong sense of injustice, but our education in the faith gave us a horizon of fraternity to build bridges of peace.

In my childhood we lived in Haifa in a neighborhood where several Jewish families lived, on the slopes of Mount Carmel, not far from the famous monastery-sanctuary of Our Lady of



Mount Carmel, and attending the school of the Carmelite nuns we learnt, together with the Arab Muslim children, how to forgive and how to move forward in interreligious relations. I remember that the Jewish children in the neighborhood would sometimes insult us, telling us to leave, that this country was not ours.... Our mother, seeing me cry because of this, decided to invite these children home to offer them warm bread. I was about 5 years old, it was an unimaginable effort for me, but

I will never forget the smile of those Jewish children who came out of our house with a piece of delicious Arabic bread each.

Later, their parents came to thank my mother and from there a new relationship was born between all of us. I learnt how a small gesture of love can build a friendship and help us overcome our fears.

Ever since I was a child, I have had a strong desire for justice in my heart and over the years I have wanted to dedicate my life to bringing peace to my country. There is still much to be done for Palestinian rights, even though Haifa is considered a multicultural and multi-religious city.

**Your father was a member of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, what does this membership mean to you?**

My father, Boulos Asaad Karram, born in 1918, was invested as a Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre by Grand Master Cardinal Eugene Tisserant, on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1965, the Feast of the Annunciation, when Archbishop Alberto Gori was Patriarch of Jerusalem. On a wall in the living room of our house in Haifa, the picture of my father with his white coat marked with the Jerusalem cross accompanied me throughout my childhood and adolescence. Later, I discovered the universal

importance of this commitment of 30,000 members worldwide, who carry the concern of the Mother Church in the Holy Land on behalf of the Holy Father and the whole Church. My sister recently found an album with photos of my father's Investiture and we were very moved.

My father loved the Holy Sepulchre and wanted to bring the light of Christ into the darkness of the world. He worked as head of the legal service of the Carmelite Fathers, was president of the Third Carmelite Order, president of the Legion of Mary and president of the Latin parish choir. Very attached to Marian devotion, he wrote a book in Arabic, at the request of the local bishop, on the Virgin's apparitions. He had many commitments in the local Church. Unfortunately, a year after his Investiture in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, he suffered a stroke and lost his speech, despite speaking seven languages... Paralysed, he gradually recovered from this stroke, but remained partially disabled for 30 years, unable to work. I was only four years old when he suffered this paralysis. His love for the Virgin Mary touched me because I often saw him reciting the rosary. The first words he spoke after a year of paralysis were "Ave Maria". My life in the Focolare Movement, recognized as a 'Work of Mary' in the Church, is rooted in my father's example. In my own way I wanted to continue and realize his work. After his stroke, my father was no longer able to visit the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, but God's plan allowed me to live and serve for 25 years in the community of the movement in the Holy City, the 'focolare'. There is a golden thread in my life, and I try to be a female Knight, a 'dame' of Jesus Crucified and Forsaken, that is, a servant of the light of love that illuminates the night of humanity.

**In Jerusalem, the Focolare has a unity project, linked to the original Roman Stairs that Jesus used when**

**he left the Upper Room to go to Gethsemane after the Last Supper. What is the status of the project and how will it work?**

Tradition has it that on leaving the Upper Room after the Last Supper with his disciples, taking these stairs up Mount Zion, down the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Olives, Christ, looking up to heaven, recited the prayer that is the heart of his testament, addressing the Father: "That they may all be one" (*John 17:21*). These stairs were climbed by Jesus after his arrest, to be condemned by the Sanhedrin during an unfair trial in the house of the High Priest Caiaphas. Chiara Lubich visited the Holy Land in 1956 and this place, so important in the Gospel, particularly inspired her. She wanted to create a center where people could witness that unity is possible. The first women's focolare was founded in 1977 in Jerusalem and this dream remained, although we did not know how it would be realized.

The Assumptionist religious in Jerusalem then thought of selling part of the land near these holy stairs in 1989, and we bought it for this project. Due to administrative difficulties, it was only in 2003 that an agreement was signed between the Focolare and the Assumptionist religious. From 2003 to the present, it has been a matter of working with the local authorities: The Ministry of the Interior, the Israel Authority of Antiquities, the Jerusalem Municipality, etc., in order to obtain the building permit, which is expected, hopefully soon.

The building will occupy only 1,000 square meters and a large garden of 7,000 square meters will facilitate moments of meeting and exchange. This International Centre for Unity and Peace will bring together people from various churches and other non-Christian denominations to share experiences, conferences and meetings on the subject of interreligious dialogue. Pilgrims will have access to



*Margaret Karram's father was a Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher. His example of generosity and service still guides the president of the Focolare Movement today.*

it, as will the inhabitants of the Holy Land. The place is rich in spiritual significance, very close to the Western Wall, known as the Wailing Wall, and the Great Mosque. Since I was young, we have been working on this project and I hope to see it realized, especially because Chiara Lubich cared so much about it.

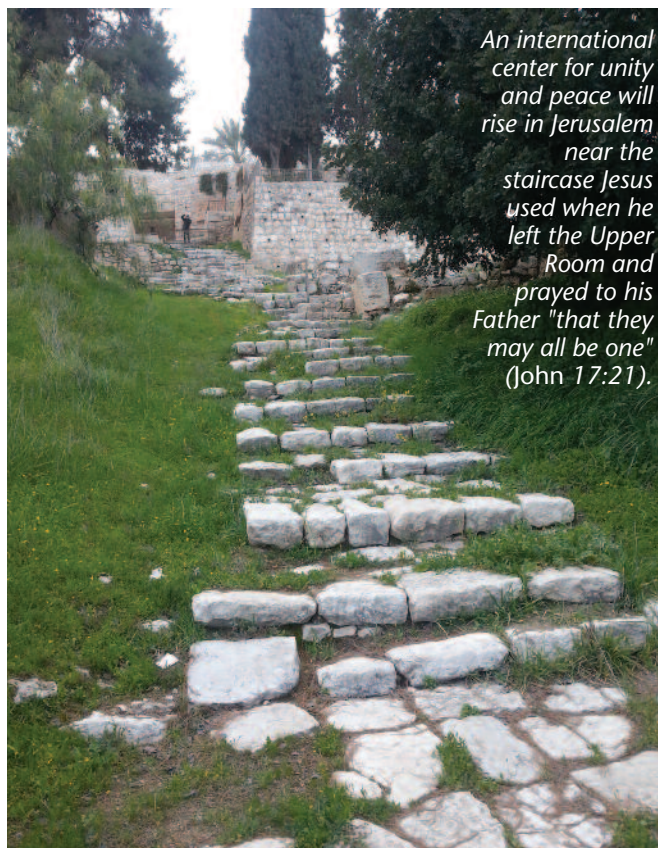
Giving one's life for unity is a big thing, it is often painful, it is not for nothing that Jesus asked the Father for this gift before He died. It is the dearest testament to His

heart. We are well aware that the graces this Centre will offer must be earned through our own efforts and sacrifices, so let us continue to love, pray and hope. The Holy Land, as Pope Francis says following Paul VI, is the "fifth Gospel".

"Transmitting the 'fifth Gospel', means making the Holy Land known, that is, the historical environment and geographical area in which the Word of God was revealed and then became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, for us and for our salvation," Pope Francis said in January 2022. "It also means getting to know the people who live in those places today, the lives of Christians of different Churches and denominations, but also those of Jews and Muslims, to try to build a fraternal society in a complex and difficult context like that of the Middle East." This is our mission.

**Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini said that until there is peace in the Holy Land, there will be no peace in the world. Would you agree with this?**

I met Cardinal Martini several times, he had come to live in Jerusalem and hoped to die there.



*An international center for unity and peace will rise in Jerusalem near the staircase Jesus used when he left the Upper Room and prayed to his Father "that they may all be one" (John 17:21).*

He came to visit us at the Focolare and we would discuss the departure of many Christians who, faced with difficulties, leave the Holy Land without hope of returning. Jews and Muslims sometimes face each other in a form of fratricidal duel. Cardinal Martini felt that we must of course respect the will of those who wish to leave, but at the same time believe in the power of heaven, in this fragile but very much alive Christian presence, regularly revived by pilgrims from all over the world.

Every Christian is a citizen of the Holy Land, hence the importance of the links that the Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre forge with the local parish communities through the pilgrimages organized every year.

Cardinal Martini also strongly emphasized the importance of interreligious dialogue as the road to peace. We must never take sides, he insisted. He advocated loving without distinction, in a delicate balance of working with some, then with others, until we can bring them together. This work of sowing, sowing, sowing bears long-term fruit.

We brought together Jews, Muslims and Christians who did not know each other and were afraid of each other. Fear builds walls within people. What is missing and what we must cultivate is mutual knowledge. For example, the Focolare has collaborated with another organization to support a group of young people from the three religions who have started to meet in Jerusalem just to talk and get to know each other once a week. The year-long project has been repeated with various young people for three years. This kind of experience gradually changes the way





*Margaret Karram grew up near the shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.*

people look at each other and leads to a desire to do good and concrete things together. A few months ago, the Focolare organized an interfaith weekend with families, young people and children, who lived together in an atmosphere of true respect and knowledge.

### **How does the Virgin Mary, so important in the Focolare Movement, guide you on the path of interreligious dialogue?**

The Virgin Mary is a model for me because she is the woman of dialogue and peace. First of all, she knew how to listen to God's voice and adhere to his plan of love. She believed without understanding everything. We can learn from her to listen because we are often afraid to confront the other who is different, to create a relationship. In today's society we hear but we do not really listen, we talk too much. It is not so much the ear that must listen, but the heart. Mary helps us to welcome this listening heart in prayer, following her example. Mary meditated in her heart.

With her I try to take people into my heart and entrust them to God. Mary also acted: she knew how to run to Elizabeth, her elderly cousin, to support her. She knew how to intervene, as at Cana, for people's needs and their happiness. If our action in society has a chance to be fruitful, it is in our ability to listen, to be silent, to contemplate. Mary was immersed in the Torah, she certainly attended the synagogue in Nazareth, she went to the temple in Jerusalem. She is a guide for us in putting the Word of God into practice.

The monthly *Word of Life* that the movement has distributed for so many years now flows from

this, because it reaches millions of people, in all languages, and the Gospel, if lived, causes extraordinary changes, a true revolution of love on a spiritual and social level. In my own life, when as a young woman I wanted to fight for justice and could have been tempted to take up arms to obtain it, the *Word of Life* allowed me to participate in building a holy land, the Holy Land that God dreams of and that God loves, and

not a land of bloodshed.

### **The whole Church is ravaged by repeated scandals and movements like yours are not spared. How are you experiencing this period of crisis and what role can women play in the future to ensure that abuses of all kinds cease for good?**

The abuse crisis in the Church resounds a call for purification. God wants to purify us so that our lives are free from pride and we are only inclined to build his Kingdom, far from all self-referentiality. In this storm, Jesus seems to be sleeping in the boat, but we must continue to be faithful to him by trying to improve our lives. God is allowing this process for a fundamental reform that is evangelical. The current synodal journey helps us, as God's people, as baptized people, to support each other beyond our institutional affiliations, to move forward in respect of our charisms.

On this path, women can certainly bring balance to the Church, to relationships free from the desire for power. The president of the Focolare Movement will always be a woman, a sign that underlines the importance of women in the Church and their enriching and truly complementary role. Women have a different capacity to love and suffer than men, they have a different sensitivity and can do much to transmit the faith, to "give life" spiritually. Today's world, tired of speeches, needs vital experiences that are realized in the patience of waiting. Physiologically, women are more oriented towards fecundity than efficiency. Pope Francis emphasizes this, without wanting to clericalize women, and his pontificate is a great hope in this field too.

**Interview by François Vayne**

## The Grand master's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land (9-14 May 2022)

*Through a captioned gallery of photos, we retrace the historic pilgrimage of Cardinal Filoni, to convey the enthusiasm felt by the delegation and to encourage the members of the Order to return to the Holy Land – after two years of pandemic – to meet the “living stones” of this vast Asian diocese, so important in the eyes of the universal Church*



© Fadi AbedRabbo/lpj.org

✙ “We come here, as Francis of Assisi said, to ‘see and touch’ the Lord: to see his footsteps, to hear the echo of his words, to touch the place where he lay, as encouraged by the angel, ‘Come see the place where he lay. Then go quickly

and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead!’ (Mt 28: 6-7). “It is where God saved us!” said Cardinal Fernando Filoni, during his speech delivered before the aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre, marking his solemn entry into the key Christian sanctuary that is the Basilica of the Resurrection.



✙ Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa had accompanied him in procession through the streets of the Old City, from the headquarters of the Latin Patriarchate to the Anastasis, the place of worship that encompasses both Golgotha and the sepulchre of Christ, a church built by order of Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.





✙✙ Many pilgrims from various countries attended the moving celebration and were enthralled by this unexpected event. Cardinal Filoni explained the meaning of the spiritual path that he could finally tread, after two years of pandemic. “We come today in the silence of faith to recharge our batteries at this well of living water, where we discover ‘the Lord, tender and merciful God, slow to anger, full of love and truth, who keeps his fidelity to the thousandth generation, supports fault, transgression and sin’ (*Ex 34: 6-7*). We come as pilgrims to discover this mystery. This is the whole meaning of our pilgrimage, of our coming to this place. It is here that all Knights and Dames who love this place know that this is where they regain their sense of dignity and that, for the rest of their life, they will carry within them the memory of their faith in the risen Christ.”



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



After this important fraternal meeting, on the morning of the solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre, Cardinal Filoni paid a visit to the Apostolic Nuncio. He then went to



see each of the representatives of the Status Quo, which governs the Holy Places, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Greeks, Theophilus III,

the representative of the Orthodox Armenians, Nourhan Manougian, and the Custos. A special moment with the Franciscan friars at the Custody was when the Grand Master accessed valuable documentary archives, in particular those relating to the dubbing of the writer François-René de Chateaubriand, made Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1806.



On Wednesday, May 11, after a morning Mass at the Holy Sepulchre, the Grand Master's pilgrimage continued with a long stop in Bethlehem, first at the Grotto of the Nativity and



then at the home for children with disabilities, the Hogar Niño Dios, run by the Religious of the Incarnate Word.



✙ Shortly afterwards, near Bethlehem, in the town of Beit Sahour, founded according to tradition in the place where the shepherds received the annunciation from the angels, the delegation led by the Grand Master met with the parish priest and parishioners, who spoke about the problems arising from the colonisation of their lands, which has led to a decrease in the number of Christians, many of whom are tempted to emigrate because of the continuing tensions in the country.



✙ During the meeting the Grand Master strongly emphasised the importance of education and training of future Christian leaders in Palestinian society, following

this the delegation went to greet the pupils and teachers of a school located in the same city, founded by the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, had lunch at Bethlehem University, supported by the Order, and then spent the afternoon at the Beit Jala seminary, in the company of candidates for the priesthood and their teachers, in an atmosphere filled with gratitude to the Knights and Dames.



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





✙✙ The evening of the same day, in Nazareth, the Grand Master suggested a time of silence in the house of Mary, which stayed opened late especially for him and the delegation, then early the next morning he presided over a mass there, concelebrated by Mgr. Rafic Nahra, the new auxiliary bishop and Patriarchal Vicar for Israel.



✙✙ On Thursday, May 12, the Cardinal and his retinue left for Jordan, via Jericho. They were due in Amman in the afternoon for the consecration of the Church of Saint Paul in Jubeiha, built in a district of the capital where the Christian population is in a phase of great growth.

✙✙ On the penultimate day of his pilgrimage to the sources of the faith, Cardinal Filoni walked in the footsteps of Moses, at the top of



Mount Nebo, where the biblical prophet was able to glimpse the Promised Land after forty years of walking in the desert.



✙✙ During the afternoon of May 13, the guests who had come from Rome attended a presentation by the directors of the 25 Jordanian schools of the Latin Patriarchate. The directors described their educational project, which includes 30% Muslim students, pointing out in particular that, for two successive years, the best baccalaureate results in Jordan have come from a Catholic establishment of the Latin Patriarchate. They also mentioned the need to develop professional schools in the country, asking the Order to commit to this if possible. ■



# The solemn entrance into the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre

*Homily by Cardinal  
Fernando Filoni Tuesday,  
May 10, 2022 before  
the empty tomb of the  
risen Christ*

A pilgrimage to Jerusalem is always a gift from God. This is how it was for the Jewish faithful; it is how it was for Jesus. But how is it for us? Moreover, what is the meaning of this special place for us?

Let me borrow a biblical analogy, I would say a Christological one, from the book of Exodus (chapters 33-34) to answer that question.

The Book of Exodus narrates that Moses, who on Mount Tabor together with Elijah conversed with the Lord, one day said to the LORD: “Show me your glory!” (Ex 33:18). The Almighty then promised to make his goodness pass and show it, and he will be gracious to those to whom he will be gracious and show mercy to those to whom he will show mercy. Then he added: “But you cannot see my face” (Ex 33:20). Then he said again to Moses: “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.” (Ex 33:21-23)

These words depicted the mystery of the cross and death of Christ. He, too, will be placed on a rock and then placed in the cleft carved into the rock. A cavity will be covered, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and, like God’s protective hand over Moses, a stone will be rolled away at dawn on the third day. The glory of God will then appear in the Risen Lord in the eyes of the unbelieving disciples.



Here, in this very place, the glory of the Risen Lord will reappear in the faith of the believer: Blessed are those who, without seeing, will believe!

This is today the meaning of making ourselves pilgrims.

Those who live in Jerusalem have the task, I would say the spiritual duty, of witnessing to and telling us about the mystery of God’s glory manifested in Jesus.

But we, we come here, as Francis of Assisi used to say, to “see and touch” the Lord: to see his footsteps, to hear his words, to touch the place where he was laid, according to the same encouraging words of the angel: “come, see the

place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell...: He has been raised from the dead!" (Mt 28:6-7). Here is where God saved us!

You, dear brothers and sisters, children of this "Mother Church" of Jerusalem, have the mission of the angel who encourages us to see where the Lord had been placed.

Thank you for this service to our faithful brothers and sisters throughout the world and in particular to our brothers and sisters - Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre.

We come today in the silence of faith to draw from this well of living water, where we discover

"The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex 34:6-7).

We come as pilgrims to discover this mystery. Here is the whole meaning of our pilgrimage, of coming to this place.

Here every Knight and Dame who loves this place knows that they draw the meaning of their dignity and will carry with them for a lifetime the memory of their faith in the risen Christ.

Amen!

## A unique moment in the life of the Order

*Present in Jerusalem on pilgrimage, several international representatives of the Order accompanied Cardinal Filoni during his solemn entrance into the Holy Sepulchre. The group included the Lieutenant for France and a delegation from his Lieutenancy, among them Knight Alain-Paul Richard, who shares the following testimony with the readers of The Jerusalem Cross below*

“One of the main traditions of the Lieutenancy for France which has endured for several decades now, is a biannual special pilgrimage known as the ‘National Lieutenancy Pilgrimage’.

It brings together Knights, Dames and sympathizers from all the Sections and, above all, that it has both the Lieutenant of France and the Grand Prior among its pilgrims.

At the end of two austere years, the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which physically removed us from the Holy Land, the Lieutenancy for France aspired, through this national pilgrimage, to rediscover the power of the Holy Places, to renew its ties with all the communities it supported and finally, more concretely, to mark the return of its future pilgrimages.

This return was a warm one. We all saw first-hand and ‘in situ’ the magnitude of the difficulties, the extent of the daily trials that the actors had to overcome. As a counterpoint, it should be added that in each of our visits we received magnificent testimonies of faith and hope.

However, an unexpected event during our national pilgrimage was a source of additional graces for our group. Could we ever have imagined, as we left Paris, that we would witness the solemn entrance into the Holy Sepulchre of the Cardinal Grand Master of the Order?

This was greeted with

*Procession of the Knights present in Jerusalem during the Grand Master's solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre in May 2022.*







joy, enthusiasm and fervor, all the more so since, apart from our Lieutenant and our Grand Prior, none of us had had the opportunity to meet Cardinal Fernando Filoni.

Aware of the privilege of being present at a unique moment in the life of the Order, each of us, in our own way, was able to experience it intensely and measure the symbolic dimension of this ceremony and the celebration that followed.

The preparations, at the Latin Patriarchate, were an opportunity to again meet with other foreign Brothers and Sisters, especially those who had arrived the day before from across the Channel with their Lieutenant, and to exchange heartfelt mutual impressions.

We experienced pleasant moments of conviviality before forming the procession that would set out in procession through the streets of Jerusalem: extraordinary moments during which the Latin Church moves through the streets of this thrice holy city, consecrated by religion and tradition, in a procession preceded by the traditional “Kawas”, as is customary in Jerusalem.

Then came the crucial moment of the Grand Master’s entrance to the Holy Sepulchre, who received the key from the Arab Muslim guardian who opens the basilica to Christians every morning, before proceeding, accompanied by the Custodian, to the foot of the shrine.

Finally, in front of an immense crowd of authorities, religious, members of the Order of various nationalities and pilgrims present that day, the climax of the celebration in front of the tomb of Christ during which, in a vibrant and profound homily, Cardinal Filoni recalled, among other things, that “at the Holy Sepulchre, every Knight and every Dame who loves this place knows that they will find there the meaning of his dignity and carry with them the memory of their faith in the risen Christ for the rest of their life.

It is not illusory to think that, at the end of this national pilgrimage, we “Milites Christi” will retain the many testimonies we have received of these encounters, and of this unprecedented Jerusalem parenthesis, many memories that will vary according to our personal feelings. We will certainly have matured even more in the conviction that our belonging to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem obliges us not to be that “soulless carcass” evoked by Cardinal Fernando Filoni.”

**General Alain-Paul Richard**  
*Lieutenancy for France*

# The annual meetings of the Grand Magisterium

## Spring meeting: Lieutenancies' enthusiasm for small projects with a social and educational dimension

**T**he Spring Meeting of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre was held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022, at the Palazzo della Rovere. Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master, who chaired the online meeting, insisted on the importance of continuing to support the Mother Church in Jerusalem, even if news of the war in Europe tends to distract our focus away from the Holy Land. The Grand Master also underlined the urgency of preparing for the future through facilitating the integration of younger people into the Order.

The meeting was moderated, as usual, by the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti

di Modrone who, in his main address, insisted on an openness to dialogue with the Lieutenancies, to support them in their work especially in the different language groups. He was delighted with the positive financial results from the Grand Magisterium. The Governor General also informed the Grand Magisterium about the work to draft the new internal Regulations of the Order, as well as the progress of the renovation works at the Palazzo della Rovere.

The members then listened to a recorded video message from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, warmly thanking the Order for its continued support and

## Latin Patriarchate Chief Executive Officer's report emphasizes pastoral activities

**W**ith the resumption of many activities following a prolonged period of closure due to the pandemic in the Holy Land, Sami El-Yousef, Chief Executive Officer of the Latin Patriarchate, took advantage of the Grand Magisterium's autumn meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022, to share the state of activities on various fronts in the diocese that are supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and also to make a presentation of what has been achieved over the past four years with small projects.

In fact, in 2019, the Grand Magisterium and the Latin Patriarchate decided to work not only through fixed monthly support for institutional expenses, schools, the Seminary, the financing of some large and medium-sized projects and humanitarian aid, but also to open up the possibility for the Lieutenancies to select small-scale projects to be taken over entirely, thus facilitating the implementation of activities that require a smaller budget and which, at the same time, can be an opportunity to establish a direct relationship between a Lieutenancy and a local community in the Holy Land.

Sami El-Yousef described the current challenges on an economic level (due to the war in Ukraine and rising cost of living as well as the drastic impact of the collapse of the euro exchange rate against the dollar) and social level (high unemployment rate in the Latin Patriarchate areas). While much of the major renovation work on the facilities has been carried out in the past years, more attention is now needed for pastoral activities. These activities testify to the vitality of the local communities and include youth activities, summer camps, care of liturgies, and much more.

In addition to pastoral activities, special attention must now also be paid to humanitarian initiatives. In recent years, the humanitarian fund agreed upon by the Grand Magisterium and the Patriarchate is one million dollars and this manages to cover various important actions: the purchase of medicines for those in need, social assistance, support with the payment of school fees for families in need, empowerment



looking to the future with hope.

For his part, the Lieutenant General announced the conclusion of the vital work of the Saint Jean-Baptist Foundation, whose mission was to save the University of Madaba, in Jordan, from running a deficit.

The final balance sheet for 2021 was then presented by the Treasurer Saverio Petrillo and approved, closing with a surplus of 1,236,524.47 Euros, almost entirely offsetting the deficit of 1,397,729 Euros from the previous year caused by expenses relating to the solidarity made necessary by the Covid-19 crisis.

In his very comprehensive report, the Chief Executive Officer of the Latin



and work initiation programmes for women and young people (especially in Gaza and East Jerusalem) support programmes for Iraqi refugees, etc.

It should not be forgotten that the items with the greatest impact on the Patriarchate's annual budget

are salaries (about 2,000 employees, 80% of whom are Christian) and the 44 schools that offer an education within a Catholic context to about 20,000 students (60% Christian in total but with different percentages in Palestine, Jordan and Israel).

On the occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the re-establishment of the Latin Patriarchate in 1847, which was marked in 2022, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, present all over the world, continues its mission to walk side by side with this diocese, supporting it and accompanying its efforts in favour of the living stones of the Holy Land.

**Elena Dini**





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

The President of the Holy Land Commission, Bartholomew McGettrick, having just returned back from Jerusalem, wanted to testify to the high socio-political tension and despair that the local population would experience if the Order were not

there to keep the torch of hope alight.

Vice-Governors De Glutz, Pogge and Mas opened a debate with their speeches on the various questions raised during the talks, including that of the training of future members. On the same theme, the Grand Master, in his conclusions, emphasised the role that Priors and Grand Priors in the Lieutenancies play in the initial and ongoing formation of Knights and Dames, a need to which he has been firmly committed in recent months through his spiritual teachings disseminated by the Order's various communication channels. Cardinal Filoni also welcomed the resumption of pilgrimages to the Holy Land. ■

## Fall meeting: each Member's gift is first and foremost a gesture of love towards the Mother Church of Jerusalem

**T**he members of the Grand Magisterium gathered in Palazzo della Rovere, Rome, gathered around the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, for the Fall meeting on October 12, after a Mass in honour of Our Lady of Palestine celebrated in the church of Santo Spirito in Sassia and presided over by Cardinal Fortunato Frezza.

Before the convivial lunch, the Grand Master presented Cardinal Frezza – former Master of Ceremonies of the Grand Magisterium and appointed Cardinal by the Pope during the last Consistory – with the insignia of Knight of the Grand Cross, warmly thanking him for his generous and appreciated service to the Order.

The working session of the Grand Magisterium opened in the afternoon.

The Governor General briefly recalled the highlights of 2022, such as the pilgrimage and first official visit of the Grand Master to the Holy Land, the resumption of meetings in presence on the occasion of the Investitures, and the meetings between the Lieutenancies after the pandemic. He particularly insisted on the presence of the Grand Priors at the Order's next Consulta, the General Assembly scheduled in a year's time, together with the Lieutenants, to deepen the theme of the spiritual formation of members. He also spoke of the work being carried out in the Palace, which will be taken over by a new hotel company chosen to manage part of the building for the benefit of the



*The Mass in honor of Our Lady of Palestine was celebrated in the church of Santo Spirito in Sassia, near the Palazzo della Rovere, the Order's institutional headquarters.*





Order and therefore of the Holy Land. Ambassador Visconti di Modrone also underlined the Order's recent development in Slovakia and plans for expansion in other countries, especially in Africa.

In his speech, Patriarch Pizzaballa mentioned several pastoral projects that he considers important, including the pastoral centre for Galilee in Haifa and the next Vicariate to be created in Cyprus, where pastoral activity is growing.

The Grand Magisterium Treasurer presented the budget for 2023, confirming that €13.4 million will be sent to the Latin Patriarchate thanks to members' contributions. Sami El-Yousef stressed, on behalf of the Patriarchate, the importance of the Order's support to cover the salaries of 2000 employees of the Diocese of Jerusalem, to which belong Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Cyprus.

The Governor General then gave the floor to the President of the Holy Land Commission, Bartholomew McGettrick, who last September led the Commission's first field trip in three years. He said that, in his opinion, some of the Lieutenancies have not yet grasped the urgency of the population

*During the two annual meetings of the Grand Magisterium, the Governor General spoke particularly about the Order's plans to establish itself in various countries, such as Africa.*

in the Holy Land and that there is still much to be done to push donations from them.

After the debate that followed the various speeches and online exchanges (several

members of the Grand Magisterium were in fact connected virtually), the Grand Master concluded the proceedings by insisting on the ecclesiological significance of support for the Holy Land, explaining that each member's contribution is first and foremost a gesture of love towards the Mother Church of Jerusalem, an expression of the profound faith of the Knights and Dames.

Cardinal Filoni's essential and fundamental text on this subject had just been published by *L'Osservatore Romano* – the official newspaper of the Holy See – with an announcement on the front page, after having been sent to all the Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates for transmission to the Priors, Grand Priors and all the bishops of the world.

# The Continental Meetings

## North American Lieutenants gathered in Pasadena: how can we foster the Order's growth?

**F**or the first time since the beginning of the pandemic the Grand Master and Governor General were able to meet in person with North American Lieutenants. In fact, the collegial gathering in Pasadena (Los Angeles), from June 2 to 4, 2022, was the first opportunity for Cardinal Fernando Filoni to travel to North America as Grand Master of the Order and take part with the Vice Governor Tom Pogge, in what has now become a consolidated tradition to allow the area Lieutenants to meet, get to know each other better, exchange best practices and discuss issues that are close to the hearts of the various local realities.

June 2 was dedicated to bilateral meetings between the Grand Master, the Governor General and the Lieutenants, particularly with newly appointed and incoming ones. The day ended with a prayer vigil in St. Andrew's Church and a presentation by the Governor General of the

important findings from the Roman Imperial and Medieval periods from the ongoing work in Palazzo della Rovere.

The second day of the meeting focused in the morning on the theme of spirituality, the formation of candidates, and the role of prayer, with various questions addressed by participants to Grand Master Cardinal Filoni. Following this, the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, gave an extensive report on the state of the Order on the administrative and organisational level, emphasising its substantial vitality and the resumption of activities after the pause due to Covid. The last day of this continental meeting of the North American Lieutenants was dedicated to an exchange of experiences on measures to promote the growth of the Order and ended with a Holy Mass, celebrated by the Cardinal Grand Master, in Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral. ■



*The Governor General presented to the North American Lieutenants the archaeological discoveries made during the ongoing work at the Palazzo della Rovere.*





## The meeting of the European and Latin American Lieutenants: “fathers and formators” called to be close to all members of the Order

The Lieutenants of Europe and Latin America met by video conference under the chairmanship of the Cardinal Grand Master on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2022. The discussion, coordinated by the Governor General, focused on topical issues concerning the life of the Order, provided an update on the realities sustained in the Holy Land through a report by the CEO of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Sami El-Yousef, and a report by the President of the Grand Magisterium Holy Land Commission, Prof. Bartholomew McGettrick, and allowed the Lieutenants to update the Grand Magisterium on local activities and raise issues for common reflection.

In the meeting with the European Lieutenants, several issues had emerged from the reports received prior to the meeting, and the Governor General addressed issues of interest one by one, including the preparation of the next Consulta. For the first time, this will see the participation of Grand Priors alongside the 64 Lieutenants from around the world, the resumption of pilgrimages, the application of the new Ritual, the boost given to spirituality, the search for new resources, humanitarian and pastoral projects and activities, initiatives in favour of young people, disciplinary aspects, the Holy Year of 2025 and the role of clergy and religious in spiritual formation and assistance.

Some of these themes were also clearly addressed the following day in the meeting with the Latin American Lieutenants, with special attention given to the Order's expansion project in this

“great Christian continent”, as described by the Governor General and where there is a high “potential that the continent can express”.

In Europe, the Grand Prior of the new Magistral Delegation for Slovakia joined the meeting, while in Latin America, Vice Governor Enric Mas announced the objective of being able to see the creation of Magistral Delegations in Ecuador, Panama and the Dominican Republic by 2023, based on the contacts established in recent months. Conversations with other countries in the region are in progress (Peru, Paraguay, other states in Brazil).

Reflecting on the mission and identity of the Knights and Dames, the Governor General recalled how “our Order must look more to the future than to the past. Our noble traditions must be a stimulus to accentuate the charitable aspect of our work. Tradition is not the equivalent of immobilism: on the contrary, tradition is the search through our roots for new ideas and proposals to better face the challenges of the present and the future.”

At both meetings, great satisfaction was shown by the participants for the Grand Master's text on the ecclesiological significance of support for the Holy Land, which was widely circulated in the Lieutenancies, dioceses and Episcopal conferences.

In his concluding words, Grand Master Cardinal Filoni, emphasised – among other aspects – the importance of the role of the Lieutenants, recalling that they are “fathers and formators within the Lieutenancies”, called upon to exercise patience and show closeness to all members of the Order, even in problematic situations. ■

# Towards the Order's General Assembly of Lieutenants, Consulta 2023

*Interview with the Governor General,  
Leonardo Visconti di Modrone*

**H**ow are you preparing for the Order's next Consulta and what, broadly speaking, is the purpose of this meeting of the world's Lieutenants?

The Consulta is like a General Assembly: all the Lieutenants come together and compare their experience. Many of them meet for the first time and come from very distant countries. For example, the Lieutenants from Australia and the Pacific, or those from Latin America, who have suffered more than the others from the Pandemic. This will be an opportunity not only for them to hear the Grand Master in person speak about the evolution of our Institution and the programs we are planning to implement, but also to get to know each other, to exchange evaluations and experiences. In a word, to experience the spirit of the Order together, in a fraternal atmosphere. Many of them will leave having gained new friendships, which will then develop and grow stronger.

Opportunities to meet, exchange visits and reciprocal invitations are more frequent among Europeans or North Americans, facilitated by the short distances. But for those who come from further afield, the *Consulta* represents a unique opportunity to be able, at least once in their term of office, to get closer to brothers and sisters they would otherwise never meet.

I am a great believer in dialogue and the exchange of experiences: I see the benefits in those occasions of meetings between groups of Lieutenants who are similar in language, culture and traditions, which I promote incessantly and which always bear good fruit.

But beyond this aspect, there is the need to promote the Order's unity, especially after the Covid experience, which has changed our way of living together and relating to each other so much. There is a need to unify, while respecting local traditions, the way of living fully and in fraternity

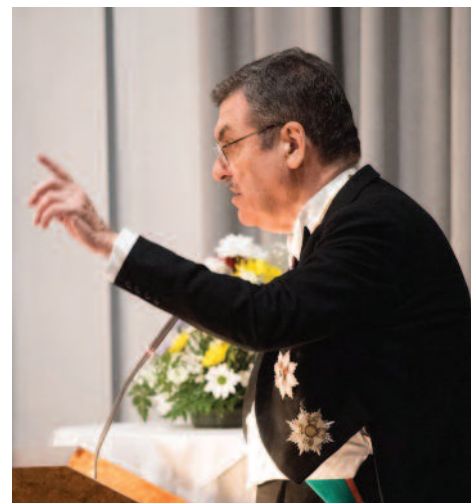
the experience of belonging to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, of praying together with the same voice.

Let us remember, that we are an Order which is not conferred on us by merit, but to which we have voluntarily asked to belong, accepting its spirit and obligations, and committing ourselves to live its spiritual and charitable contents. This is why the Cardinal Grand Master considered "Formation" to be the theme of this Consulta: so that through a common vision of formation, we may reach a unity of intent and fully respond to the mandate conferred upon us.

**Members' formation is therefore the focal theme of the Consulta, but not only spiritual formation. What other aspects of formation will be addressed?**

Formation is divided into different successive stages, but we could say they are integrated into a single purpose. Generally, the greatest effort in formation is attributed to the preparatory phase of a candidate for entry into the Order. It is clear that this is an important moment to understand whether the motivations behind the request to be accepted into the Order are sincere and whether the candidate has fully understood the commitment he or she is making.

But the ongoing formation of the Knight and Dame already in the Order is no less important, particularly in helping them to nourish the original flame that determined their entry, and to ensure that negative elements, which have occurred in their lives, cannot weaken or drive them away from their





initial commitment.

Lastly, the formation of those who are called upon to take on positions in the Order's hierarchy, and who in turn are required to confer them is equally vital. They must be aware of the responsibilities that accompany every advancement, the need to be an example and a guide for other brothers and sisters, and above all not to fall into the temptation of pursuing ambitions of social vanity. Every assignment brings with it a tremendous burden of responsibility, including operational choices, especially in a pyramid structure such as that of the Church and the Order, in which the assignments of tasks are not the result of an elective process, but a conferral from above, and in which the choices may be – as is desirable – the fruit of consultation, but fall substantially under the exclusive responsibility of the person who assumes them.

**In an exception to the norm, the Grand Priors will be invited to this Consulta. How will you articulate the interventions in relation to those of the Lieutenants and how do you plan to foster the exchange between them?**

The Consulta – I repeat – is the General Assembly of the Lieutenants, i.e., those responsible for the various peripheral structures of an

*Participants of Consulta 2018 received by Pope Francis at the Vatican.*

Order that is lay. The Lieutenancy is not a vessel with two captains. The leadership of the Lieutenancy of a lay Order rests with the Lieutenant. The role of the Grand Prior, as defined by the Constitution, is to assist the Lieutenant and collaborate with him in the spiritual direction of the Lieutenancy, also by coordinating the activities of the Priors of the Section and Delegation. Therefore, it is an important role of supporting the task of direct responsibility that belongs exclusively to the Lieutenant, and which presupposes a harmony in respect of the individual roles. Such harmony has sometimes been lacking. Experience has shown that dialogue is sometimes rendered difficult by the fact that the Grand Prior – because of his principal office as Bishop or Archbishop of an important diocese, in some cases with the rank of Cardinal – has little time to devote to the spiritual issues of the Lieutenancy. In other cases, he is unable to establish a constructive dialogue with the Lieutenant for various reasons, which can generally be traced back to a misperception of what the mutual assignment is or to a lack of personal understanding. Hence the need to involve the Grand Priors in the assembly debate in order to focus on the various problems of running a Lieutenancy. It will be interesting to involve them in the debate precisely on the issue of formation, an exercise that needs the contribution of the spiritual element, proper to the figure of the Grand Prior.

**After the last Consulta in 2018, the new Constitution and the new Ritual are in force, and a new Regulation is being drafted. How will these important texts be evaluated during the 2023 Consulta?**

The last Consulta, although it did not produce a final document, gave a significant impetus to focus on the new rules that currently govern the Order. After the Holy Father's approval of the New Constitution, which accentuates the spiritual aspect of belonging to the Order compared to the previous ones, new Ritual for Celebrations were drafted, reflecting this aspect, applying it to the liturgy, and which were the fruit of profound reflection and extensive consultation.



At present, the Order's leadership is engaged in drafting the General Regulations, which are an addition to the Constitution and in a certain sense its rules of implementation. This drafting work has also benefited from all the reflections that emerged from the last Consulta on the rules that each Lieutenant is called upon to apply in his daily work. That work, skillfully collected and coordinated at the time by the Lieutenant General, as expressly mandated by the Grand Master, will flow into the General Regulations that I hope can be finalized in time for the 2023 Consulta, so that an assessment can already be made. However, the intention remains that the General Regulations will only enter into force after a period of application *ad experimentum*, during which additions or changes may also be proposed.

**Since you took office as Governor General, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is better known not only in the media but also in the diplomatic world. What are your plans for the future to develop this dimension of external relations,**

#### **also in view of the Jubilee of 2025?**

The Order must avail itself today of the most modern means of communication to make itself known and to make our work in the Holy Land known. This is why I have tried to develop external relations, also drawing on the experience gained in over forty years of diplomatic activity in the service of my country. The enhancement of Palazzo della Rovere, a splendid 16th century building donated by the Pope to the Order, which I like to compare to one of the talents in the famous Gospel parable, is also part of this context. It is our duty to bring this "talent" to fruition to the best of our ability, like the faithful evangelical servant, for the good of the Church and the Holy Land, obviously operating with the utmost transparency and under the watchful eye of the Vatican supervisory bodies, aware of the responsibility entrusted to us. The Jubilee of 2025 is an important milestone for many of our initiatives, which aim to raise awareness of the Order among the thousands of pilgrims who will flock to Rome.

**Interview by François Vayne**

## **Renewal of mandate and appointments**

**Jean-Pierre de Glutz, Vice-Governor for Europe**

**C**ardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, signed the renewal of the mandate of Jean-



Pierre de Glutz as Vice-Governor General for Europe for four years, starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2023. The mandates of those in charge of the Order are renewable only once, as stipulated in the Constitution. A banker by profession, the Vice-Governor General for Europe is also Lieutenant of Honor of the Lieutenancy for Switzerland. We offer our congratulations and best wishes to Jean-Pierre de Glutz.

**A new Master of Ceremonies of the Grand Magisterium**

***By decree on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, the Grand Master appointed Monsignor Adriano Paccanelli Master of Ceremonies of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.***

Born on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1950 in Casatenovo (province of Lecco, archdiocese of Milan), graduated in Dogmatic Theology and Canon Law, Monsignor Adriano Paccanelli was ordained priest on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1977.

He first served as Vicar and was then appointed Secretary and Master of Ceremonies to the Bishop of Alexandria, Monsignor Ferdinando Maggioni (1980-1989).

He was an official of the Secretariat of State of His Holiness from 1990 to 2019 and Master of Liturgical Celebrations of the Papal Basilica of St. Mary Major from





1990 to 2022. In 1995, he founded the Collegium Liberianum, an association born within the Papal Basilica of St. Mary Major, under the auspices of the late Cardinal Archpriest Ugo Poletti, to provide a liturgical and protocol service. This service is performed by about fifty lay men and women, still active today, some of whom have joined our Order as Knights and Dames.

In 1998, with a Motu Proprio decree signed by the late Cardinal Carlo Furno, then Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Monsignor Paccanelli was appointed Knight of the Order, then Knight Commander in 2002.

In 2000, Pope John Paul II appointed him Coadjutor of the Chapter of St. Mary Major. Monsignor Paccanelli has been Chaplain of His Holiness since 1996, Honorary Prelate of His Holiness since 2006 and is currently Secretary of the Vatican Foundation *Diffusione Amore Misericordioso di Gesù*.

He is the Master of Ceremonies of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy and a member of the Italian Archaeological Academy.

#### **Thomas Standish new Member of the Grand Magisterium**

**T**he Cardinal Grand Master proceeded on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2023 to appoint Knight Grand Cross, Tom Standish as Member of the Grand Magisterium. Born in 1949 in Houston



Texas, Tom Standish has always lived in that city, graduating in engineering and then working as an expert in electrical control systems within the Center Point Energy Company, of which he was president from 1999 to 2015. He entered the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in 2000 and was elevated to the rank of Knight Grand Cross in 2011. He served as Lieutenant in one of North America's largest Lieutenancies, USA Southwestern from 2015 to 2022. Married to Joyce Standish, he is the father of three children and grandfather of eight grandchildren. ■

#### **Farewell to Vice Governor General Paul Bartley, and appointment of his successor - John Secker - for Asia, Australia and the Pacific**

**T**he Cardinal Grand Master and all the members of the Grand Magisterium learned with deep sadness of the passing of Vice Governor General Paul Bartley, who died after a long illness on Friday, December 2, 2022 in Brisbane, Australia. A distinguished physician, who graduated with honors from the University of Queensland and specialized in endocrinology, he had served in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem as Lieutenant for Australia Queensland, before being appointed Vice Governor General with responsibility for the Asian and Pacific States. He will be remembered with deep sympathy and affection.



**I**n January 2023, Cardinal Grand Master appointed the current Lieutenant of Honor of Australia - New South Wales, John Secker, as the new Vice Governor for Asia, Australia and the Pacific. He was admitted to the Order in 1995, when



the Lieutenancy for Australia New South Wales was created. He became Secretary of the Lieutenancy in 2004 and then served as Lieutenant from 2008 to 2016.

John Secker was born in England and completed his studies in London, began his banking career in Britain in 1964 and moved to Australia in 1982. He married Philippa Kenny in 1970 and was widowed in 2005, he remarried Jai Milward in 2010; he has two daughters from his first marriage, an adopted son from his second, and four grandchildren.



**GUCCIONE**

SINCE 1975

DECORATIONS OF KNIGHTLY ORDERS



Order of the Holy Sepulchre

Papal Equestrian Orders

Order of Malta

Italian Dynastic Orders and Orders of the Italian Republic



## The 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Patriarchate and the restoration of the Order



*An anniversary to remember: Nulla Celebrior*

**“F**or Christians there is no city more famous, no region better known than the City of Jerusalem and Palestine.” With these words Blessed Pope Pius IX began, “a perpetua memoria”, the Apostolic Letter Nulla Celebrior, with which on July 23, 1847, after mature and long consideration, he decided to restore (“restituimus”) the Patriarchate and the Latin Patriarch’s jurisdiction over Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

In the Letter the Pope recalls the sacredness of the places where the Lord lived and died and the veneration of Christians for them, and remarks on how already the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), in canon 7, had established that everywhere the Bishop of Jerusalem and his Church should be held in high honour [Jerusalem, as Patriarchal See would later be erected at the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.)]. He adds, moreover, that after long and serious historical events, when the European Princes [11<sup>th</sup> century] liberated Jerusalem and established a Kingdom there, the Apostolic See began to appoint Latin Patriarchs [to distinguish them from the Greek Patriarchs because of the schism of 1054; until that date the Greek Patriarch had been in communion with Rome]. The institution of the Latin Patriarchate was later confirmed by the Fourth Lateran Council at the time of Innocent III (1215). Further historical events, writes the Pope, soon prevented the Latin Patriarchs from exercising their pastoral care in the Holy Land, which is why the Roman Pontiffs, without interrupting their

appointment, exonerated them from residing there.

Now, the Pontiff adds, considering the needs of Religion and pastoral necessities, and having had the desire, from the moment of his ascent to the Chair of Peter, to restore the ancient See of Jerusalem, comforted by the Cardinal Fathers and trusting in divine grace, in the second year of this pontificate, with the authority that is proper to him, he intended to reconstitute the Patriarchate of the Holy Land with the obligation of residence for the Patriarch himself, to whom he entrusted the pastoral care of the faithful and pilgrims. Hitherto entrusted to the Franciscans, as well as whatever else would be decided by the Congregation de Propaganda Fide [on whom it was territorially dependent at the time; shortly afterwards, in the same year, the Pope appointed Giuseppe Valerga as the new Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem].

The Papal Letter was followed by the Instruction (10<sup>th</sup> December 1847) of the same Congregation, which, in Article 8, dealt with “*the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre*” and established that they fell under the authority of the Latin Patriarch,

both for the granting of honours and for the collection of financial subsidies, to be paid into the Alms Fund for the support of the Holy Land.

It is a pleasure to recall this historical chapter based on these two documents on the occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their publication; they remind us of a very significant moment in the life of our Order. Motivation and historical memory allow us not only to reflect on the past, but also to revive the love nourished by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for the



Mother Church of Jerusalem. As well as its solicitude and moral bond that stretches back to apostolic times, when the Apostle Paul, in times of particular calamity, persecution and famine, asked the communities of Antioch, Greece, Galatia and Macedonia to remember the “*saints*” (i.e. Christians) in Jerusalem and to hold collections, which the Apostle himself later described as extremely generous. The Order still intends to

respond to this commitment today by appealing to the munificence of Knights and Dames from all over the world, who, during their pilgrimage to the Holy Land, can visit some of the charitable works they support.

Charity cannot be extinguished; it is an eternal fire that has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

## Seminaries are an essential reality in the life of every diocese

### *Interview with the Rector of Beit Jala Seminary*

The perception we always have from outside is that seminaries are an unchanging body with a perennial mandate. Father Bernard Poggi, rector of the Seminary of Beit Jala helped us to see how much tradition and innovation come together in the vital work of supporting future priests in the discernment of their path and preparing for their journey.



*Cardinal Filoni greets Latin Patriarchate seminarians and their teachers in May 2022.*

The New “*Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* – The Gift of the Priestly Vocation” greatly impacted how the Seminary of the Diocese of Jerusalem conceives itself and realigned its educational framework.

Father Poggi explains: “According to the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (RFIS), which was Promulgated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 2016), the manner in which we focus on how formation is given, has changed. It went from the focus on four main aspects: academic, spiritual, human and

pastoral to the application of formation in four stages: The Propaedeutic Stage, the Stage of Philosophical Studies (or Discipleship), the Stage of Theological Studies (or Configuration to Christ) and finally the Pastoral Stage (or Vocational Synthesis).”

The focus on integrated formation has shaped the way the Seminary is accompanying these young men in their path to priesthood. Certainly, each stage has a specific emphasis but the process is a whole. In this path the Order of the Holy



Sepulchre silently supports the endeavour and action of this key institution of the Church of Jerusalem with a monthly contribution of about \$ 60,000 and is very close to both seminarians and priest formators who are living their ministry there.

During the Propaedeutic Stage, Father Poggi tells us, “there is a human-spiritual emphasis; a time in search for the Lord: *quaerere domini*. In this, the year focuses heavily on vocational discernment, on self-knowledge and on how to live an authentic Catholic spirituality.”

The Stage of Philosophical Studies “is constitutive to helping answer the most fundamental questions, such as those about existence, reason, knowledge, values, mind, and language. This period is also designed to help the student understand the scientific methodology of study and research in the field,” he continues.

During the Stage of Theological Studies, “it becomes necessary for the seminarian to focus on how to become even more configured to the image of Christ, *in persona Christi*”. This time is offering a higher theological instruction and,

Father Poggi, explains, “it is during this stage that we send our students for one year to attend St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, New York. In addition to the courses which they take while in the United States, the seminarians become aware of how the church works in other parts of the world. There, they are introduced to a very different pastoral reality.”

Finally, the Pastoral Stage is one of “vocational synthesis” and supports seminarians in concretely understanding what happens in the everyday life of a priest and “how to work with the parish priests in parish activities, setting and executing pastoral plans, engaging with young people, organizing Sunday masses and their associated ministries of liturgical chant, altar service, etc,” the rector of the seminary concludes.

Currently there are 20 seminarians in the major seminary (17 for the Latin Patriarchate and 3 for the Melkites from the Archdiocese of Akko) who are in various stages of their formation. The staff is composed by the Rector, Father Bernard Poggi, plus other four priest formators. This team also follows “23 seminarians who were in the minor

## From the United States, a call to serve the Arab-Catholic community

*A testimony of life from father Bernard Poggi*

I was born in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1980. When I was 5 years old I had Leukemia; the experience has been very formative in my life. It was during the time of my illness that my maternal grandmother also had cancer (Multiple Myeloma). I saw in her that when you are sick there is kind of surrender to God, but at the same time a strength and vigor to overcome the illness. I underwent chemotherapy for 3 years at Stanford Children’s Hospital. The illness really marked the end of my childhood; I couldn’t



*Father Poggi (center, to the right of Cardinal Filoni) welcomed the Grand Master and the Order's leadership during their visit to Beit Jala Seminary.*



seminary which has been closed since Corona Virus. They are now living with their respective families and are followed by the director of vocations, who visits them from time to time ensuring that things are going well for them,” Father Poggi shares.

Speaking in broader terms about the mission of the seminary, the Rectors says: “I like to use the analogy of life in the seminary to that of an engagement in preparation for marriage. We try to make the path as clear as possible and the goal is evident: these young men want to become priests.

run with my peers because my bones were fragile, I couldn't swim because I got sick very easily, etc.

It was in that experience that I realized I wanted to give my life to helping others. I was not too sure in which way, that is why after finishing Highschool I studied Physiology; I wanted to become a Medical Doctor. It was, and to a certain extent, still is a passion for me to help people feel better. While I was studying at San Francisco State University, I became the secretary to the parish priest of the Arab-Catholics in Northern California. In seeing the work of that priest and his dedication to serving the community, I realized that much in the same way that a doctor helps to heal a person, so does a priest. I really saw that no matter how good medicine as a practice got, there is always going to be a need to help prepare people to meet God. As time progressed my role with the priest became less and less administrative and more and more spiritual/pastoral.

I graduated from college and finished 3 years of research in the field of endocrinology. Then I came to the Holy Land for the first time in 2007, to attend the wedding of a friend. During my visit here to the Holy Land, I realized how much the church did for society and I decided that I wanted to come to the Seminary here in Beit Jala, the place in which I now serve. I left the USA and entered the Seminary in 2010, I was ordained in 2014 and I was assigned to serve the Arab-Catholics in Northern California, replacing the priest with whom I had served for a long time.

During my time as parish priest in the San Francisco Bay Area, I did my graduate work at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkely in Systematic Theology. After attaining my STL, I was called back by the current Patriarch to serve in the Seminary, under the capable direction of Father Yacoub Rafidi with whom I served for 3 years. I am currently serving the Seminary in the role of rector, now for the second year.

In being the rector of the seminary, I feel not only a sense of great responsibility but moreover a sense



Before they can do so there are several difficulties which they must overcome, it can be likened to a path along which you walk, along the way you find both roses and thorns. On our part we try to help the seminarian become aware of what God's will is in their lives and we try to the best of our abilities to give them the education and formation necessary for them to succeed in their mission."

In the Fall of 2022, the Beit Jala Seminary welcomed – as every year – a visit by the Patriarch, Archbishop Pizzaballa. It can be considered a canonical visit during which, Father Poggi shares, "the Patriarch lives with us as we live, there are largely no 'special programs'. He meets with everyone in the house, he actively listens to them and gives direction in a one-on-one basis. After doing so, he meets with the priest formators and gives them a kind of consensus of his visit. Together, we set a few goals or things which we have to work on in the coming year."

For the academic year 2022-2023, His Beatitude asked the team of formators to focus on two things which Father Poggi reports: "the first is the quality of formation which we offer. The second thing he asked us to do is to open the seminary to the laity. He wants the seminary to be a place of catechesis as well as a place of formation. In response to this

goal, we focused on opening the seminary to the wider community in Palestine and Israel."

This way the beating heart of the Diocese in terms of formation of the local Church will not only be a place where seminarians grow in their life choices but also a place for the people of God to come and drink at the source of spiritual life. It is wonderful to know that, "in the past year, – as Father Poggi recounts with emotion – we have had well over 40 groups from the Catholic parishes in Israel and Palestine who have come to visit and spend some time in the seminary. We are able to offer them days of reflection, talks and some time to encounter the seminarians – and an opportunity just to get away from everyday life. In this way, the seminary becomes a place where the faithful can come and discover the richness of our faith and how to have a life that is rooted in Christ."

While we just celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this institution, since Patriarch Giuseppe Valerga founded the Seminary in December 1852, we remember with gratitude his Catholic vision: to form local Arab Christians and young men coming from abroad to be diocesan priests for the Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem and we keep praying for that.

**Elena Dini**

of gratitude. They always say that before the formator in the seminary begins to form others, he finishes his own formation. After being out of the seminary for four years, having been a parish priest, the schedule and order which is instilled in the seminary kind of begins to leave your everyday practice. Coming back to this order has been a blessing in my priestly life. Beyond that helping to form the next generation of priests for the Holy Land is a great honor. I see in them a lot of promise, they want to make the church the best possible "place" to encounter the Lord and each other.

As priests of the Patriarchate, we are very close to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. From the first moment of *Nulla Celebrior* and the restoration of the Patriarchal See to Jerusalem as a residential Patriarch, Pope Pius IX re-organized the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. For us then, the link between the Patriarchate and the Knights is not one which is secondary, it is commonly part of our identity. There is complementarity between the work of the Order and the work of the Patriarchate.

Some ask why there should be an Order specifically to support the work of the Patriarchate, why not others? I think this goes back to the time of Saint Paul when he, having left Jerusalem physically, still remained attached to the mission of the "saints in Jerusalem" (*Romans* 15:26). For him the project of the Church of Jerusalem, the mother of all Churches, was of great significance; he even went to the extent of risking the alienation of those churches that he had founded in order provide for Christianity in the Holy Land. The order for us represents the same "concern" of the Universal Church for the Mother Church. I have a fear that over time the significance of this "concern" will become diminished and I likewise have an awareness that responding to the initiative of the Order remains the thing which we as a local church must do better.

# Two seminarians share their experience

## Seminarian Jiries Khalil shares his spiritual path

*"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you came to birth, I consecrated you"* (Jeremiah 1:5)

**M**y name is Jiries Majed Abu Khalil. I am 21 years old and I was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2001. I am originally from Jifna, a small village near Ramallah in the West Bank, but my family moved to Jerusalem eight years ago.

My calling to enter the seminary became stronger after I had received the Sacrament of Confirmation on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. At the end of the Mass, the bishop suggested I join the seminary if I wanted. I thought a lot about it because I knew it was not going to be an easy decision to make. I finally made my decision to get a taste of that life by joining the minor seminary so I could learn more about Jesus, about the vocation and about the Patriarchate I belong to.

I entered the minor Seminary in 2014. After finishing school, I stayed here and entered the propaedeutic year to know if my vocation was to serve God as a priest or to serve him as just a believer.

So, I entered the propaedeutic year to know if that was my vocation, and following this year and two years of philosophy I was certain of it and my decision to become a priest. I recognized that the voice of the bishop at that time was the voice of the Holy Spirit calling on me to be God's servant. As the above quoted verse from (Jeremiah 1:5) states, I feel my mission in life had already been decided from the day of my conception in my mother's womb. The day I received the sacrament of

confirmation when I first felt my calling was also my 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. That is why I feel I was called to be a servant of God the day I was born, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, I hope to become a good priest, and a good shepherd. So, I ask you to pray for me on my journey towards becoming what God wants me to be. Thank you so much.

\* \* \*

## "This life brought me closer to God", shares seminarian Salameh Azar

**M**y name is Salameh Azar. I am 23 years old, a Palestinian from the city of Beit Jala where the Seminary is located. I am now in my second year of philosophy. I

entered the seminary three years ago after completing two years at Bethlehem University. I withdrew from university and the reason is that I felt God wanted me to pursue something else.

I didn't feel out of place when I first entered the seminary. The reason is mainly that since I was a child, I felt very connected with the church and its mission. Of course, taking this decision has not been easy, especially since my mother was not in favour of it. She depends a lot on me because I am the oldest son.

Despite the fact that I quickly got used to my new life in the seminary, it does not mean that it is without challenges. The strict routine is the toughest part. However, I also find this life to be also very rewarding. Most importantly, it brought me closer to God.

My calling is now clearer, and that gives me the peace of mind I need the most, knowing that I am in the right place. I feel more in tune with my inner self and the divine within and without.

In the future, I aspire to be a priest with a new vision, one that can help me be closer to people's lived experiences and struggles following the example of Jesus Christ.





# The Order's projects together with the Latin Patriarchate

*Some projects supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land and completed in 2022*

**At the request of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Order's mission is to support the implementation of numerous projects, large and small, in the Holy Land. This article presents the projects completed in 2022, thanks to the contributions of the Lieutenancies around the world. These works, once completed, contribute to improving living standards of our brothers and sisters in this part of the world.**

A retrospective on the past year allows us to note that while the Covid-19 pandemic was less pervasive than the previous year and allowed for the normal resumption of international travel, other factors have destabilized the world.

Firstly, the war in Ukraine, which caused a large number of casualties and led to increases in the cost of many basic goods and services, increases that in the Holy Land were sometimes as high as 10% and in other cases reached 20%.

Inflation also increased and unemployment rates remained high in Jordan and Palestine, where they continued to exceed 20% (peaking at over 50% in Gaza), compared to 5% in Israel.

The demands on the humanitarian aid fund therefore remained very high. The distribution of medicines, healthcare for the neediest, school support and social assistance continued unabated and the number of beneficiaries remained high.

In addition, job creation programs in Gaza, support funds

for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and East Jerusalem continued to support many families during the year.

In particular, thanks to the Order's funding, job creation in Gaza provided employment for some one hundred young people in the past three years. The good news is that some sixty-five people who have benefited from this program in the past now have permanent and secure jobs.

Support for Iraqi refugees also continued during the year, benefiting 17,000 refugees, including 12,000 Christians.

With regard to the East Jerusalem fund, there



was an increase in demand due to the tightening of measures imposed on families applying for family reunification.

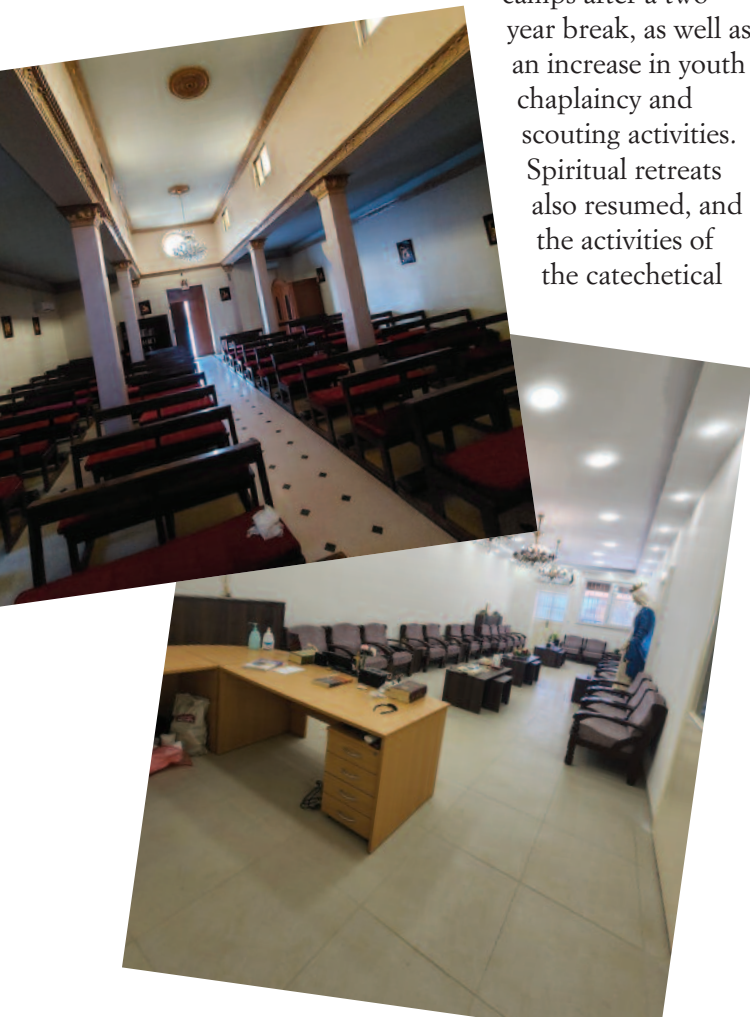
During the year, efforts were made to move towards more sustainable empowerment programs. Some creative programs were designed to help beneficiaries become independent, an example being the programs for women and young people, who improved their skills through the teaching of a trade that enabled them to generate an income to support themselves and their families.

In this sense, the AFAQ (Horizons) skills development and career guidance programs, implemented in cooperation with Bethlehem University, has been a great success.

## PROJECTS SUPPORTING PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Thanks to the gradual easing of restrictions on group activities, pastoral activities increased positively throughout the year. Among the most significant activities was the resumption of summer

camps after a two-year break, as well as an increase in youth chaplaincy and scouting activities. Spiritual retreats also resumed, and the activities of the catechetical



and liturgical offices increased. Within this framework, several projects were carried out to provide services, renovation and safety, in order to offer a protected, welcoming and comfortable environment to those who benefit from it.

## Purchase of a new minivan to support youth pastoral activities

JEC Jordan (Christian Student Youth) needed a reliable vehicle to transport its members to various organized activities, including training courses, workshops, spiritual meetings, camps, sports activities and educational trips. Thanks to a generous donation from the **Dutch Lieutenancy**, the Latin Patriarchate was able to purchase a minivan to

support these activities. A dozen members of the General Secretariat of JEC, fifty members of the Work Commission, priests, nuns and spiritual leaders of JEC, can now benefit from this

purchase, which also allows all members in Jordan, especially those from the more remote villages, to take part in the masses, events and religious celebrations organized by this dynamic movement.





## Renovation of spaces for the Catholic Church in Jordan

The **Lieutenancy for Germany** financed the renovation of the Latin parish in Smakiyeh, which covered the church, the priest's house and the multi-purpose hall. The parish, which is located in a marginalized area outside the capital Amman, had not been renovated for decades. Thanks to this project, the Latin Patriarchate was able to create a pastoral environment suitable for living, praying and participating in masses and parish events.

In Misdar, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Amman, located in the eastern part of the city, where families struggle to meet their daily needs, the parish of Christ the King was established in 1924 and the construction of the church and school was completed in 1928. This parish continued to function normally until 1948, when many Palestinians fled their country and settled in the area, thus creating a new demographic situation. In



fact, the parish grew significantly over the years, especially as many refugees fled from Middle Eastern countries and the region became a destination for all these immigrants. The premises needed urgent maintenance to meet the minimum health and safety standards of the residence. The project also included tiling work on 400 meters of the Church of Christ the King. All of this was made possible by another generous grant from the **Lieutenancy for England and Wales**.

Also in Jordan, the **Lieutenancy for Luxembourg** donated funds for the renovation of

the meeting room of the Christian Student Youth activities in Jabal Amman. The Chaplain and the JEC management team have always insisted on creating a professional environment to be used for meetings and activities at JEC headquarters. The renovated space will be ideal for group gatherings, formal committee meetings or training events. The space will also be used to organize online meetings, video conferences, presentations, lectures and interviews.

### NEW FACILITIES FOR OVER 3,000 STUDENTS AND NEARLY 300 TEACHERS

In the academic world classes and extracurricular and pastoral activities also resumed this year.

Two major educational projects that had been presented and started in 2020 were completed in 2022 thanks to the **US Northeastern Lieutenancy**.

Some schools in the Holy Land needed a reorganization of their libraries, where shelves were limited and educational books were insufficient to meet the needs of students and teachers. In addition, the furniture was old or broken and far from comfortable for the students and teachers who wanted to use these spaces to read, study and do research.

Sixteen of these libraries were renovated. The project enriched the selection of books available for students and teachers, and also provided new furniture to offer a safe educational space to make access to learning more functional.

The second project was proposed by the Latin Patriarchate after the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted education worldwide and affected millions of students. Schools needed to be equipped with interactive whiteboards and projectors to optimize teachers' teaching to enrich the learning experience and cultivate students' passion and skills for technology. Overall, twenty interactive whiteboards and 20 projectors were purchased. Seven schools benefited and were able to offer interactive lessons, enhancing the learning experience of their pupils. In Jordan, a total of 2,140 students and 204 staff and teachers benefited from the new equipment. In Palestine, 1,163 students and 92 staff and teachers benefited. In



total, 3,303 students and 296 teachers will use the new equipment, thus enhancing and enriching the learning environment in the schools of the Latin Patriarchate.

At the structural level, a number of important projects aimed at modernizing services were implemented during the year. In particular, in the School in Gaza, four projects were completed.

The school entrance hall and laboratory had to be renovated as the safety of both areas had been compromised by multiple problems. The entrance hall is a very important space because it is used for all school activities, including meetings, assemblies and gatherings. The windows, lighting and ventilation system needed to be replaced and the entire security system overhauled. Meanwhile, the school's laboratory had become unusable due to a serious water leak that had caused extensive damage.

Thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for England and Wales**, work began in 2019 to secure these two areas. The second intervention, completed in autumn 2022, involved the installation of a new steel roof on the school's



playing field, thanks to a donation from the **Lieutenancy for the Netherlands**. This project was proposed to complement the Latin Patriarchate's commitment to provide its students with a positive school environment and to contribute to their health and well-being. The new canopy will provide a shaded area where students can rest during recess and protect themselves from the sun and rain, allowing for longer periods of safe learning and play. In addition, the more adequately protected play area will also allow the parish to host family and social events that require a shaded outdoor area.

Lastly, the **Lieutenancy for France** financed the extension of a computer lab for the students and teachers of the Gaza school.

As for the school in Jordan, the school building of the Latin Patriarchate in Ader had been in need of renovation for some time, especially in the basement, where there were problems with humidity and general dilapidation. It was therefore urgent to reinforce and restore the foundations. The work, which began in 2021 with the support of the **Lieutenancy for Germany**, was completed in 2022, making it possible to create a safer and healthier environment for the children.





## PROJECTS FOR THE WHOLE DIOCESE OF THE HOLY LAND

The **Lieutenancy for Luxembourg** also supported the work of renewing the IT management system for the entire Diocese of Jerusalem. The Latin Patriarchate needed to create a centralized web application system that could be hosted by the Patriarchate's Data Centre and be accessible to all parishes and the Chancery, including the Custody of the Holy Land (Franciscans).



The **Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain** supported the training of the Patriarchate's employees, as well as employees of the Beit Afram Retirement Home, the seminary, the printing office, the vicariates and others, through training and capacity building courses. The program was implemented by the Human Resources Department of the Latin Patriarchate and included: courses on archiving principles, payroll accounting, payroll processing and management, strategic planning for school leaders, an electrical training course and a scholarship for a master's degree in nursing, culinary arts, as well as a training course in music for kindergarten teachers.

## IMPORTANT INTERVENTIONS FOR THE BEIT AFRAM HOME FOR THE ELDERLY IN TAYBEH, PALESTINE

Established in 2005 to provide care and a healthy environment for the elderly in Taybeh and other neighboring villages in the State of



Palestine, the Beit Afram home for the elderly also offers opportunities for interaction with students, youth groups and religious movements, enabling the elderly to remain active and engaged and to safeguard their dignity and self-esteem.

In the building that houses this facility, the railings and balustrades of the terraces and balconies had been defective since their construction. In addition, the house had suffered extensive damage and had multiple problems related to inadequate waterproofing of the building. Waterproofing works were necessary to protect the integrity of the structure and create a healthy environment for residents and staff. In 2022, thanks to a grant from the **Lieutenancy for France**, the Latin Patriarchate was able to carry out these repairs, thus securing the building and providing safe and secure living and recreational spaces for the elderly residents and staff.

Also thanks to support from the **Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain**, it was possible to purchase a washing machine for the Beit Afram old people's home, to ensure the necessary hygiene of the linen



provided for the elderly. In addition, in terms of technology, an intercom system was installed that allows staff to see and speak to visitors at the entrance, ensuring the safety of all.

### RENOVATION OF THE CONVENT AND HOUSE OF THE SISTERS OF THE ROSARY IN RAMALLAH AND BIRZEIT, AND OTHER WORKS IN PALESTINE

Other projects completed in 2022 involved the convent and house of the Sisters of the Rosary, located in Ramallah and Birzeit respectively.

Through their presence and work, the Sisters of the Rosary respond to the needs and make a difference in the lives of local Christians in the Holy Land. Their mission is dedicated to apostolic works in the fields of education (kindergartens and schools), social work (with the elderly) and medical care.

The nuns' convent in Ramallah, located close to the school of the Latin Patriarchate and the parish building, faced some problems both during peak school hours, when parents would pick up their children, and during the parish activities that last until the evening, coinciding with the nuns' prayer hours. That is why an intervention was necessary with the aim of transforming the convent into a more private and peaceful place for the sisters, allowing them to live their spirituality in complete serenity.

The house of the Sisters of the Rosary in Birzeit, on the other hand, which had not benefited from renovation work for several decades, had serious dampness problems and no longer met the minimum health and safety standards for residence.

The work of separating and renovating these two places began in 2021 thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for France** and the **Lieutenancy for Austria**, and was completed in 2022, creating a healthier, more comfortable and safer environment for our sisters who work to cultivate goodness towards all the people living in the Holy Land.

Also in Birzeit, another building was in need of maintenance: The Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace, a historic building with a dilapidated roof and several water infiltrations in the interior walls



and ceilings. Waterproofing and renovation work was therefore needed, which was carried out between 2021 and 2022 thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for Ireland**.

### MAINTENANCE WORK FOR THE PATRIARCHATE BUILDINGS IN JERUSALEM

Staying in the area of historical structures, the Latin Patriarchate building in Jerusalem represents a legacy for the Church and the city. The structure consists of the Co-cathedral and the main building. The roof of the Co-Cathedral was suffering from waterproofing problems, resulting in water seepage on the first floor and damage to the ceilings and interior walls. The poor condition of the roof was accelerating the deterioration of the building's historical materials (masonry, brick,





wood, plaster, paint, etc.), which would eventually lead to a general disintegration of the structure.

Thanks to a donation from the **Lieutenancy for Portugal**, it was possible to start renovation work in 2019, in order to close the various water infiltration points and, at the same time, improve and maintain its structural integrity, thus providing a healthier environment for the inhabitants of the historic building. Priests, nuns (around 20 religious men and women), forty staff members working in the administrative offices, and members of the surrounding Christian community who come to pray in the Latin Patriarchate Cathedral during religious celebrations and festivals benefited from

the work, which was completed in 2022.

For the year 2023, the Latin Patriarchate has requested the Grand Magisterium consider redistributing the resources sent regularly and prioritizing charitable and pastoral activities. This will be done by reducing the budget for projects, in order to meet the needs of families who have suffered greatly from the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years, particularly those employed in hospitality and pilgrimage-related activities that have been closed down (causing job losses, unemployment, reduction of staff and hours in the hospitality, care, crafts and related service sectors).

## The Order, part of a “symphony of charity” within ROACO

The 95<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of ROACO (Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches) took place from June 20 to 23, 2022 at Casa La Salle in Rome. It was chaired by Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, at that time still Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches<sup>1</sup>, with the participation of the Apostolic Nuncio in Israel and Cyprus and Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem and Palestine, Monsignor Adolfo Tito Yllana, Father Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land, and the Vice Rector of Bethlehem University, Brother Peter Bray. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre was represented by Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone. The debate highlighted the persistence of problems for the Catholic community in the Holy Land, such as the economic repercussions of the health crisis, the escalation of tension in Gaza, the danger of the marginalisation of the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the irreversibility of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories. After an extraordinary session dedicated to Ukraine, the projects for the second half of 2022 were taken over by the various ROACO member organisations. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre pledged to finance projects in the Holy Land for a total of Euro 234,500, mainly for the restoration of places of worship and parish halls for Greek Melkite Catholics of the Byzantine rite (such as the new floor of the pastoral center Our Lady's House in Nazareth, for 100,000 Euros, completed in early 2023). During the audience granted to the Plenary Assembly, Pope Francis spoke of the “symphony of charity” developed by the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, together with those who make up ROACO. “In setting up the symphony of charity, continue to seek agreement and flee every temptation of isolation and closure in oneself and in one's own groups,” the Holy Father emphasised, encouraging the participants to “keep your eyes fixed on the icon of the Good Samaritan”.



*Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, Governor General, greeted the Pope on behalf of all members of the Order during the papal audience granted to the ROACO in June 2022.*

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, appointed last November by Pope Francis to head the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, began his new mission on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The former Apostolic Nuncio – among the countries in which he served was Ukraine – has succeeded Argentine Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, who resigned for age reasons.

# A truly universal Church in Israel

*Interview with Father Nikodemus Schnabel,  
Patriarchal Vicar for migrants and asylum seekers*

**F**ather Schnabel, could you tell us who the people belonging to your Vicariate are?

We are the Vicariate for Migrants and Asylum Seekers. We are the most international of the Latin Patriarchate Vicariates because we are in charge of all the Catholics who do not have the citizenship of one of the countries of the Latin Patriarchate. So, we are working with migrants and asylum seekers from the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, China, Ukraine, Romania, Poland, and both English and French-speaking Africa, Latin America... and it's a very colourful Vicariate with four rites and many languages. It is very difficult to count numbers but we could say we gather about 100,000 sisters and brothers.

**There is a difference in the status of these people: some people are legally here while some other people are not. Can you explain this concept further?**

Our sisters and brothers live very different situations. Some of them are legally in the country. These are migrant workers mostly from the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka who through agencies came here working in the fields of caregiving, agriculture or construction work. But, for example, if one of these people – and we are speaking mostly about women (95%) – give birth, she immediately becomes illegal.

Another example is the work visa that expires automatically if the employer dies. This means that so many of them – although they arrived legally – no longer have this legal status.

Then we have also some migrant workers who came here as pilgrims, but didn't return home, stayed here and tried to find their luck. They are often employed in the cleaning sector.

Finally, we have the asylum seekers: this is the smallest group. These are people from Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia. They really try to escape from hunger, bloodshed and war, but the borders are



*Some 100,000 migrants and asylum seekers in Israel belong to the Catholic Church, a reminder of its universal dimension.*



closed – and therefore it is a shrinking phenomenon – while the migrant workers represent a rapidly growing phenomenon.

**What are the main activities the Vicariate offers to these different groups?**

Our Vicariate tries to support these sisters and



brothers in all the fields we can. Definitely in everything connected to their religious and spiritual life starting from the liturgy (celebrating the Eucharist, the sacraments, teaching the catechism, etc.) but also from a social point of view because their life is often very difficult. In the whole of Israel, we have about 50 places from North to South where we celebrate the Eucharist in the different mother tongues and rites of the migrants.

But very often our people lack religious freedom. They cannot go to a normal Sunday Eucharist because they have to work or because very often the employers don't allow them to attend Eucharist. So, we have to be creative. For example, we have Sunday eucharists on Tuesday or Friday nights and not only in churches but very often in tents, gyms, kindergartens or very hidden places. Sometimes we meet at noon or at 1pm so, while they go shopping, they can stop for the Eucharist. Very often our people are not free to celebrate and profess their faith: when they live at home as caregivers they are often told "no cross, no New Testament, no Jesus here in our house" and this is really a big challenge.

One very important part of



*A pilgrimage to Jerusalem animated by the Vicariate for Migrants of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.*

our work is therefore advocacy: to stand up for our marginalized and discriminated sisters and brothers and fight for the human right of religious freedom, but also, the right

to life. As a church, we believe that you should have the courage to say yes to life, but here it means to become illegal as I mentioned. If we encourage to say yes to life, then we have to help the mothers. So, we have 11 day-care centers where babies and toddlers from zero to three years of age can stay. Teachers who take care of them are migrant mothers, so that they can take care of their own child and other children. We also work on that together with Israeli organizations to offer a high-quality education. For youth we have today two after-school programs, in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, as well as a fostering home in Jerusalem for children who don't have a father and whose mother has difficulty making ends meet: we take care of these kids 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but during the weekend, we try also to make sure that the children stay with their mothers.

What is really important here is to provide our people "a home far from home". It doesn't matter if they are legal or illegal, if they are young or old, they always face the challenge of being a foreigner

*Young people are welcomed within the activities organized by the Vicariate for Migrants.*





and hear the voice saying  
“you don’t belong here”  
because you have the  
wrong faith or the wrong skin color.

*Father Nikodemus  
Schnabel's team.*

And I think our vocation is that we are a place. Sacred spaces must be safe spaces where our sisters and brothers can be weak, where they don’t have to fear the government, the police or deportation but may just practice their faith, share their food, sit and chat together, and find a person who is listening to them.

#### **Who helps you in all that at the Vicariate?**

I have a wonderful team with many religious women coming from the countries of the migrants and asylum seekers and they are always there available for the needs of our sisters (the vast majority of people in our Vicariate are women) and then I have wonderful priests who really do their best: they always go the extra mile. You should think, for example, that our people are not always in the big cities but they might live in the rural areas where there are only a few people and our priests go there to celebrate a mass only for 10 people who have only two hours free every other week.

We only have one priest from Sri Lanka, one Eritrean and one Konkani-speaking one. Imagine, for example, that there are six Konkani-speaking

communities in the country and these are vibrant communities with 200 (the smallest community) to 700 people coming to a regular Eucharist, not mentioning the big Holidays.

My priests and my sisters are real heroes because they work hard and with a wonderful missionary spirit. If someone is seeking a comfortable place to wait for people to show up, this is not the experience we have here. Here you need a missionary Spirit to get out of your comfort zone and meet the people where they are. I remember very well

the first night I spent visiting our parishioners together with one of our Sri Lankan sisters. I thought it was weird that we were starting our visits at 10pm but then my sister explained to me: “Father, you know, they have to work the whole day. The only free time they have is during night time because their employer is sleeping.” So, we went from place to place for visits during the whole night.

#### **How do people in your Vicariate live their faith?**

Every day here I realize how privileged I am to be able to practice my faith without fear and problems. Usually in other countries, the Church thinks about how we can motivate people to practice their faith or how we can give people the taste of the beauty of faith. Here this is not at all the issue at stake. My sisters and brothers are a wonderful Church full of desire, full of longing for God, for the sacraments and for the Word of God. People use their only free hours to gather and pray if they can.

For example, the Sri Lankan groups meet online at night at 11pm to pray and read the Bible or at 6am for an online mass. For people like them who cannot physically gather together for working constraints, the digital world has been a blessing. They have such a deep and inspiring spirituality.



And for me, as a monk, priest and theologian, this is so heart-touching and I see them much closer to God than I am. When I have to preach in front of them I wonder what I could tell them... it is better to listen to them and learn from them, not vice versa.

**How did you end up becoming the Vicar of this incredibly amazing reality of the Church in the Holy Land?**

It is an interesting story. I'm very often asked that because I'm a monk and this is not generally the kind of activities people think a monk could be involved in because people think only about the contemplative monastic life, but they do not know that we have always had a tradition of missionary and pastoral monastic life also and that what I do therefore perfectly fits into this context.

*Father Schnabel arrived at Palazzo della Rovere to personally thank Cardinal Filoni for the support the Order gives to the pastoral work carried out by the Vicariate he heads in Israel.*



The Latin Patriarchate asked me in July of 2021, if I would be ready to take on this position and offer this service to the Church, and I thought I could. Before then I was for two years the superior of my Monastery so I know a little bit how to run a community with two houses. I also have some diplomatic background and I know some languages for having lived abroad. I come from a family of artists and, as a child, I changed my living place 14 times, and I was raised by a single mother so there are many aspects I can empathize, understand, and feel so comfortable with our sisters and brothers of this Vicariate. It is a great blessing for me to serve them.

**The Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre are really grateful for all that your Vicariate does. Is there something specific that you were able to implement thanks to their contribution?**

First of all, I have to mention that I'm myself a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, belonging to the German Lieutenancy. I'm very grateful for the support the Order of the Holy Sepulchre offers to the Vicariate for Migrants and Asylum Seekers, especially when it comes to our minors, the migrant children and youth. For example, health insurance is paid for our children, but also activities such as our youth music classes.

**What is the gift that this Vicariate offers the whole world?**

I think that these sisters and brothers from all over the world who are now here in the Holy Land have a useful prophetic voice to show that Christianity in the Holy Land has many languages, many faces, many skin colors, many different rites.

The roots of our faith are here in the Holy Land and I like very much that we have not only the local Christians and the pilgrims but that there is also a third reality: Christians from all over the world who come here as workers or seeking refuge. God is not asking "show me your visa or show me your legal status." So, the German pilgrim, the Palestinian Christian and the migrant worker from Sri Lanka all have the same baptism and that's really heart-touching for me to feel that we are connected and one in the baptism.

**Interview by Elena Dini**

# In Bethlehem: “The Holy Child Program”

*A mission at the service of children with serious behavioral and emotional problems*

The *Holy Child Program* was founded in 1995, by the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist and is one of the very few centers in the Bethlehem area serving children with severe behavioral and emotional problems in a therapeutic day treatment setting. Located in Beit Sahour (the place of the Shepherds’ Field), it was founded at the request of parents whose children were suffering from psychological distress, resulting from the first Intifada, or military incursion into the West Bank by Israeli forces. The Program currently serves 35 children and their families. It provides additional outreach programs in the West Bank, including being a training center for local universities and other agencies serving children and families in the

*The Grand Master met with the children of the Holy Child Program in Bethlehem during his trip to the Holy Land in May 2022.*



region.

As a day treatment program, children attend regular academic classes, as well as participate in specialized therapeutic activities, including personal counselling, land and animal therapy, and those centered

on the arts. The *Holy Child Program* uses the “Incredible Years Program”<sup>1</sup> as a framework for these creative therapies, aiming to help each child achieve mastery of their psychological and behavioral problems, as well as teaching problem solving skills, increased emotional and social competence while reducing disruptive and aggressive behaviors. Parents are expected to participate in family meetings, mothers’ programs and educational activities designed to foster strong family foundations and encourage a systemic change for both the child and the family.

The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and Franciscan spirituality provide the framework for the services offered by the *Holy Child Program*.







The students and staff – both Christian and Muslim – begin each day together in this Catholic milieu, with a time of prayer.

*The Holy Child Program works alongside the Palestinian population experiencing severe hardship and in need of healing and peace.*

The program monitors its graduates, who show a very high success rate for integration back into normal or trade school settings, as well as long term success in becoming responsible members of the local community. Some of our graduates are working in olive wood shops, cooking at quality hotels in Jerusalem and studying abroad.

### **Continued Relationships with the Order of the Holy Sepulchre**

The *Holy Child Program* has been blessed with the support of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and owes its continued existence to several Lieutenancies in the United States.

Actual visits from pilgrim groups of Dames and Knights to the *Holy Child Program* encourage and sustain the children and staff, supporting their therapeutic process in ways that equal the monetary support so vital for continuity of the program. A vivid memory of such a visit includes a child being shown on a map where the visitors came from in relation to the Holy Land. The child exclaimed, “You came here to see me?”. The knowledge and feeling of being loved and thought of offers opportunities for reconciliation and healing in their everyday lives. The importance of this cannot be underestimated.

The relationship of the Co-Foundress of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, Mother Shaun Vergauwen, with the Former Grand Master, Cardinal O’Brien, and the works of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist in Jerusalem, paved the way for this relationship between the Lieutenancies and the *Holy Child Program*.

Mother Shaun was recently inducted as a Religious Dame of the USA Eastern Lieutenancy. She accompanied the Grand Master Cardinal Filoni for his Solemn Entrance into the Holy Sepulchre this May 2022. The *Holy Child Program* was privileged to receive the Delegation for a brief but joyful visit. The Cardinal Grand Master engaged the children in conversation in English, to the surprise of the teachers. The Program dedicated the meeting and prayer room of the school to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, presenting Cardinal Filoni with an olive-wood plaque, a copy of which will be displayed in the room marking the dedication. Mother Shaun also addressed the children and staff. The *Holy Child Program* owes its existence to the support of Mother Rosemae Pender and Mother Shaun, Co-Foundresses of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist. To have the presence of one who holds the founding vision of the *Holy Child Program* and that of the Cardinal Grand Master who holds the body that helps sustain that vision was an incredibly moving and memorable event for the Program.

As the *Holy Child Program* completes its 27<sup>th</sup> year of providing therapeutic healing and academic progress to the holy children of the Bethlehem region, it continues its capital campaign to purchase the building and land which currently houses the Program. This will provide continuity and greater security for the program, as well as the ability and freedom to expand the program to meet the needs of a population in need of healing and peace.

**Sister Naomi Zimmermann**  
*Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist*

<sup>1</sup> The “Incredible Years Program” is a series of interdependent programs intended for parents, children and teachers based on more than 30 years of research. With the objective to prevent and treat young people’s behavioral problems and to simultaneously promote their social, emotional and academic competence.

# The Holy Places according to young Palestinians

*The drawings on the cover of our magazine are the result of a contest for young people in Palestine's schools*

When the schools of the Latin Patriarchate resumed classes after the summer holidays in the autumn of 2022, the Communications Department of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, in collaboration with the Director General of Schools in Palestine, initiated an art project with the students.

The Director General of the Schools in

Palestine, Father Yacoub Rafidi, and the Executive Director, Abeer Hanna, enthusiastically proposed to the students to create works of art inspired by the story of the Holy Places in the Holy Land.

A few months later, the works of art depicting the Holy Places through the eyes of young people living in the Holy Land were digitalized and sent to the Grand Magisterium to be used for the Order's publications and communication activities.



St. Peter's Church, Capernaum  
Suhail & Majeda Hanna, St.  
Joseph School, Nablus



Church of the Holy Sepulchre,  
Maria Anton, Holy Family  
School, Gaza



Abraham's Oak Holy Trinity  
Monastery, Natalie Bannoura,  
Latin School, Beit Sahour



Capernaum Church, Suad  
Samaneen, Ahleya College -  
Ramallah



The Holy Family Church,  
Anton Anton, Holy Family  
School, Gaza



Church of Mary  
Magdalene,  
Christina Fazaa,  
Latin School,  
Gaza



Basilica of the  
Annunciation,  
Kamal Anton,  
Holy Family  
School, Gaza



Iglesia Dominus Flevit, Carole  
Anton, Sagrada Familia,  
Gaza



Church of the  
Holy Sepulchre,  
Najeeb Fazaa,  
Latin School,  
Gaza



Saint Sharbel  
Church, Zaher  
Farah, Latin  
School, Beit  
Sahour



The Grotto of  
Nativity, Dana  
Saadeh, St.  
Joseph School,  
Nablus



Church of the Holy Sepulchre,  
Eliana Abu Saad, Latin  
School, Beit Jala



Basilica of the Annunciation,  
Bana Saadeh, St. Joseph  
School, Nablus



Church of the Beatitudes,  
Christeena Saadeh, St.  
Joseph School, Nablus



Capernaum Church, Fadwa  
Shaheen, Holy Family  
School, Gaza



Church of Saint Peter in  
Gallicantu, Joseph Saadeh,  
St. Joseph School, Nablus



The Grotto of  
Nativity, Danial  
Fazaa, Latin  
School, Gaza



Church of the Holy  
Sepulchre, Khader  
Ayyad, Latin  
School, Gaza



The children were free to choose any technique, media and style (painting, pen, pencil, collage or other materials; on paper, canvas, cardboard, wood, plastic, in abstract, realist, surrealist style, etc.) for their submission.

In fact, ensuring maximum freedom of expression was an essential element, to allow the children to express themselves freely and portray their personal vision of the Holy Places seen through the eyes of their heart.

Both younger and older children were invited to participate: their creativity, whether childlike or more mature, is precious and unique. Moreover, allowing them to express themselves through visual

and non-verbal means, including observation and attention to detail, was also an opportunity to create a personal bond with the place they chose to represent.

The ten best drawings from each school were chosen by the school contact persons and copies were sent to Rome in high-resolution digital format.

We are therefore thrilled to show the results in our annual magazine, with the hope of repeating a similar experience in the future, both with the schools in Palestine and with all those supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land.

## The Experience of Resurrection

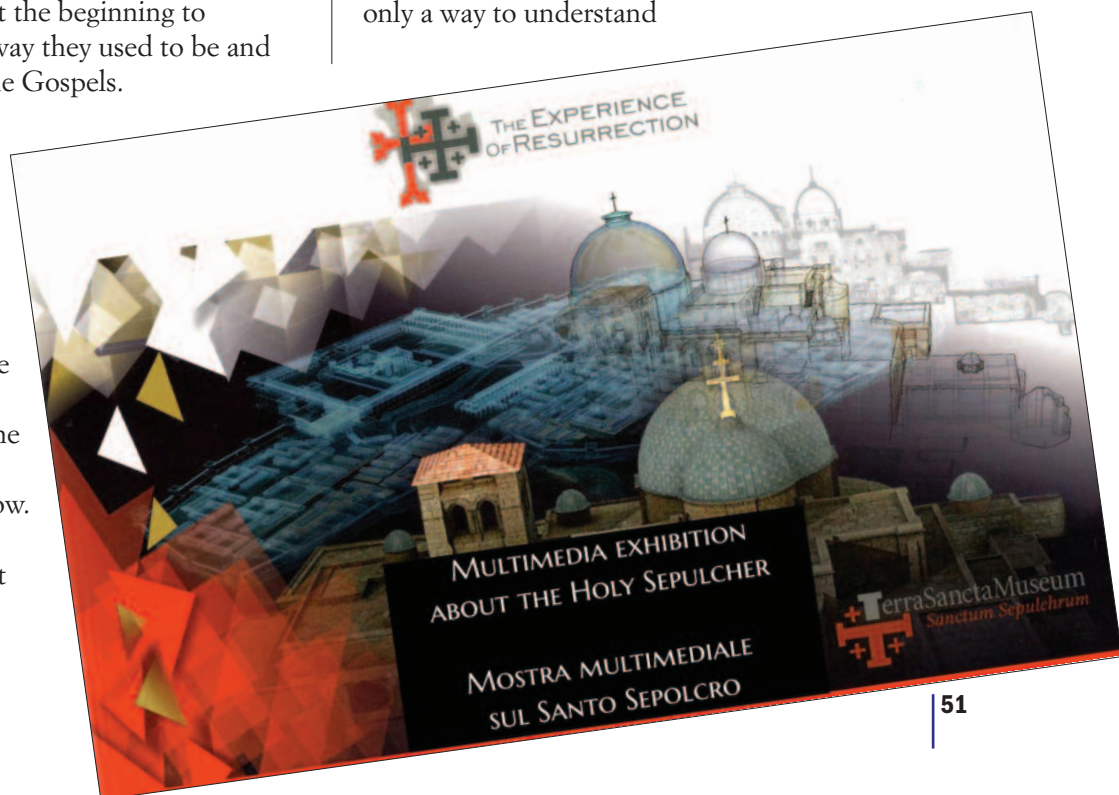
*A multimedia experience of the senses in Jerusalem, allowing one to participate in the encounter with the Risen Christ*

When one enters the Old City of Jerusalem, the small streets of this city so dear to our heart, the sounds, the voices, the colors and the people... everything tells us we are in a special place. The basilica of the Holy Sepulchre welcomes the pilgrims who go there to spend time in the places where Jesus suffered his passion, died and resurrected. However, it might be challenging above all at the beginning to imagine those places the way they used to be and we know them through the Gospels.

The multimedia exhibition “The Experience of Resurrection” located in the Christian Information Center, near the Jaffa Gate, “seeks to bring these memories alive – explain the curators in the booklet introducing the exhibition – and to make them tangible here and now. It describes the historical situation, the environment that witnessed Christ’s

journey. Through the implementation of modern and innovative technologies, the exhibition literally ‘moves’ us through Christ’s last days.”

The six rooms of the exhibition allow the pilgrim to look beyond the surface of what is visible now when visiting the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and retrace Jesus’ steps until the resurrection. What the curators want to offer is not only a way to understand



what the city looked like and where and how some important passages of the life of Jesus happened. The spiritual dimension and the personal experience of meeting with Jesus is at the heart of this idea: “The entire experience of this exhibition and the grace of pilgrimage will lead you to answer the final question, where is my Lord? He is here, with us, inside us, waiting patiently for us to open the doors of our hearts to him,” they write.

Father Tomasz Dubiel OFM, former director and initiator of the project, explains how this idea came to be and became a concrete project. “The idea was born in 2015 when Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa was the Custos. The number of pilgrims was increasing and the level of explanations at the Holy Sepulchre was lowering. At the same time some Israeli sites were getting organized with multimedia rooms to give explanations about some archaeological sites. Therefore the Custos thought it might be a good idea to do something like that for the Holy Sepulchre. The Christian Information Center looked like the ideal place to host that.”

“We contacted a company that worked with us – he continues – and they went for two days to the Holy Sepulchre and listened to what the guides were saying and explaining to the pilgrims, seeing what the most recurring elements were. They then took into consideration my experience and that of other friars who are Holy Land tour guides. We then came up with the idea of the six rooms by dividing the material and thinking about what kind of technology might be most appropriate for each experience.”

Room 1 hosts a 1:1000 scale model of Jerusalem at Jesus’ time. Thanks to a special visualization that “enlivens” the model and the Gospel fragments corresponding to individual places, one can follow the path that Jesus travelled from the Garden of Olives to Golgotha. In Room 2 the visitor is invited to a visit to the Garden of Olives and to experience the scene of Jesus being sentenced to death by Pilate virtually reconstructed thanks to the VR technique (Virtual Reality). Everyone is given VR glasses to enter the

room and become an apparent participant in the given event.

In Room 3, a short film about the history of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the time of Christ until today guides the visitor through the successive historical epochs to show how the city changed over time. Room 4 is the history of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre made in the form of a hologram and it complements the story presented in Room 3.

Room 5 presents the complex issue of the Status Quo explaining the agreement defining the property rights of each of the five religious communities who are present inside the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

In the last room, the pilgrim is welcomed by a

model of the Tomb, approximate to scale of the Tomb of Christ, which is the real focal point of every pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Here the visitor is invited to make a step further and really opens himself/herself to Jesus’

resurrection and to depart from here like the women and the disciples, ready to announce Jesus’ victory over death to the world.

The multimedia exhibition “The Experience of Resurrection” is a part of the Terra Sancta Museum run by the Franciscan Fathers at the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem. The concept was designed by fr. Tomasz Dubiel OFM, who supervised its realization and whom we met for this article. Polish artists and specialists designed and constructed this exhibition.

The *Terra Sancta Museum* project includes three sectors: in addition of the multimedia exhibition “The Experience of Resurrection” at CIC there is the multimedia and the archeological section located at the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, in the Convent of the Flagellation, along the Via Dolorosa. The third and most important part will be the historical section, situated inside the Saint Saviour Monastery, which opening is scheduled for 2025.

**Elena Dini**

“ *The experience of this exhibition leads to answering the question: “Where is your Lord?”* ”



## Prayer Vigil on the occasion of the Investiture

**T**he Ritual of the Order highlights the beauty of the symbols that accompany the solemn Investiture ceremony (Vigil and Liturgy) of the Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Symbols (from the Greek *symbolon*, derived from the verb *symbállō*, “to put together”) reveal hidden meanings. During the Prayer Vigil ceremony, the spurs evoke care for the things that come from God, encouraging members to participate in works of justice, peace and Christian charity. The sword is present and has a purely symbolic value, recalling the defence of truth and peace in justice: its use is limited to the Vigil ceremony, unless prohibited by local laws and regulations. On the



following pages, we publish a clarifying address by the Grand Master, who again explains why the sword is no longer used at the Investiture Liturgy, but is still valued during the Vigil. In the Vigil rite, the jar of perfumed oils is also used to express the devotion of the Dames to Jesus, following the

example of the women who cared for him. Below, we give space to a Dame of the Order, who testifies to the importance of the jar in her spiritual experience. Finally, we have chosen to publish passages from a beautiful homily given by the great Italian theologian Bruno Forte, Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto and member of the Order, at the Investiture Vigil held in his diocese in September 2022. ■

### The sense of symbols

*From Cardinal Fernando Filoni*

**M**any will have noticed the photo that appeared in Newsletter No. 67 of the Investiture ceremony in Naples, published again here. The photo gives me the opportunity to reiterate once again that the role of the “Sword” has not disappeared from the Ritual, but we find it again in the Prayer Vigil at the moment when the candidates are invited to take up their own symbols: for the Dames the “Jar of Fragrant Oil” and for the Knights the “Spurs” and precisely the “Sword.”

The “Sword,” at the moment it is



presented to the Candidate-Knight, should be unsheathed and brought to the level of the forehead and held for a few seconds. The candidate may reflect at that moment that that symbol reminds him or her of his or her commitment to truth, justice and loyalty, typical chivalric virtues.

In this way the symbolic value is not only not lost, but integrated with the spirit of the Order, since ours is an Order that is linked to the Mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord; therefore, the “Astylar Cross,” placed on the shoulder of the new Knight or the new Dame, is the most suitable instrument in the Investiture.

I would still like to add another thought that

seems important to me: while the “Sword” remains in the realm of the symbol (with debated meanings), the Cross, as *sacramentum fidei* (bond of faith), is linked to the mystery of Jesus’ death; therefore, the Cross, from *patibulum* (instrument for condemned), is changed to *Signum salvificum* (sign of salvation).

Now, with the imposition on the shoulder of this *Signum salvificum* (the astylar Cross), the constitutive formula (“I constitute you...”), the handing over of the Cross (to be worn on the neck) and the Mantle, the *novum* (the novelty) is enacted, and the Knight and the Dame assume their new, high dignity.. ■

## “The Grand Master's decision to introduce this strong symbol of the jar of oils, for the Dames, is an immense gift”

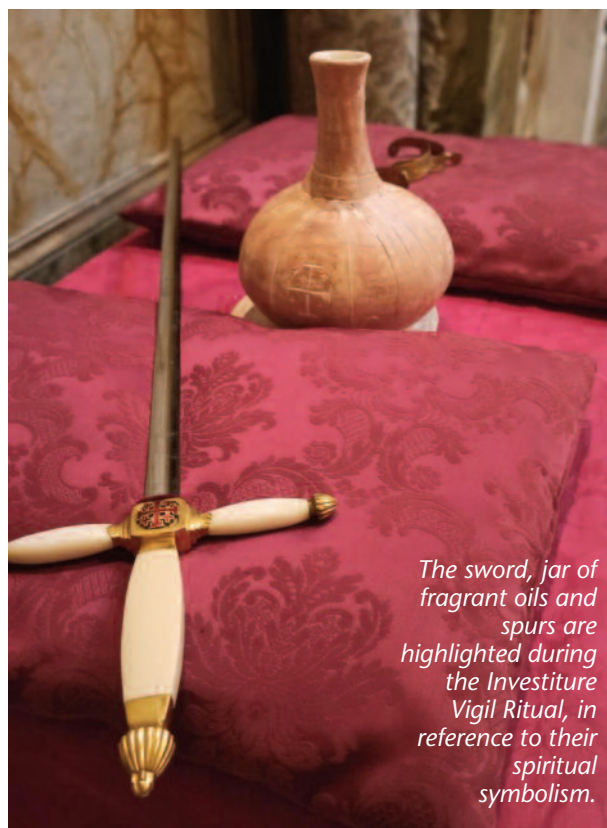
*Agnès Durand, Dame Commander of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy*

“I would like to begin by expressing my greatest gratitude and thanks to the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, for the introduction of the jar of perfumed oils in the rite of ceremony for the Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

The Grand Master’s decision to introduce this powerful symbol for the Dames is an immense gift. The experience of holding it in my hands and passing it on to the new Dames of our Order is unforgettable.

The act of holding this jar in their hands, helps each Dame to experience, in a special and unique way, the memory of the gesture of the first women who loved Christ and who had brought the jars of fragrant oil and aromas to prepare His Body in the tomb. They found the tomb empty; Christ is risen! It is the foundation of our faith. It is this resurrection that gives power to our life and is the reason for the existence of our Order.

The Lord gave me the grace to be chosen by the Lieutenant for Central Italy, Anna Maria Munzi Iacoboni, to pass on this vessel to the new Dames last July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The whole time I held it in my



*The sword, jar of fragrant oils and spurs are highlighted during the Investiture Vigil Ritual, in reference to their spiritual symbolism.*

hand during the ceremony, my excitement was immense, and I felt questions and answers arise.

What does it mean for us Dames of the



Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre to remember and perpetuate what the first women did or to hold this jar in our hands? What do we put in this jar, for whom and why?

Firstly, the symbol of this jar allows those who hold it in their hands to ponder the power of Christ's resurrection in their daily lives as Catholics and especially as Dames.

We no longer fill the jar with oil and aromatics, but with our actions of charity, love of Christ, of others, of ourselves, summing up, the life that the Gospel asks us to follow.

Finally, this jar is also for us, because the tomb is empty, and the glorious Body of Christ needs neither perfumed oil nor aromatics. Instead, it is our mortal body that needs to prepare itself for the encounter with the Lord on the chosen day with what we will put into this vessel each day.

**“Blessings and graces are hidden in suffering. Learn how to bring them forth”**

The answer of why is in the intimate relationship each of us has with Christ. In my case, the answer is found in the painful circumstances the Lord chose to call me into the Order.

Coming from one of the poorest countries in the world and from a large family in which I am responsible for the needs of my brothers and sisters, I had no reason to enter the Order because already the concerns and expectations related to my family in Africa and my country are enormous. I know well that entering the Order is an honor for many people however, for me, it is a call to consolidate my faith and I believe that was why I received the jar in my hands.

It all started with the following premonitory quote, added to the end of a Christmas message sent to me by a religious friend: “Blessings and graces are hidden in suffering. Learn how to bring them forth.”

In my discouragement, the Lord revealed to me



*Agnès Durand with the jar of fragrant oils during the Investiture Vigil procession in Chieti.*



what faith allows me to understand, the path of my journey to find my answer.

Thus, my eyes were opened to find this answer on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, during a spiritual retreat of the members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, in Rome, during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The answer that was clearly revealed to me was on the page I was holding in my hands at the time, on the liturgy sheet of the day that had been distributed to us where it said, “Christ, who transfigures our mortal body to conform it to your glorious body, configure to the image of your glory our dead.”

The jar therefore reminds us why we need to prepare our body, Christ's temple, for the day of his transfiguration. The jar is really a gift for all those who understand the meaning of their belonging to the Order and the purpose of life on earth.

All these things are for me the confirmation and fulfillment of the beautiful quote enclosed in my friend's message.

May the Holy Spirit always descend upon Cardinal Fernando Filoni to guide us and upon each of us members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.”

# “May we all together become ever more luminous and credible witnesses of the light that invaded the earth at Easter”

*Homily by Archbishop Forte of Chieti-Vasto, in Chieti, September 16, 2022*



**D**ear Dames and Knights of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem!

The Word of God that has been proclaimed to us helps us to meditate on three relevant aspects of the spirituality that inspires your commitment in the Church and in society the witness of the hope that comes from God; the commitment of solidarity, which overcomes distances and creates communion; the “meditatio mortis” which, in the light of the abandonment of the crucified God and His victory over death, opens us to the prospect of eternal life, helping us to see in the pilgrimage to the Holy City a dense metaphor for the pilgrimage of life towards the Heavenly City, illuminated and promised in the resurrection of Jesus.

**To be “prisoners of hope” means never surrendering to the apparent victory of evil**

It is the text taken from the book of the prophet Zechariah (9:8-12; 16-17) that offers us an

extraordinary definition of the believer, guarded by the faithfulness of the God of the covenant: to the divine promise of the joy that overcomes pain and death - “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you;” - is followed by an invitation to return to the holy place - “Return to the citadel” - and to do so as “*prisoners of hope*”! How beautiful is this definition of those who believe in the living God: “prisoners of hope”! Yes: those who know that God is the Most High, alive and faithful to the covenant He freely established with us, cannot escape this sweet prison, which is precisely the greatest hope, the one that overcomes all trials and surpasses the boundaries of death. To be a “prisoner of hope” means never surrendering to the apparent victory of evil, because the good promised and guaranteed by the pact with the Eternal cannot be defeated and, despite everything, indeed even against everything, it will triumph in the end. The Knight



of the Holy Sepulchre knows that the empty tomb is the announcement and certain promise of the life that will conquer death: his gaze is illuminated by the light that comes from God, his heart is inhabited by the loving presence of the Eternal, his choices and his steps are unmistakable traces on the path that goes from time to eternity, along the road traced by the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, which from the earthly City leads to the Jerusalem of heaven, where God will be all in all and the whole world will be God's homeland. "What riches, what happiness!" the Prophet adds, moved by this daydream, speaking from the superabundance of the heart.

### **The power of charity poured into hearts by the Spirit of the Risen Lord**

The second reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (11:21-30), presents us with another fundamental inspirational line of the spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre: solidarity, charity, that is, concrete, humble and active. After telling us about the first Christians that "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord", the author of Acts lists a succession of events in which the love given to us by Christ becomes effective action: Barnabas comes from Jerusalem to Antioch and shows by

word and life the power of charity poured into hearts by the Spirit of the Risen Lord; "like the virtuous man he was and full of the Holy Spirit and faith" he does not hesitate to seek out Saul, marginalised by the others and who, thanks to the prophetic charity of his friend Barnabas, will become the singer in love with the Gospel of Jesus to the ends of the earth. Without sparing themselves, Barnabas and the new believer, Paul, instruct many and lead them to Christ with such passion and faith that 'in Antioch for the first time the disciples were called Christians'. Faced, then, with the terrible ordeal of famine, the community of disciples unhesitatingly organises "relief to the brethren living in Judea, each according to what he had": and the charity they live seals the credibility of the good news they proclaim, bringing to faith numerous hearts, reached by the light of the Lord. It is this active and courageous solidarity, capable of inventing every way to do good to those in need and in distress, that characterises the nascent

Church: and it is this same active and hard-working charity that must characterise the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, intent on making alive and relevant in their common and personal

*Group photo of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy during the Investiture celebrated in Chieti in September 2022.*



action the freshness of the Love crucified on the hill outside Jerusalem and which in the Lord's resurrection became light to enlighten the nations and glory for the people of God's elect.

### **"Love does not forgive death"**

Finally, the page from the Gospel according to Mark (15, 33-47; 16, 1-8) speaks to us: it describes with essential, dramatic and touching traits the hour of the death on the Cross of the Son of God who came among us, echoing the cry of the abandoned Lord - "Eloì, Eloì, lemà sabactàni?", - "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? -, which wrests from the Roman Centurion and from anyone who shares in that unheard-of pain, the words of a confession as unexpected as it is profound and sincere: "Truly this man was the Son of God!". We are then presented with the hard-working charity of the women, the ambiguity of Caesar's representative, the courageous piety of Joseph of Arimathea, who did not hesitate to ask for the body of Jesus, to take it down from the cross, to wrap it with the cloth and to place it in a

tomb hewn out of the rock, only to have a stone rolled at the entrance. It is known, however, that love does not forgive death: that is why, after the Sabbath, Mary of Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome buy aromatic oils to go and anoint the body of the Lord, abandoned to death. It is then that from a prison of death, that tomb becomes an aurora and source of life and the 'meditatio mortis' is converted into a commitment and passion for a new existence: the word of the Angel comes to them, which through their testimony speaks clearly to us as well: "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, *here is* the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you'." From that moment, those who are reached by Grace and open to divine action believe in the risen Lord, they seek him, they encounter him, they allow themselves to be grasped by him, they are filled with the joy of forgiveness and the strength of a love that overcomes evil and death. ■

## **Members of the Order and Living Witnesses of the Gospel**

*"Convinced and sincere ambassadors of Peace and Love"*

**Colombe de Boccard, Dame of Romande Switzerland Section of the Lieutenancy for Switzerland and Liechtenstein, describes the significance of her commitment to the Order for the readers of the *Jerusalem Cross***

**"I** had the great honour of taking part in the Investiture Ceremony of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

This celebration, as beautiful as it was solemn, moved me greatly. It gave concrete expression to my desire to serve the Church, the Holy Father, to support the Christians of the East and to cultivate my faith.

As I was pregnant with our second child at the time of the Investiture, this commitment had special significance for me. The kind support and attention of my friend Donata Krethlow-Benziger and my godfather Jean-Pierre de Glutz-Ruchti during this process were of great support. I am very grateful to them.

My husband is a Knight of the Order of Malta. Thus, through our involvement in these two Orders of the same Christian family, we wish to give a spiritual and charitable dimension to our lives. We also want to transmit these values to our children. It seems to me that the secular values cultivated by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre,





such as prudence, justice, courage, temperance, are more relevant than ever. They are the foundations of Christian morality and must be upheld in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With this commitment, I wish to help my neighbour and contribute, in my humble way, to peace in the Holy Land”.

\* \* \*

**Luca Montaner, 32, from the Diocese of Lugano, Switzerland, is a Knight of the Order. He recounts the mission of the Order’s members through his experience during the Investiture presided over by the Grand Master in Lugano in the spring of 2022**

“After two years during which the pandemic severely restricted the ordinary activities of the Lieutenancy for Switzerland and Liechtenstein, it was finally possible last Spring to organize the new Investitures without any health restrictions. It was deeply moving to once again gather together on a festive occasion: The Cathedral of San Lorenzo in Lugano, packed with so many sisters and brothers, will remain in the minds and hearts of the participants for a long time. It was an opportunity to touch and experience the family

*Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy for Switzerland, surround the Grand Master in Lugano in spring 2022.*

atmosphere of the Order first hand. This was also possible thanks to the presence of numerous international guests and the honor of being able to

welcome the Grand Master Cardinal Fernando Filoni and Governor General Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone to Ticino. Gathering around them and with them to pray together, to celebrate the new Dames and Knights allowed us to breathe that air of unity and communion that binds us to the Holy Father and the entire Church. As Dames and Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, we are called to be “convinced and sincere ambassadors of Peace and Love”; an important task, especially in these times that seem to have forgotten the principle of fraternity and the common good. Moments like the one we experienced in Lugano are precious, because they help us renew this promise of ours, shared with so many brothers and sisters in the faith, and rebuild those bonds of friendship based on charity, which are the foundations of our mission in the Church and in the World!”

# “Jerusalem at heart”

*Luca Rotili, pilgrimage guide and member of the Order, wrote his testimony for us during the return flight from the Holy Land to Rome: “The Church of Jerusalem continues to be the Mother Church, and the other Churches continue to owe a debt of gratitude to Jerusalem”*



“In 1992 Bishop Salvatore Boccaccio, bishop in Sabina, asked me in a polite but pressing manner to be a spiritual animator for groups of pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land. Before becoming bishop, Father Salvatore had been CEO of the *Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi*. I hesitated. I tried to oppose it. Imagine, I don’t even know where the Holy Land is... I thought to myself: so much to learn, to deepen, so much fatigue, sun, getting up in the morning... no, no, it’s not for me. He convinced me by firmly inviting me to go with him on a pilgrimage. On the evening of the first day I had a microphone in my hand, 50 people hanging on my every word and a fever of 38 from stress. Sharp memories. A blow to the heart, the roots, the charism, the life.

In twenty-six years I have accompanied some 250 groups of pilgrims in this incredible experience.

The Order arrived only some time later, again at the suggestion of Bishop Boccaccio... *you know Luca, I see your attention to the local community and I believe you express the full charism of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, perhaps*

*your activity could be amplified: think about it!*

On a warm Saturday in May 2000, in the splendid setting of the Cistercian Gothic Abbey of Casamari, I was clad in a heavy cloth cloak, yes heavy and warm, but... I truly felt it was part of me, my skin. Always.

Guiding so many people through this wonderful experience on a true journey leading to an encounter with the mystery of God, listening to

what the Holy Land has to tell us, was an incredible grace for me. It was meeting and touching the totally other in a special way: when one reads the Gospel one hears the Word that was made flesh in this land; when one enters into contact with the silence of the desert one hears the echo of the experience of Jesus drowned in the devilish temptations; when one walks the streets of the villages and towns, one puts one’s feet where the Lord put them; when one visits the shrines, one becomes a witness to the miracles that Christ performed there. When one arrives at the Holy Sepulchre one becomes a herald of his resurrection. The pilgrimage is a desire to retrace the story of Jesus, letting oneself be enchanted by the poetry and charm emanating from

*Luca Rotili states that the vocation of the Knights of the Order is to be witnesses of the resurrection.*





the streets of this land, from the crowded markets full of the smells of distant spices, from the silent deserts, the colors, the songs, the sound of quick steps along the alleys

But. Yes, that's right, but!

But the stones don't talk. That's right, stones do not speak!

It is the people who inhabit those stones that speak, they are the living stones!

The Church of Jerusalem continues to be the Mother Church and the debt of gratitude of the other Churches to Jerusalem remains. Today, then, support is necessary because the local Church in

the Middle East has no means, it certainly does not receive funding from the State. Nor can it expect support from the faithful, who are a religious minority within their own countries. A minority in need of help. So greatly in need of help!

It is a question for us, Knights and Dames, of witnessing to help pilgrims move from a simple economic contribution to a real "taking charge", beginning to compromise – also and above all through prayer – with the reality of those who live in the Holy Places.

Listening to *the silence of the stones*, I discovered the charism of the Order". ■

## “Dames have the same rights and duties as Knights”

*Teresa Maria Pitarch i Albós, Dame Commander, Member of the Council of the Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain, talks about the contribution of women to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre*

“**T**he Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem has long welcomed Dames in addition to Knights. More and more women are taking on their role in our Pontifical Institution, carrying out multiple activities.

To tell the story of the Dames of the Order, it is essential to begin by mentioning one very illustrious woman: Saint Helena. Driven by her devotion to the Holy Sepulchre, she went to Jerusalem in search of its location. To honour it, she ordered the erection of a sumptuous temple in honour of the Glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ, built on the mountain of Golgotha and the tomb of Christ.

She then established a chapter of canons - so called because of the 'canon', or rule, by which St Helena had organised the work and duties of these religious men. For the safekeeping and



preservation of the Holy Sepulchre, the religious were assisted by a number of lay brothers, who, as a distinctive sign, were given a cross made of five red crosses, in memory of the five wounds of Our Lord.

However, to know how the “Most Illustrious Noble Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem” came into being, we must travel back in time. It was only with the Apostolic Brief of Pope Pius IX (1868) that the interest of the Dames in

collaborating in the missionary works of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem became apparent.

It is at this point in history that the name of our first Dame appears, Countess Maria Francisca Lomax, who went to see Monsignor Valerga eager to obtain information about the Order in order to make it known to her entourage.

In reality, the real reason for her visit was to ask him if he could confer on her the honour of being able to wear the medal of the Holy Sepulchre, as custodian of the works of the Patriarchate, knowing that women could receive this type of honour.

At the Patriarch's refusal, this persevering Dame

requested a private audience with His Holiness to ask for the medal of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The Holy Father agreed to grant it to her, confirming her right to wear it as Dame Guardian of the Order.

Countess Lomax was the first name to appear in the Order's Book, opening the Chapter of Dames on April 15, 1871.

Later, after being appointed Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Bracco appointed a second Dame, Duchess Rosina di Lesignano. Later, Catherine Theresia Berthet de Flahaul, of French origin, and Theresia Cristina Maria, Empress of Brazil, were also appointed Dames.

Bishop Bracco's role was fundamental in the process of recognising the mission of the Dames. He proposed to His Holiness to create a special branch of the Order for those Dames who were committed to praying and loving the holy relic and who had the interests of the Holy Land at heart. As a reward, they would receive the insignia of the Order and the title of Noble Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre.

The successor of Pius IX, Pope Leo XIII, the sovereign head of the Order, gave final approval to the Dames in his Apostolic Letter *Venerabilis Fratre Vicentius*, in the form of an Apostolic Brief, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1888.

Thus, 136 years ago, a

*The presence of women in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre dates back to the time of Pope Leo XIII. Currently, women represent about one-third of the Order's members worldwide.*

number of Dames from various countries of the world began to play a decisive role in the Holy Land. Today, the Dames make up about one third of our members and work with great diligence and participation in our Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations. In addition, many of the Order's peripheral structures are now led by women.

They are promoters of numerous actions and, just as the women who were present at the resurrection of Christ announced the good news, they play a fundamental role.

The Dames have the same rights and duties as the Knights. It is exactly the same. Witnessing to their faith and responding to the needs of the Order and its members is part of their personal commitment. This commitment implies great generosity in the use of their resources, skills, influence and energy in the service of others.

But it is particularly worth emphasising all the work done by the Dames, through prayer and action, to promote peaceful coexistence between all the peoples of the Holy Land. Providing spiritual, moral and material support through their participation in aid projects in the Holy Land, following the example of the first Dames.

Contributing to the financial support of the religious, charitable, cultural and social institutions and activities of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land is and always will be one of the priorities of the Dames of our Lieutenancy.

The solidarity of our Dames, exercised through the various proposals and activities within the Order, especially with the women of the Holy Land who are in need and deprived of the means to defend themselves and their rights, has become one of the special functions of the Order.

But we still have many challenges to face. We must do all we can to ensure that new Dames have the desire to join us, committed and involved women who can help us give all the support we need to achieve recognition, respect for the dignity and human rights of individuals, especially freedom of religion and worship and equality before the law, for all the inhabitants of the Holy Land.

May Saint Helena, august and tenacious Dame, enlighten us and protect us so that we may continue our work in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem with perseverance". ■





# A beautiful family experience

*A young Knight, a member of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy, introduced his father to the Order, leading to his later joining. In this two voice interview, the father and son share their experience with the Jerusalem Cross readers*

**C**arlo Maria Basile, how did you get to know the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and what attracted you and prompted you to consider joining it?

I joined the Order in November 2017 and the choice was fully shared by both my father, a retired Chief Magistrate, and my mother, an official of the Lazio Region in fact, I have always been close to the ecclesiastical institutions, a contiguity that comes, I might say, from my family's DNA. Over a hundred years ago, my grandfather founded a 'Pia Unione' ('Pious Union') in Palermo, which carried out, and still does today, assistance in one of the poorest neighborhoods of the city. He is today commemorated by a memorial plaque in the ancient church of Sant'Isidoro Agricola, where an evocative procession, sponsored by the Diocese and the Municipality of Palermo, is still celebrated with votive icons donated by my family over more than a century.

I knew about the existence and aims of the Order from 'outside' but not its intense activity in the Holy Land. A colleague and friend, already invested as a Knight, gave me the opportunity to get to know the Order 'up close', so to speak, by participating, at the 'St. Matthew's' Delegation in Rome, in the interesting meetings held there with experts in the Holy Land, both lay people and clergy. What struck me most was the combination of tradition and the relevance of the Order's aims, which translate into incisive interventions, such as building schools, hospitals, supporting the poorest families, and thus into concrete help for these tormented peoples. All this prompted me to consider joining.

**Can you share a significant experience you had after your Investiture as a Knight?**

The most significant experience after my Investiture was undoubtedly the trip to the Holy



*Carlo Maria Basile was born in Rome in 1989, he graduated in Law at the University of Pisa and currently lives and works in Viterbo. He joined the Order in December 2017. Benedetto Basile was born in Palermo in 1948, he graduated in Law in Palermo and currently lives in Rome. Retired Chief Magistrate he joined the Order in February 2020.*

Land, which made me understand the difficulties of everyday life in those places and at the same time the need to live in communion in a land sacred to all the religious communities there. I also

understood the essence of that place, which cannot be fully understood just by reading or following the relevant reports in the various media. I went on this

trip together with my parents and this meant that within my family we were able to discuss these issues, having more time there than in Rome. It was an experience that gave me a spiritually and humanly rewarding awareness.

**Benedetto Basile, the call to be a Knight of the Order is also part of a dimension of communicating and sharing faith and the great gift of living first-hand the support of the Land of Jesus: what was it like in your family experience? Can you tell us how you approached this experience?**

Born in Palermo, my profession, as a magistrate, meant that I had to travel frequently throughout the country, limiting the moments of sharing within family life. Having reached the age for retirement, it was possible for us to increase the 'sharing' of faith, as well as the 'communication' of the same, and it was precisely at that time that I came to know and began to attend the Order, thanks to my son Carlo who had recently joined it. The interest in this way of living the faith arose immediately, but it was the trip to the Holy Land,

*Charles Mary and his father Benedict, welcomed at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem with pilgrims from the Lieutenancy for Central Italy.*

made together with my wife and my son who had already been invested Knight, with the reflections made there, that strengthened my resolve. It was my own son Carlo who 'introduced' me on the occasion of my request for admission to the Order. This seemed a very nice thing to both of us, considering that usually the opposite happens. My wife is not a member of the Order but she is very close to it, following with me the various meetings and testimonies promoted by it.

**Do you think that within your family life, there is some level of sharing that has been added thanks to this common choice to join the Order?**

Within our family dimension, the spirit that inspires the principles of the Order has always been there and comes to us, as I have already mentioned, from past generations, but being part of it has increased the level. This is an 'added value' of which we have taken note. We have found in the Order a motivation and a drive that has given a new impetus to our reflections on the faith, due above all to our now deeper knowledge of the Holy Land. This was also possible thanks to the numerous moments of participation in the meetings promoted by our Delegation. Nor should we underestimate the convivial moments, which

also represent an opportunity for the brothers and sisters to meet, where in a more informal, and no less fruitful manner, they can exchange views. All this, which already has an intrinsic value in itself, becomes "special" when experienced as a family, increasing cohesion and human and spiritual sharing.



**Interview by  
Elena Dini**



# Promoting an atmosphere of joy and brotherhood during the Investiture ceremonies

*The following are the main excerpts from a testimony that the Lieutenant for Malta, Roberto Buontempo, kindly sent us on the Investiture Ceremony he organised in 2022*



“In 2022 the Lieutenancy for Malta finally reached its 100th member. Six Knights, four Ladies and a clergyman were invested and are now part of this growing family. The Maltese reality has shown that, even during the pandemic, the number of faithful interested in the Order has increased rather than decreased [...].

The pomp and ceremony is important, but by itself it means nothing. On the contrary, I believe that pomp alone creates a kind of boundary that separates the simple believer from those who think they are important because they become a Knight or Dame.

We care about promoting an atmosphere of joy and fraternity [...]. Furthermore, we are keen to emphasize the ecumenical dimension, and every year I invite leaders of other Christian denominations... Who knows, maybe next year we will also invite the Imam!

We do not organize dinners after the Vigil,

*Lieutenant Buontempo (to the right of the Archbishop of Malta), along with several other Lieutenants and the Order's Treasurer, Saverio Petrillo, during the celebration held in Malta.*

because we prefer the atmosphere to remain as sober as possible. In fact, we offer refreshments - a standing buffet - so that everyone, from the oldest and most decorated to the newcomers, can mingle, feel fully part of the same

community and exchange experiences in a much smoother way than they would during a dinner.

Later, at the convivial lunch after the Investiture Ceremony, we wanted to give everyone the opportunity to have a foreign lieutenant or representative at their table, which would show the openness of our lieutenancy to the universal dimension of the Order, which reflects that of the Church of which we are first and foremost members [...].”

**Roberto Buontempo**

# The family dimension of a priest's life in the Order

*Testimony of  
Father Vincent  
Comte, Prior of  
the Languedoc  
Saint-Roch  
Delegation and  
Prior of the  
Montpellier  
Saint-Gilles  
Section of the  
Order's  
Lieutenancy for  
France*



In my role as Regional Prior in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, I also serve as Prior of one of the Delegations, which means that my experience has an authentic family dimension.

One of the Knights and his wife regularly and frequently welcome me to their table. These are privileged moments of exchange, and I would say also of spiritual communion. This also means sometimes cycling together while praying the rosary for the Order or praying the rosary while cycling together. The result is the same, sometimes to the amazement of those who hear us as we pass on the cycle path! The support of other families in the Order is also precious to me. It is about concrete friendship and true fraternity.

Of course, regular meetings, with Mass that I preside over, when possible, the study of chosen themes and topics, in-depth discussions, and meals, all contribute to this family dimension.

Priests, and perhaps particularly those who do not live in community, need this kind of relational

life and moreover, quite often can contribute to it.

What can we say then about the experience of being on pilgrimage! I have experienced it and am still experiencing it. It is a privileged time and even, let us not fear the term, a time of communion. I am sure that all my readers will agree with me and that in this sense I am throwing open an already open door. I simply wanted to insist on how important it is, even for the priest, that he accompany and be accompanied fraternally.

The family dimension of the life of a priest in the Order, of my life as a priest in the Order, is also manifested among priests. It is an essentially fraternal relationship, which can have filial and paternal overtones. We can live this in the various moments when we meet, however fleeting they may be.

Yes, in the Order we truly live under the banner of this word of Jesus: "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Mt 12:50) ■



## More artistic marvels of Palazzo della Rovere

*In the Palazzo della Rovere, headquarter of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, attention and wonder focus on the famous ceiling of the Demigods, unique in subject and technique. It is logical that this should be so. But this should not make us forget the rest, as Furio Rinaldi, curator of the Department of Drawings and Prints at the San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts, rightly points out in a detailed and well-documented study published in Burlington Magazine in September 2022*



In the summer of 2021, the San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts acquired a pen drawing by Pinturicchio of great interest, both because it is one of the very rare drawings by the artist that is known, but especially because it depicts St. Matthew from one of the fresco lunettes in the Hall of the Prophets in the Palazzo della Rovere.

The painting depicts him in a half-length pose, while the drawing shows the full figure of the evangelist with a robe of large, voluminous drapery and adds two angels at his sides. The one on the left is kneeling with joined hands and gazing at the saint, while the other seems to be arriving, transfixed, carrying a book on his head to add to

*The lunette depicting St. Matthew in the Palazzo della Rovere was painted by Pinturicchio.*

the numerous others piled at St. Matthew's feet.

This detail does not refer directly to the Evangelist but rather to Cardinal della Rovere, a scholar and bibliophile, who could boast, according to

tradition, of a collection of hundreds of volumes. What definitively links the drawing to the lunette, besides the similarity of the faces, is the frieze at the bottom, with a grotesque motif and, in the centre, the della Rovere coat of arms.

The cardinal's library, adjacent to his private flat, could thus be identified with the room of the



Apostles and Prophets, all intent on writing or reading from the scrolls of ancient texts.

Moreover, the glazed ceramic lunette by Benedetto da Maiano inside the sacristy dedicated to St. Matthew in the Basilica of Loreto has the same figurative layout, and at the base a frieze similar to that of Pinturicchio's drawing, with the coat of arms in the

*Pinturicchio's drawing purchased by the San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts is one of the few known drawings by the artist.*

center and acanthus swirls instead of grotesques. These were years of important restoration work at the Basilica, whose patron saint was a cousin of Domenico della Rovere, the bishop of Recanati, Girolamo Basso della Rovere.

The three images of the same saint would therefore have a common inspiration, and the drawing acquired by the San Francisco Museum would confirm, beyond any doubt, that the fresco lunette in the Hall of the Apostles and Prophets must be attributed to Pinturicchio, the "little painter" Bernardino di Betto, who, to use Furio Rinaldi's definition, together with Perugino and Raphael forms the trio of great artists from Central Italy who illuminated the late 15<sup>th</sup> century with their talent.

The lunette was visited on 27 October 2022 by thirty American art enthusiasts who came to Italy expressly to admire the works of 15<sup>th</sup> century Italy, guided by Furio Rinaldi himself, and admired not only by the works of Pinturicchio but also by the charitable mission of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

**Leonardo Visconti di Modrone**  
Governor General

## The book by the Grand Magisterium on the Palazzo della Rovere

(Available in Italian, in English and soon in French)

**P**refaced by His Most Reverend Eminence, the Cardinal Grand Master, and edited by the Office of External Relations in collaboration with the Communication Service, this book contains introductory texts by Lieutenant General Agostino Borromeo and Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, as well as a complete historical-artistic description of the Palace by the art historian Maria Cristina di Chio. The texts are accompanied by extensive photographic documentation, both on the frescoes and the works of art that are in the halls of the Palace, and on the main events of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem that have taken place in recent years. The book also includes a brief report by the "Special Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Rome" on recent discoveries in the city's subsoil, dating from the Imperial period and the Lower Middle Ages. For more information, Lieutenancies can send a message to: [relazioniesterne@oessh.va](mailto:relazioniesterne@oessh.va)





# Barbiconi

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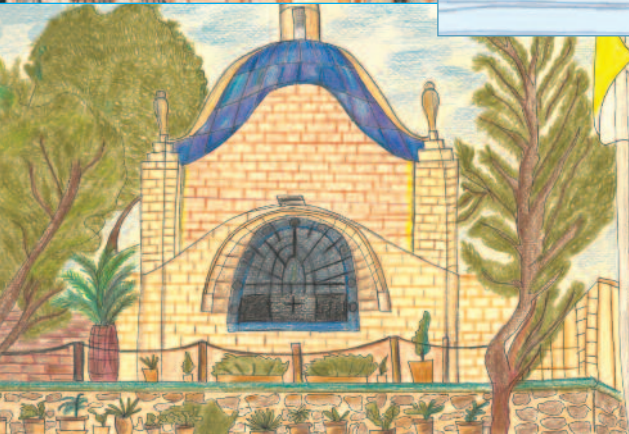
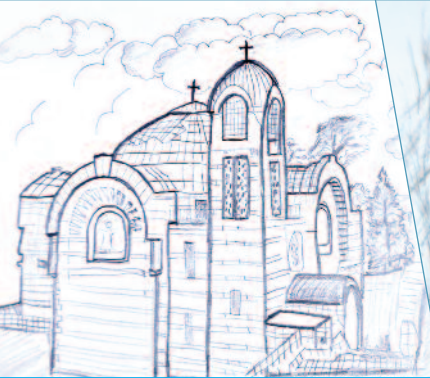
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