



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

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

Mary, Queen of Palestine, model of faithfulness to the Word of God



**The Grand Magisterium, the Dames and Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, joined the faithful of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Palestine, patron of the Patriarchate and patron of our Equestrian Order. For this occasion, Msgr. Antonio Franco, Assessor of the Order, had the desire to write a meditation to aid our prayer.**

This feast is for us all a precious chance to take a pause in the contemplation of Mary, humble child of Nazareth who, at the announcement of the angel, commits herself without hesitation to the divine plan of Salvation: “I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to your word,” (Lk 1:38) and **sets off straight away on the path, past Galilee, Samaria and Judea**, to see her cousin Elizabeth who, at an elderly age, is also expecting a child: She is a servant of the Lord, attentive to those who are in need, like at Cana in Galilee (Jn 2:1-11)! And we follow her through all the stages of the life of Jesus, from Bethlehem to Calvary, which is intimately part of the events that she keeps in her heart in order to grasp the deeper meaning (cf Lk 2: 19-51), in an evermore heightened understanding, of the plan of God which he reveals in the Son and also in **her faithfulness to the specific mission as Mother**, who at the foot of the cross, sees it extended to all humanity.

We are sure that **today**, as servant of the Lord, faithful virgin, mother of mercy, **she has a particularly attentive regard for the inhabitants of the lands in which she travelled whilst following her son**, these people who hunger and thirst for peace! We are equally sure that today, Mary has a particularly attentive regard for us, Dames and Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, who have welcomed the mission to contribute to keeping alive the historical memory and the presence of Christ in these lands.

**Mary invites us to follow her example:** to grow in the understanding of our Christian identity and in our specific mission as Dames and Knights in relation to the Holy Land and more generally the whole region; theatre for the story of salvation, performed by Christ and actualised by the ministry of his Church. She is on our path, radiant as model of faithfulness to the Word of God and motherly concern for those who are in need. She invites us to be **agents of peace in a region tormented** by violence, through our commitment to active solidarity, and we plead with her to call upon her divine Son for peace in Jerusalem, for the Holy Land, for the Middle East, for the whole world, this peace which is born in the heart and which makes us feel like brothers and sisters, without distinguishing between race or religion.

**+ Antonio Franco**

**Assessor**

*(October 25, 2016)*