



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

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## Msgr. Pizzaballa thanks the Order



In these four years of service to the Latin diocese of Jerusalem, in the Latin Patriarchate, I have been able to personally ascertain the role of the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre for this Church, not only in the context of educational and pastoral activities, but in general for the life of the diocese as a whole.

Four years ago, at a particularly difficult moment for the Patriarchate, the Knights and Dames - through the Grand Magisterium – showed their solidarity and closeness by encouraging and also concretely supporting the processes of revision and control of the administrative life of the diocese, which had become urgent and necessary.

During these four years, through pilgrimages and with initiatives in their respective territories, the various Lieutenancies have nurtured their bonds with the various realities of the Latin Patriarchate, not only in words but also with tangible facts.

All of this has been reconfirmed in this last year marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and during which the Patriarchate found itself facing a new emergency, just as we had believed our situation to be improving. As a result of the measures decided by the various governments to tackle the pandemic, in fact, a large part of our population found itself facing a drastic cut in wages, and a general economic situation even more fragile than usual.

Thanks to the support of the Grand Master with the Grand Magisterium, our appeal to the Knights and Dames had a response that went far beyond our expectations and that gave us the necessary

breathing space to manage this emergency with greater serenity. We were all amazed and humbled by the immediate response and its scope.

2020 was also the year that, despite the many emergencies, nevertheless marked the end of a tiring path of restructuring and resolution of difficult pre-existing situations. The large debt which the Patriarchate owed to the Saint John the Baptist foundation, linked to the University of Madaba, has been fully repaid. This has reduced the overall debts that burdened the Patriarchate administration by almost 60%. It was possible thanks to the painful relinquishing of some property, which however, was not essential for the Patriarchate. We now have a structured plan to conclude the remaining commitments soon as well.

Much remains to be done, but we are now at the end of a positive path for the life of the diocese of Jerusalem.

I wish to thank the Grand Master, both the current one and his predecessor, for their support and encouragement; through them, our thanks extends to the whole Order of Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, without whom all that we have accomplished to date would have been impossible.

Thank you for being, for this small but important Church, the concrete and tangible sign of Divine Providence!

**+ Pierbattista**

*(October 2020)*