



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Statement of the Grand Master on closing of Holy Sepulchre



Dear Knights and Dames, Brothers and Sisters in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem:

The events of recent days in Jerusalem are alarming and merit the special attention of our Order.

In a rare and desperate initiative to keep Christian life alive in the Holy Land, Christian Churches leaders have decided to close the doors the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to protest the Municipality of Jerusalem's "Systematic campaign against the churches and the Christian community in the Holy Land."

Betraying international treaties and centuries of practice, all Christian properties, except churches themselves, are being taxed tens of billions of dollars. This includes hundreds of agencies, including Christian schools, hospitals, homes for the needy, health care facilities, and pilgrimage centers such as the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem. Many church assets are being frozen, fines threatened, and hundreds of thousands of dollars seized from Christian churches in an effort that will severely curtail Christian freedom of practice. These are acts of unprecedented discrimination against Christians.

I encourage all our Lieutenancies' members to offer prayers in light of this further evidence of Christian discrimination. And at a time when Western governments tend to show special favor to Jerusalem, members might bring these anti-Christian discriminatory actions to the attention of government leaders.

Edwin Cardinal O'Brien

Grand Master

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

(February 26, 2018)