



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The call to nourish the Order's spiritual life

Reflection of the Grand Master



Pastores Dabo Vobis, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien's motto, recalls God's promise as recounted by the prophet Jeremiah: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (Jer 3:15).

All of us are quite familiar with the opening foundational statement in Article 2 of our Statutes declaring the principal purpose of membership in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre: "...to strengthen in its members the practice of Christian life, in absolute fidelity to the Supreme Pontiff and according to the teachings of the Church...."

According to our records 7.3% of our membership are ecclesiastics – that is, overwhelming, priests. (Individual lieutenancies vary significantly in their percentage of priest members.) It is my solid impression that our priests could be more effectively employed in fulfilling our members' goal to achieve personal holiness and I would ask our Lieutenants and Priors to help bring this about.

Indeed, we might stress our clergy serving more as chaplains than as "knights". I've no doubt that the great majority of our priests would take to the pastoral challenge of serving members at every level and in every area of our lieutenancies in spiritual support:

liturgical planning and advise;

individual spiritual direction; availability for Reconciliation in connection with liturgies;

conferences for members and for prospective members/members in formation;

assistance in identifying worthy new members;

organized outreach to "inactive" members;

newsletter meditations.

This would imply three steps for each Lieutenant and Staff:

Having familiarity with each priest member and specific knowledge both of his willingness to assist and in which of the above areas he might be of service;

Making it clear to each incoming ecclesiastical member that in joining the Order he is assuming important spiritual and pastoral responsibilities to the extent he is able;

Informing members of the resources our "Knight Chaplains" offer them.

As I mentioned during our Spring meeting of European and North American Lieutenants, there is vast potential here for the spiritual strengthening throughout our Order.

To ecclesiastics already so engaged: Thank you!

To those not yet so engaged: Help Wanted!

Edwin Cardinal O'Brien

(July 29, 2016)