European Lieutenants and Grand Magisterium Members Gather in Pompeii Under the Protection of Our Lady of the Rosary



The European Lieutenants' meeting and the autumn meeting of the Grand Magisterium were held in Pompeii from October 19 to 21, near the renowned Italian Marian shrine and one year after the canonization of Knight Bartolo Longo. The gatherings provided an important opportunity for these leaders of the Order to exchange views and share experiences. For the first time, members of the Grand Magisterium took part in the meeting of the European Lieutenants, who had not gathered for seven years. This fraternal initiative, promoted by the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, was a great success, taking place one year ahead of the next Consulta, the Order's General Assembly, scheduled to be held in Rome from November 9 to 13, 2027.

Participants in both meetings were welcomed by Archbishop Tommaso Caputo, Prelate of Pompeii and Assessor of the Order. Representatives of the Holy Land also took part in the proceedings: Archbishop Iyad Twal, Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan, and Johny Zeidan, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Latin Patriarchate, accompanied by his predecessor, Sami El-Yousef.

The meetings opened on Monday, October 19, with a Eucharistic celebration at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary, presided over by the Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni. "Like John at the foot of the Cross," he recalled in his homily, "Bartolo Longo gives Mary a 'home': the Shrine of Pompeii, in a desolate, poor, and disreputable land.

This was the path he followed day after day, until the moment when, even after facing misunderstandings and unjust rumors, he became a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem."



The following day, Tuesday, October 20, the meeting of the European Lieutenants opened with another Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Archbishop Tommaso Caputo in the shrine's chapel dedicated to Bartolo Longo. The chapel is located near the urn containing the saint's remains, with his body clad in his Knight's mantle. "Bartolo is a model of Christian life for us," the Prelate of Pompeii declared in his homily.

During the subsequent proceedings, the Lieutenants deepened their understanding of the Order's life and activities worldwide and received updates on the severe crisis affecting the Holy Land. After listening to several presentations on these subjects, they took part in an extensive discussion moderated by the Governor General and attended by the four Vice Governors General, including the newly appointed Vice Governor General for North America.

Archbishop Iyad Twal, the special envoy of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, emphasized the unity between the Order and the Patriarchate, which share a common history and mission. He also encouraged members of the Order to return to the Holy Land in large numbers on pilgrimage and to meet with parish communities, whose faithful need their moral support. A report on the recent visit of the Holy Land Commission, presented by its interim president, Donata Maria Krethlow- Benziger, generated considerable interest. It highlighted the tangible results of the regular and extraordinary support that the Order provides to the Mother Church of Jerusalem during this particularly difficult and uncertain period.



Amid this atmosphere of intensive exchange and shared reflection, the Grand Magisterium held its meeting on Wednesday, October 21. It was preceded by a Eucharistic celebration in the chapel dedicated to Bartolo Longo, presided over by the Patriarch’s envoy, Archbishop Twal. All members attended the meeting, including, for the first time, the new Vice Governor General for North America, Shawn Cleary.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni opened the proceedings by outlining several areas on which the Grand Magisterium must focus, in particular the preparations for the upcoming Consulta. Held every four years, this meeting brings together all the leaders of the Order from the more than 60 Magistral Delegations and Lieutenancies, along with the central governing bodies.

The Governor General updated participants on other important matters, including the continuation of renovation work at Palazzo della Rovere, ongoing discussions concerning the Friends of the Order, and developments involving certain entities associated with the Order, such as the new Foundation in Italy, a Third Sector Entity. These entities are distinct from other initiatives that do not fall under the direct management of our Pontifical Institution and could give rise to conflicts of interest, which must be avoided in the interest of consistency and transparency.



As part of the scheduled agenda, the members of the Grand Magisterium approved the proposed budget for 2027. Considerable time was then devoted to an exchange of views on the situation in the Holy Land, with a presentation by Archbishop Iyad Twal, who highlighted three areas in which the Order's support can continue to make a tangible difference: parishes, education, and humanitarian aid. His testimony was followed by remarks from Johny Zeidan, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Latin Patriarchate, who shared his initial reflections and outlined his vision and strategic priorities for the coming years. His analysis was complemented by recommendations from the interim president of the Holy Land Commission, following her return from the Commission's semiannual field visit.

The meeting continued with presentations by the four Vice Governors General, who raised additional issues concerning the Order's local presence and the establishment of new Magistral Delegations, particularly in Latin America, but also in other regions of the world, including India and Africa.

Following closing remarks by Archbishop Tommaso Caputo, the Grand Master concluded by recalling that being "in the home of Bartolo Longo, the Order's first lay saint, allows us to see how the Order itself bears witness to a process through which its members grow in holiness." He cited figures such as Enrique Ernesto Shaw in Argentina and James Joseph Norris in the United States, whose causes for beatification are currently under consideration.

As Shawn Cleary remarked in his first address as the new Vice Governor General for North America, "Our responsibility is also to lead our Knights and Dames to Heaven."

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