



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Message for Lent 2020



Lent is a special time for all members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Throughout this time, we are accompanied each day by the mystery of the Cross, of the Burial and Resurrection of Christ. The Sepulchre is the symbol of the end of the life of Jesus, and its emptiness is the symbol of Christ's return to glorious life, whereby his disciples, women and men, encounter him resurrected and alive.

It is thus, for us, a particularly precious time of the year. During this period, it would be my wish that everyone of us ponder upon the meaning of our belonging to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

The creation of the Order came in response to a desire to involve qualified men and women wishing to collaborate in a most noble cause that has always held a central place in the hearts of all Christians: offering assistance to the Holy Land and to its human, cultural and spiritual institutions, and serving the Church and the Communities living there in respect of the fundamental human rights, while favouring dialogue between diverse peoples and promoting peace. Jesus reminds us that the promoters of peace, the peacemakers, will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9). This beatitude concerns us and imposes upon us a serious obligation, since, as well as being our ideal, it serves as a measuring-rod for comparison and for judgement.

Our belonging to the Order does not only flow from our desire to participate. This is not sufficient: each member must have the proper dignity and disposition to be part of the Order. At the bottom of it, it may be said that it requires a vocation, aside from being available. Dames and Knights are in fact created through the authority of the Church; their appointment is not based upon their social status nor upon hereditary pedigree. It is born of the maturity of sensible Christians seeking to contribute to the good of the Holy Land, the Land of Jesus the Redeemer, which was rendered Holy by His presence, by His word, and by His sacrifice.

Hence, on this occasion, it is my desire that everyone of us reflects on the means to render our Order an adequate institution which corresponds to its own ends.

It is the charge of each one of us to discern if it is our calling; to perceive, without falling into misleading perfectionisms, if this is "my Order," capable of generating within me generosity, friendship and esteem. It pleases me to think, that being a Member of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, would generate in each of us the same awe experienced by Mary Magdalene and the disciples upon witnessing the empty Sepulchre of the Lord and upon meeting him resurrected. This filled them with boundless joy.

I recommend that in the lives of Dames and Knights, prayer which brings us closer to Christ should never be found lacking, neither charity, the virtue of our specific vocation as Christians, nor generosity, as a conviction that doing the good is of even greater service to myself, even before it is to others! It is my hope that these reflections will accompany us on our path towards Easter, a path laid out by the Church for our sanctification.

Happy Lent!

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

(1° Sunday of Lent 2020)