



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

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

## Entrusting ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Palestine



Each year as the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine draws near; the Lieutenancies organize themselves to celebrate the Patron Saint of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. During this period the **Grand Magisterium** is gathered for one of its two annual meetings. On **October 25** participants come together at the **St. Peter's basilica** for the solemn celebration of the Eucharist, presided by the Grand Master, **Cardinal Edwin O'Brien**, carrying the intentions of all members in their hearts. Later in the evening they share a convivial moment at Palazzo della Rovere.

From Saturday 21 October to the following Sunday, October 29, celebrations will take place in the various Lieutenancies. For example, on October 21 **Knights and Dames throughout Tuscany gather in Prato** to entrust the mission of the Order and the entire population of the Holy Land to the Virgin Mary, while 35 km from Jerusalem in the Shrine of **Deir Rafat**, which is easily identifiable thanks to the beautiful statue of Mary that watches over it, under which is read "Regina Palestinae", celebrations in honor of the principal patron of the Diocese of Jerusalem will be held on 29 October. Holy Mass will be followed by a procession with the icon of Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine.

The special relationship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine with the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre dates back to the pontificate of Saint John Paul II. In 1983, 50 years after the institution of the Feast, Saint John Paul II – addressing the Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancies of Northern and Central Italy – urged them to be witnesses of Christ in everyday life and to continue the work of the Order in the Holy Land under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Ten years later, in 1993, the then Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Giuseppe Caprio, asked Saint John Paul II to declare of the **Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, Patroness of the Order**. The Holy Father replied on 21 January 1994 by a decree granting the request.

It is to her, she who said "yes" to God's plan, who carried the Savior in her womb, walked the streets of the Holy Land and continues today to spread her maternal mantle over us, that **the Order entrusts all the inhabitants of her land**. In the icon venerated in the hall of the Grand Magisterium of the Order, we see Mary cradling in her arms - the same arms that once cradled the infant Jesus and then the lifeless body of her Son taken down from the Cross - the city of Jerusalem as we know it today with its sacred buildings for the three monotheistic religions.

*(October 20, 2017)*