



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

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

## "The Holy Land is within us"

The pilgrimage of the Grand Magisterium's staff



From February 1 to 5, the management and staff from the Roman headquarters of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre spent five unforgettable days on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, at the express invitation of Cardinal Edwin O' Brien.

It was the Grand Master desire that Grand Magisterium staff visit some institutions that benefit from the Order's support and meet the people who coordinate the aid in the offices of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The group then went to Jaffa di Nazareth, to a parish school that has about 500 students and which has expanded: It is just one of the great projects that Knights and Dames have generously contributed to in recent years.

On the same day, following Mass presided by the Grand Master on the shores of Lake Tiberias, the pilgrims gathered in prayer in the place of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and visited the Mount of Beatitudes, as well as the Basilica of the Annunciation, trying to internalize the beautiful expression shared in the morning by Msgr. Fortunato Frezza, the Order's Master of Ceremonies: "The Holy Land is within us".

This affirmation became increasingly true for each of the participants, as the pilgrimage continued on to Jerusalem the following day. There Mass was celebrated at Calvary followed by a moment of meditation in the Upper Room and a procession to the Western Wall of the Temple.

One of the important moments of this journey was marked by a visit to Saint-Louis Hospital in Jerusalem. This structure welcomes the terminally ill - Jews, Muslims and Christians – and can do so thanks to the financial support of the Order. "We do not add days to life but life to the days", explained

Sr. Monika, director of this institute, showing to what extent a commitment to the dignity of the human person can concretely reinforce interreligious dialogue.

On the eve of our departure, we gathered before dawn at the Holy Sepulchre, inside the empty tomb, for a Mass during which, side by side, the staff of the Grand Magisterium breathed profound spiritual solidarity, strengthening the awareness of being one family, while carrying the prayer intentions of the 30,000 members of the Order in their hearts.

The day continued with a visit to the Mount of Olives, at Gethsemane, before going to Bethlehem University, a vital education centre that works in large part thanks to the generosity of the Order and that since its opening in 1973 has become a bearer of true hope for the young Palestinians tested by the complicated situation in which they live.

Lunch with some representatives of the University's 3000 students helped to clearly show the difficult conditions that the Palestinians face due to the sinister Separation Barrier and the colonization of their lands.

After praying in the Grotto of the Nativity, the group spent the afternoon at the Hogar Niño Dios – to which the Order is a major contributor - together with the disabled and abandoned children whom the nuns of the institute of the Incarnate Word care for with tenderness and love.

On the last day, during a Mass at the Little Cenacle, in Jerusalem, the preacher invited each pilgrim to ask the Lord for help to carry out his or her mission here on earth for which He has desired us from eternity. He recalled that God only waits for a definitive "yes" to His will to work miracles.

The delegation also went to the Basilica of the Dormition and then to the church of St Peter in Gallicantu, next to the steps of the ancient road that connected the city to Gethsemane, surely travelled by Jesus.

Before leaving, in the absence of the Apostolic Administrator who was with the Pope in Abu Dhabi, Msgr Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Patriarchal Vicar in Jerusalem, warmly received the staff of the Grand Magisterium and hosted a lunch for them together with the staff of the Latin Patriarchate, directed by Sami el-Yousef.

This historic pilgrimage has allowed to create new bonds of collaboration between Rome and Jerusalem. The discovery for the first time of the holy places for some employees of the Grand Magisterium has strengthened the motivation that sustains their work. Moreover, everyone was able to renew the enthusiasm of serving the Church through the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

**François Vayne**

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