



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

"A new spirit in our relations": Msgr. Pizzaballa during the ecumenical ceremony for the inauguration of restored Edicule of the Tomb of Christ



Address of the Apostolic Administrator, Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

March 22, 2017

You Holiness, Your Beatitudes, Most Reverend Father, Your Excellences, distinguished guests, dear Friends.

It is with great joy and honor that I join His Beatitude the (Greek Orthodox) Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Paternity and His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch in this celebration of the reopening of the Holy Tomb of our Savior.

I think that most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all those who have familiarity with the life in the Holy Sepulcher and generally with the life in the Christian Jerusalem couldn't believe that it would be possible to arrive to this moment. Many times, when the pilgrims were asking why or when it would be possible to restore the Holy Aedicule, the common answer was: "we will never see that day". And in our discussions in the various Church Committees, like the one of the Status Quo, this goal was considered "not achievable". But now, despite the common belief, we are here to celebrate this event!

In the Gospel of Luke, the archangel Gabriel says to the Holy Virgin: "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Lk 1:37). Yes, if we are with God, nothing is impossible. This apparently "Mission Impossible" (the restoration of the Holy Aedicule) became possible because we allowed God to enlighten our thoughts, our eyes and our relations. May the Lord be blessed in all those "who hear the word of God and obey it!" (Lk 11:28).

Things, in fact, do not change by themselves. If we are here, it is because the different Churches and their leaders have been able to hear the Word of God, to change their vision and with their leadership guide all to understand, to accept and to realize that it was time to build. Build a new model of relation among all of us, based on trust and respect.

This restoration marks, not only an important technical achievement, the end of an important professional work, but marks above all this new phase in our relations, it is the visible result of this newly restored building, which is the life of the Churches in Jerusalem.

The Holy Sepulcher, in which all the Christians make the memory of death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the custodian of our faith, but also of our respective histories, our identities. It is the mirror of what we are. And while we see in this building our wounds that our historical divisions have created, we want today to celebrate and to show also our desire to cure these wounds. Today the Churches of Jerusalem with the restoration of this physical building are putting also oil and balsam on the wounds of the one body of Christ, which is the church of faithful and peoples, like the women of the Gospel, who “had come to the Tomb to see how His body was laid” (Lk 23:55) and “prepared spices and ointments” (56) for the body of Christ.

This is cannot be the end of the work. We are just at the beginning. My wish, for all of you, your Beatitudes and your Paternity, is that we Churches of Jerusalem could continue to enjoy this new attitude among all of us in seeing the continuation of this restoration for all the other parts of this unique Basilica, and to continue enjoying at the same time the new spirit in our relations. I am confident that with your leadership you could overcome the inevitable problems and continue to give to all of us this important and long awaited testimony of the Risen Lord.

May the Lord bless all those who have the courage “to hear the word of God and do it” (Lk 8:21), here in our beloved Holy City of Jerusalem. Thank you!

+ Pierbattista