

EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY
SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

COMPENDIUM

*Ecclesiastics in the Equestrian Order of
the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*



ORDO EQUESTRIS
SANCTI SEPULCRI
HIEROSOLYMITANI

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To the Most Eminent / Most Excellent Grand Priors and Prior Bishops
To the Reverend Ecclesiastical Members of the Order
To Their Excellencies the Lieutenants
To the Magistral Delegates

We are pleased to submit the attached Compendium for your consideration. This Document is the fruit of a reflection on the role Ecclesiastics who belong to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem are called to fulfill.

The Document is intended to serve as a set of guidelines to ensure uniformity of conduct, while respecting established traditions.

Each Lieutenant and Magistral Delegate is requested to forward a copy to the Ecclesiastics within their respective territories of competence (Bishops and Priests), so that they too may derive fruitful benefit from the information herein.

As may be noted, this is a brief document presented in six languages; however, the Italian text remains the reference version.

The Compendium, which bears the date of the Nativity of Our Lord, is - for the time being - approved *ad biennium*. During this two-year period, brief observations concerning the text may be submitted to the Grand Magisterium.

We are grateful to all those who have generously contributed to the production of the Compendium.

Leonardo Visconti di Modrone
Governor General

Fernando Cardinal Filoni
Grand Master

INTRODUCTION

This “Compendium” was created to bring together all those documents that, in a scattered way, deal with the presence and activities of clergy within the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. In truth, therefore, there is nothing new here. Nevertheless, during meetings with Bishops, Priests, and Deacons who are approaching the Order, there are many who ask for “guidance”, who are unfamiliar with the Order itself, with the role of ecclesiastics in a lay chivalric Order, or even with its place within the Church.

The Compendium text is not long though it is intended, it is hoped, to respond - at least in a straightforward fashion - to the needs of ecclesiastical or religious Knights, religious Dames, and those who are interested.

All Lieutenants and those in positions of authority are encouraged to make the Compendium known to the clergy who are about to join the Order, to the Bishops of the dioceses where Knights and Dames are present, and to the ecclesiastics who are already members.

+ Fernando Cardinal Filoni
Grand Master

THE ECCLESIASTICS AND THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

A Brief History

1. The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is a Chivalric Institution approved by the Apostolic See and acts as a Central Entity of the Catholic Church (Constitution, art. 2).

2. The Order has ancient roots that can be traced back to the custom by which brave men sought to be invested as Knights at the Tomb of the Risen Christ. On July 24, 1847, with the Apostolic Letter *Nulla Celebrior*, Pope Pius IX reorganized the Order as a true *Chivalric Order*. He also entrusted it with the support of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which had likewise been restored after the agreement with the Ottoman Empire. The Patriarchate's jurisdiction then covered Palestine (today Israel, Palestine and Jordan) and Cyprus; concurrently the Pope appointed Monsignor Giuseppe Valerga (1850) as the first Patriarch with the mission of establishing a local Church, opening a seminary (Beit Jala), forming a clergy, founding parishes, and setting up charitable and educational institutions.

3. The questions most often asked are the following: is the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem a lay chivalric Order? Why are there ecclesiastics, religious men, and religious

women included? And, what is their role?

4. Before answering these questions, it should be noted that as early as 1888, Leo XIII wished to include the presence of women in the Order as *Dames*, thus going beyond the traditional concept of knighthood reserved to men. At a time when the Pope had recently lost the territoriality of the Papal State, he turned his attention to the universal mission of the Roman Pontiff. He immediately realized that the supreme authority of the Church, which had been freed from temporal burdens, should concern herself with matters of faith, morals, and pastoral care; and address social realities (such as the industrial transformations from the late 19th to the early 20th century), as well as issues of peace and relations among peoples. The mission of the Order within the Church therefore required the participation and collaboration not only of generous men but also of women who wished to join. These women brought with them both the wealth of their generosity and their sensitivity. In fact, they were not unlike those who, as the Gospels recount, accompanied the Master through Palestine and welcomed Him into their homes.

5. When Pius IX revised the faculty of a Knights Investiture, hitherto exercised by the Custody of the Franciscans of the Holy Land, he entrusted it to the Latin Patriarch as the supreme diocesan authority. Later on, in 1907, another Pontiff, Pius X, placed the Order under the protection of the Holy See, while reserving for himself and his successors

the title of Grand Master and whom assume the office of Investitures exercised by the Latin Patriarch. In 1940, Pius XII gave the Order a Cardinal Patron and subsequently, in 1949, entrusted the title of Grand Master to a Cardinal, with the duty of creating new Knights and Dames, which continues to this day.

Nature of the Order

6. The Supreme Pontiffs have repeatedly emphasized that the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is not a philanthropic entity. In other words, it is not simply destined to promote the material and social improvement of its beneficiaries. Instead, and above all, it must foster the spiritual growth of its members through formative programs. These programs include the love of prayer, meditation on the Sacred Scriptures, and a deepening of the Church's doctrine and of religious culture, particularly Christian. Special reference is made to the Holy Land and to the ecumenical and interreligious mission of Jerusalem. From all this derives the highest service to the Holy Land: namely, education (schools and universities) and charity (support for poor Catholic families, assistance to homes for the elderly, the disabled, children in difficulty, the unemployed of the Christian communities, and refugees) (cf. [Address of Pope Francis to Members of the Consulta of the Order](#), 16 November 2018).

7. The Order, consequently, operates as a Central

Entity of the Catholic Church, has moral and juridical personality, and – under both canon law (CIC, can. 113) and Vatican civil law – it is a subject of rights and obligations corresponding to its own nature. In the Pontifical Yearbook it is placed among the Equestrian Orders, enjoying the special protection of the Apostolic See

8. Therefore, in order for the Order to achieve its purposes, it has its own governance, maintains full communion with the Roman Pontiff and the entire Church (CIC, can. 204), remains faithful to the Magisterium, erects and directs its own institutions, and is able to own and administer the assets at its disposal according to Church law and of the Countries' judiciary in which it is present.

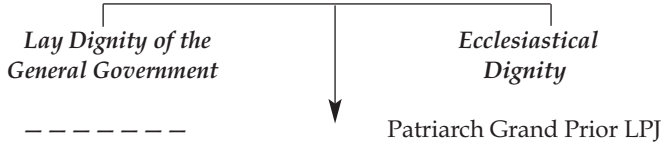
Structure of the Order (Constitution of 2020)

9. Within the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem there are two distinct Classes: the clerical and the lay, each with its own responsibilities, directed toward the pursuit of the same aims.

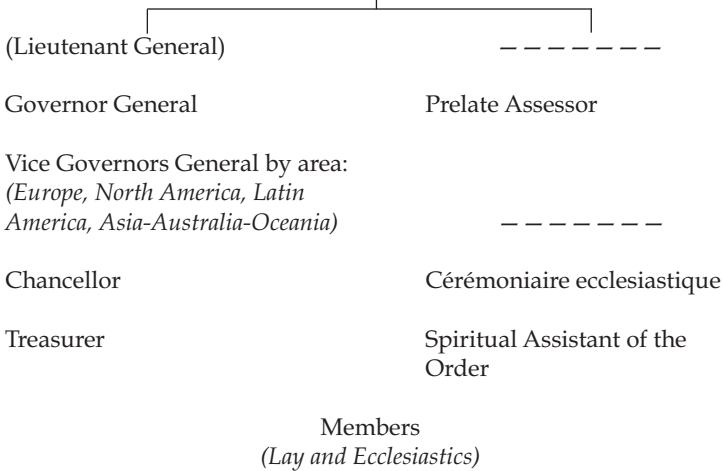
10. Schematically, the two Classes may be represented as follows:

CENTRAL ORGANIZATION

Cardinal Grand Master



Grand Magisterium
(Governing Body)



TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

(Lieutenancy or Magistral Delegation)

<i>Lay Dignity of territorial Government</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical Dignity</i>
-----	Patriarch Grand Prior <i>(in the Patriarchate)</i>
Lieutenants and Magistral Delegates	Grand Priors <i>(Cardinals, Bishops or equivalent)</i>
Section Presidents	Section Priors <i>(Bishops or other clerics)</i>
Local Delegates	Local Delegation Priors <i>(Ecclesiastics)</i>

Government of the Lieutenancy or of the Magistral Delegation

Council of the Lieutenancy or Delegation

(Lay and Ecclesiastics)

Chancellor	-----
Treasurer	-----
Secretary	-----

Members

(Lay, Ecclesiastics and Religious)

Government of Sections and Local Delegations

Council of the Section and Delegation

(Lay and Ecclesiastics)

Members

(Lay, Ecclesiastics and Religious)

11. Respect for the two Dignities is fundamental in the life of the Order. This implies not only the significant consideration to be given to the role of

the laity and that of the ecclesiastics, but also the need for a positive mutual collaboration, which avoids any form of predominance of one side over the other within the Institution.

12. It should be borne in mind that the General and Territorial Governance of the Order (Governor General and Lieutenants - Constitution, arts. 8-14) pertains to the laity, whereas the pastoral and spiritual care belongs to the Ecclesiastical Dignitaries (Grand Priors and Priors), who offer counsel to the Lay Dignities. In accordance with the Constitution and the General Regulations, the latter will ordinarily consult them especially in matters that require their specific opinion.

ADMISSION OF ECCLESIASTICS

The value and meaning of their inclusion

13. By way of analogy, I am pleased to recall here an expression of Saint Augustine who, in relation to the Apostle Peter, wrote that on the human level he was but a man, on the level of grace he was certainly a Christian, but on the level of Office he was the one and the same Prince of the Apostles (from the *Tractates on the Gospel of John*). By analogy, one could say that an ecclesiastic, on the human level as a Christian, is among those who may aspire to belong to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and share in its aims. On the level of the ministry entrusted to him, he is called to foster the spiritual growth of the Order's Members. The primary purpose of the Pontifical Institution is the holiness of each member. This goes together with love for the Land of Jesus and the Mother Church of Jerusalem, and with participation in the needs of their own local Churches, *our Mothers* in the generation of grace (institutional tripod).

14. Belonging to the Order therefore concerns, first and foremost, the lay faithful, both men and women, and is open to the clergy (be they Bishops, Priests and/or Deacons), especially those who are committed to fostering spiritual growth, progress and participation in the apostolate (cf. Constitution, Preamble).

15. Every cleric who enters the Order must always have the consent of his own Ordinary and be willing to undertake the task of spiritually forming the Knights and Dames in the territory of his competence. As stated in the *Formation Document* (Nos. 79–80–81), clergy, religious men and women who wish to enter the Order are also recommended to **(a)** know the spirituality of the Order; **(b)** know the Order as an Institution (Constitution and Regulations), as well as its history and present reality; and **(c)** to be willing to serve the Order according to the indications received from the Popes and the Grand Master, the Grand Magisterium and the local ecclesiastical and lay authorities. The formation of members, lay and ecclesiastical, was the topic of the 2023 Consulta (in which all the Lieutenants with the Grand Magisterium, and for the first time the Grand Priors – 22 Cardinals and Bishops – took part). In the Audience granted to them, the Supreme Pontiff, reaffirmed the importance of a formation that was “necessary for candidates [...]; an ongoing formation for those who already participate in its life and mission; and furthermore, the formation of those who are called to hold roles of responsibility, [...] in the awareness of the high moral commitment assumed before the Altar”. (FRANCIS, Address to the Participants in the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, 9 November 2023).

16. On a separate occasion, the Pope explained the admission of Bishops, Priests and Deacons into

the Order of the Holy Sepulchre as, “it is part of their duties of pastoral service to assist those among you who have a role of responsibility” (FRANCIS, Address to Members of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, 16 November 2018).

17. These are clear words that encapsulate not only the meaning of admission and the role of the ecclesiastics in our Order. To belong to our Order, in all honesty, is a very high *honour*, since that *empty Sepulchre* and the *Cross* enhanced upon our insignia are a sign of the boundless love of the Crucified and of that *Mother Church* to whom we are all indebted (through faith and grace). In addition, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, the *Mother Church* urges us to come to the aid of the “Saints” in Jerusalem (cf. *1 Cor* 16:3). We cannot allow the places of Jesus’ life today to be deprived of the presence of Christian communities, that is, of the *Mystical Body* of Christ, nor that the Holy Land be reduced to functioning as an archaeological museum of the faith and its Holy Places turned into tourist attractions.

18. In his 2023 Address, Pope Francis said that the Order, as understood by the Popes and the current Constitution, has a “*universal outlook*” then added; “*you are called to be an Order that, strong in its own identity, participates in the mystery of charity in the most beautiful way, open and available, ready to take on those services that the Lord requires through the needs of our brothers and sisters: from the education of children in*

schools to concrete solidarity with the most fragile categories, such as the elderly, the sick, and refugees” (ibid.).

19. In this way, participation in pilgrimages to the Holy Land not only brings to life that reality which we share with Jews and Muslims, but also becomes an occasion to know the divine Revelation more deeply, and awaken in us a faith which all too often grows lukewarm. We would like, then, to touch Christ as the unbelieving Thomas did, or, alternatively, like Francis of Assisi who, as a pilgrim to the Holy Places, said he wished to perceive the words of Jesus, follow his footsteps, grasp the fascination of the mystery of divine life, and contemplate the Lord’s passion, death and resurrection. We know that one day, at La Verna, he was *touched* by the Crucified, who granted him the gift of His holy wounds. It is absolutely certain that pilgrimages also deepen in us clergy our friendship with the Lord, our familiarity with the other Members, and in every way strengthen our belonging to the Order and our pastoral responsibility.

20. I would like once again to emphasize – as was recalled in the *Formation Document* and as I had written in the text *And the Whole House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Ointment* – that for the ecclesiastics “*spirituality is intimately linked to their own vocation as men of God, friends of the Bridegroom, united to him through participation in the threefold office of Christ as teacher, priest and king*”. As Benedict of

Nursia taught, we should never put anything before Christ.

21. The ecclesiastics who are Members of the Order, therefore, are required to actively participate in initiatives at various levels, be that at the level of the Lieutenancy and at the local level. At the same time, they must fulfil their personal obligations (e.g. financial contributions) as a sign of generous participation in the needs of the Land of Jesus. Common experience shows that it is not unusual for some ecclesiastics to either not understand the pastoral and personal duties that concern them or, once they have achieved the goal of being enrolled in the Order, to become disinterested.

22. It is incumbent upon all, and in particular upon Pastors and clerical Members of the Order, to make the mission and aims of the Order known correctly. This is not for proselytism, but so that the proper information is diffused and, where appropriate, to awaken the desire to participate. I would also add that the Order should be correctly presented within the ecclesial sphere (to diocesan or religious clergy and to the Episcopal Conferences), since there are those amongst them who consider the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem an anachronistic Institution or who harbour unfounded prejudices.

23. Finally, it is the Pastors and ecclesiastics' task to take care of the "Friends of the Order" too. The term "Friends" is the name given to the group of

men and women who, in their appreciation of the commitment and aims of the Order desire to follow its general principles; however, for personal reasons or other motives do not wish to enter the Order. The commitment of the “Friends of the Order” involves contributing – whether that be occasionally or more often –, to the Order’s support of the Holy Land.

The Cardinal Grand Master

24. The Cardinal Grand Master is appointed by the Supreme Pontiff from among the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church (cf. Constitution, art. 5 §1).

25. The Grand Master represents the Order at all levels (civil and ecclesiastical, as well as international and national) and, in the general governance of the Order, is assisted by the Prelate Assessor (cf. Constitution, arts. 5 §2; 7 §§2-3), the Grand Magisterium (cf. Constitution, art. 8 §1), and his Presidency. He leads and governs in a spirit of service.

26. The Cardinal Grand Master alone is responsible for admission to the Order, both of lay people and of clerics, religious men and women. Admission is by request presented to the competent territorial authority, after obtaining the approval of the applicant’s own Ordinary in the case of ecclesiastics.

The Grand Prior of the Order

27. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem is *ex officio* the Grand Prior of the Order. In view of his high office in the Holy Land, he exercises certain prerogatives belonging to the Cardinal Grand Master on the basis of what has been established by the Constitution (cf. Constitution, art. 6) and by the General Regulations (cf. General Regulations, art. 13). The Grand Prior reports periodically to the Cardinal Grand Master and to the Grand Magisterium on the pastoral needs of the Latin Patriarchate.

The Assessor

28. The Assessor is a Prelate appointed by the Cardinal Grand Master with the approval of the Roman Pontiff. He remains in office until the appointment of the next Cardinal Grand Master. He assists the Cardinal Grand Master, the Lieutenant General and the Governor General. He must be consulted by the Cardinal Grand Master on the most important decisions concerning the life and activity of the Order. He temporarily exercises the prerogatives of the Cardinal Grand Master in the event of the latter's death, resignation, incapacity to act or prolonged absence (cf. Constitution, art. 7).

The Grand Prior of a Lieutenancy

29. The Order provides for the presence of the Grand Priors of Lieutenancy (Constitution, art. 27), who serve for a term of four years, which may be renewed. They are charged with assisting the Lieutenant and cooperating in the governance of the Lieutenancy. They must also accompany the action of the Priors in their pastoral service, organize formation meetings among the Priest-Knights, and, when possible, accompany pilgrimages to the Holy Land or elsewhere. The Grand Prior should not neglect to follow the life of the Order within his Lieutenancy and to maintain good relations with the Lieutenant and the other lay Dignities, and offer opinions and advice. He should also be available to preside at Investitures in the absence of the Grand Master, which is one of the highest moments of the life of the Order, following the established ritual protocol. It is further recommended to read the reflection on The Mission of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, which explains the ecclesiological meaning of supporting the Holy Land, and the 2024 letter (prot. no. 259/2024) to the clergy (Appendix I and II).

30. Cardinal Grand Priors are admitted to the Order with the rank of Knight of the Grand Cross (cf. General Regulations, art. 72 §5b).

31. Bishop Grand Priors are admitted to the

Order with the rank of Knight Commander with Star, Grand Officer (cf. General Regulations, art. 72 §4b).

32. When inviting the Cardinal Grand Master for an Investiture or any other activity, it is the duty of the Lieutenant and the Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy to inform the local Ordinary. The same applies if the Patriarch Grand Prior of the Order or the Assessor is invited.

The Section and Local Delegation Priors

33. The ecclesiastics are those most often in contact with the Members, Knights and Dames of the Order, and they accompany them as a whole through their concrete pastoral and spiritual initiatives, both at the personal and group level.

34. Section and Delegation Priors who possess episcopal character are appointed by the Grand Master (in consideration of their episcopal dignity) (cf. General Regulations, art. 2 §2e); those without episcopal character are appointed by the Lieutenant (cf. General Regulations, art. 64 §1) once the approval of the Presidency of the Grand Magisterium has been obtained.

35. Priors who possess episcopal character may avail themselves of their own delegate (cf. General Regulations, art. 64).

36. It is recommended not only to never ignore,

but also to value the pastoral work of the local Ordinary of the Knights and Ladies in whose geographical area Sections and Territorial Delegations are present, existing in multiple dioceses. If necessary, for pastoral needs, assistance should be sought from clergy chosen from among the Members of the Order.

37. Collaboration with the Lieutenant, the President and the Local Delegates is an essential part of rendering the best service to the Order.

38. The promotion of clerics is governed by the *General Regulations* (cf. *General Regulations*, art. 72 §2b; §3b; §4b; §5b). The insignia for clerics is the white mozzetta with the enhanced cross over the cassock, to which the stole with enhanced cross for Bishops is added.

39. Priests and Deacons are admitted to the Order with the rank of Knight (cf. *General Regulations*, art. 72 §2b), and as a rule the rank of Commander is the highest rank that can be conferred upon them, as well as full canons of the Patriarchal Chapter of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (cf. *General Regulations*, art. 72 §3b).

40. The promotion of a Member of the Order to a higher rank constitutes a recognition of his or her commitment in the Order, participation, and quality service in the rank for at least five years (*General Regulations*, art. 71 §1).

The Ecclesiastics of the Order's Habit

41. Every ecclesiastic may wear the insignia proper to his rank as provided for by the General Regulations. See arts. 76 and 77 in the sections relating to ecclesiastics, religious men and women.

42. No ecclesiastic may, at ceremonies of the Order, arrogate to himself the right to alter these provisions or to use garments and decorations unprovided for, or to combine them with insignia conferred by other chivalric institutions different from our Order.

43. The Grand Priors, Priors and lay Dignitaries shall be vigilant to prevent those vanities or abuses that do not befit the dignity of the Order and still less the mystery of the Cross which we serve. Canons 284–285 §1 of the CIC prescribe decorum and fidelity to the Regulations of one's membership.

44. Abuses are therefore to be corrected with a spirit of truth and charity, but also with firmness, by the ecclesiastical and lay Dignitaries, who may take appropriate measures in serious cases, by informing the Grand Magisterium. Belonging to the Order does not exempt one from the faithful observance of the liturgical and behavioural laws established by the general Law of the Church.

45. The honour one receives in the pastoral service of the Order should be perceived as the highest level of one's belonging to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Religious-Knights and Religious-Dames

46. Following the pontifical approval of the Constitution (2020) and in the desire to respond to various requests for the admission of Religious men and women into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the *Guidelines* reproduced here for completeness were issued (cf. Prot. no. 485/2021).

47. The admission of Religious (men and women), as faithful called by God to a particular consecration (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 43), falls within the spirit of the Order. In fact, by their specific consecration to God they contribute to keeping alive the awareness that the Cross in Christian life is the superabundance of God's love overflowing into this world (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, 24).

48. A Religious man or woman, in themselves, do not aspire to inclusion in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for an honorary title. Instead, it is rather pleasing to think of the attraction exercised by the central mystery of our faith, namely the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord, which is also experienced in the Order as a special charism and intense spirituality. In addition, that they are moved by the desire to be part of the mission toward the *Mother Church* of Jerusalem is equally pleasing. In some cases, those who have aspired for inclusion have been religious men and women who not only knew about the Order but had rendered themselves deserving, either personally or through their

Institute, of noble and generous initiatives in the Holy Land.

49. The **admission** of Religious men and women to the Order belongs ordinarily to the Cardinal Grand Master (cf. Constitution, art. 35 §1). The Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Grand Prior of the Order, may extraordinarily admit laypersons, clerics, religious men and women stably resident in the Patriarchate, subject to confirmation by the Grand Master (cf. Constitution, art. 35 §2).

50. The admission of Religious Men and Women, however, takes place as in other cases, by request or personal invitation, including for members of Orders of strict monastic observance. The Lieutenant, in agreement with the Grand Prior, will consult the Grand Master on a case-by-case basis beforehand. By reason of their profession of religious vows, admission cannot take place without the written consent of their own Major Superior.

51. It is also appropriate that Religious Men and Women, in the ways that are open to them, participate in the most significant moments of the formation and life of the Order (Vigil, Investitures, etc.). With their witness of life and the contribution of their own charism, prayer and friendship, they enrich the life of the Order.

52. Because of the vow of poverty, the payment of contributions, offerings, etc. is to be agreed, in concert with the Grand Prior. It is the

Lieutenant/Magistral Delegate who takes into account specific situations; for example, an exemption, or a symbolic or one-off payment, which may be envisaged. At their personal request or that of the responsible authorities of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, suitable pastoral activities may be entrusted to a Knight or Dame in the ways open to them. In certain circumstances, the inclusion in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem of Religious Men and Women is also intended as a gesture of appreciation towards male and female religious Institutes that are present in the Holy Land. This gesture can manifest in a Knight or Dame offering their contribution to the Christian communities living there, for example, through educational, charitable and hospitality interventions, and an engagement in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

53. As a distinctive sign of membership, at their Investiture, the following should be observed: Religious men will be offered a white scarf with a red enhanced Cross to be worn over their habit. For non-clerical Religious, the use of the mantle is possible in the absence of their own traditional vesture. For Religious-priests, the mozzetta over the cassock for those without their own vesture. For Religious-women, a black shawl with a red enhanced Cross to be worn over their own vesture is foreseen; in the absence of their own vesture, as in the case of lay associations, it is fitting to use the black cape.

54. Religious Men and Women are admitted to and remain in the Order exclusively with the rank of “Knight-Religious” and “Dame-Religious” (General Regulations, art. 72 §2c).

Ceremony or Chivalric Protocol and Liturgy

55. Before concluding it is appropriate to say something about the *Ritual for Celebrations*; as is known, the text is composed of two parts: the rite-ceremonial part and the part of the actual Liturgies.

56. The Ceremonial or Chivalric Protocol includes:

A. The Vigil:

- (1) The adherence by the candidates signing their commitment,
- (2) The blessing of the vestments,
- (3) The acquisition of the symbols (for laypersons only: sword, spurs, vase of oils),
- (4) The Liturgies of Eucharistic Benediction and/or of Vespers.

B. The Investiture:

- (1) The gesture of the Imposition of the Cross or of the pastoral staff on the shoulder and the blessing of the candidate;
- (2) and, the investiture with the mantles and the other insignia.

57. After the Investiture, the Liturgy of Holy Mass follows, and the Rite approved by the Holy

See must always be used.

58. The *Ritual for Celebrations* (2021) clearly takes into account the two realities (Ceremonial or Chivalric Protocol and Liturgy) and, in particular, for the Ceremonial or Protocol of the Investitures, it draws upon previous practices and experiences (not always nor everywhere uniform) with adaptations (for men and women and for clerics) to the principles of simplicity and solemnity that the moments of Investiture entail (see the Preface to the *Ritual*).

59. It must be borne in mind that the Liturgy is always a supreme expression of prayer addressed to the Lord made in community; therefore, the Chivalric Ceremonial should also take place in a suitable setting in keeping with the aims of the solemn moments.

* * *

60. As a specific commitment, everyone is asked to show special zeal and solicitude for the Land of Jesus. In fact, an ancient bond unites the Members of the Order to the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the perennial memorial of Christ crucified who was laid there and of Christ risen who conquered death. Jesus Christ crucified and risen is the centre of existence and of every personal and associative project of the Order (cf. *Address of the Holy Father Francis to Participants in the Pilgrimage of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*, 13 September 2013, no. 3).

APPENDIX I

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF
SUPPORT FOR THE HOLY LAND

“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 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 among Christians' highest sentiments of responsibility toward 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, preaching, performing miracles, and offering life on the Cross as a ransom for us. St Jerome recalls that blessed is he who carries the holy places 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 so much poverty, perhaps even more, and we do not have sufficient financial resources? These questions have been raised both by lay people and clergy.

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, where the places of 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*’ (2 Cor 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” (2 Cor 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, clement 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 sites, the construction of basilicas and churches to preserve the sacred memory, and even unfortunately, the struggles to defend, conquer and appropriate the Holy Land all bear witness to this enduring sense of ecclesial responsibility. 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 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 extemporaneous 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 Card. Filoni

*Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy
Sepulchre of Jerusalem*



APPENDIX II

00120 CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

26 February 2024

Prot. No. 259 / 2024

Ns. ref.: FF/et

To the Most Eminent/Excellent Grand Priors and Prior Bishops
To the Most Reverend Ecclesiastics Members of the Order

Eminent/Excellent Grand Priors and Prior Bishops
Most Reverend Ecclesiastics,

Following the work of the Consultation held last November on the theme of 'Formation' to be implemented at various levels for all the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, it seemed significant to take up the subject on the presence and mission of the ecclesiastics-members of the Order itself.

On several occasions, the Holy Father Francis recalled that the admission of Bishops, Priests and Deacons into the Order is not only an honor, but also a pastoral service towards the Members of the Order and towards the responsibility for the Land of Jesus, which has always been at the heart of the entire Church. That is, a service that includes, in addition to accompanying people and their families, the care of their spiritual life through appropriate catechesis and moments of prayer (cf. Address to the Lieutenants on 16 November 2018).

All ecclesiastics are full Members of the Order; they are therefore bound to respectful cooperation and observance of the norms and commitments, including contributions (cfr. Mt 17, 24-25), according to the general rules and local practices. There is no point in joining the Order and then vanishing shortly afterwards. Therefore, they must be generously available to accompany the Knights and Dames on pilgrimage to the Holy Land or elsewhere, they must take an interest - where they exist - in the young (squires) who are approaching the Order, supporting any training and volunteer initiatives, and they must not fail to provide a correct vision, in the ecclesiastical sphere, of the Order where prejudices or misunderstandings exist. The exemplary nature of their participation in the life of the Order will encourage many to hold the mission of our Knights and Dames in high regard. Let them remember the sensitivity of the Apostle Paul, who instructed his own Christian communities to take the 'saints' of Jerusalem to heart and from whom he asked for a contribution in times of famine, war and pestilence that had put the Mother Church of Jerusalem under great strain.

Particular attention must be paid to cleric candidates, who, in addition to a special love for the Land of Jesus and the Mother Church of Jerusalem, are called upon to know the spirituality of the Order, the Constitution and the Regulation, and to collaborate with the lay leaders (Lieutenants, Magistral Delegates, Presidents, etc.), knowing that the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a lay Order of ancient tradition, restored by Blessed Pope Pius IX, who indissolubly linked it to the support of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1847); and as is well known, Pope Francis recently (2021) updated its Constitution.

It is then the specific task of the Lieutenant, as Moderator of the procedure for the admission of clerics to the Order, to be in harmony with the Most Eminent/Excellent Grand Prior and the local Priors, ensuring that their numbers and presence meet the requirements of the Lieutenancy. The clerics, in fact, perform a true pastoral mission so that the Knights and Dames grow in faith and service to their local Churches together with their love for the Holy Land.

Finally, we would like to recall that the Lord Jesus, when accepting the gesture of Mary of Bethany who anointed his feet with perfumed nard oil on the eve of his passion, wanted to make it clear that the nascent Church would have to attend to the human and spiritual needs of the 'poor', that is, of a humanity godless, but, at the same time, that it was up to us to anoint the feet of a Church walking in the world, often with difficulty in preaching and wounded by the harshness of the sins of her children, yet beautiful and necessary for the mission of being a sacrament of the encounter with God.

We hope that these words will be welcomed and be listened to, as we are all committed to making the Order of the Holy Sepulchre respond to the beautiful mission entrusted to it in the service of the Mother Church of Jerusalem and, at the same time, of our local Churches in which we are daily generated and regenerated to Grace.

With deepest esteem and consideration.



Leonardo Visconti di Modrone
Governor General



Fernando Cardinal Filoni
Grand Master

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