



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The Dialogue Between Lieutenancies: A Moment of Common Reflection



When I assumed the role of Governor General, I observed that – except in rare cases – the “horizontal” dialogue between the Lieutenancies was quite limited. Each Lieutenancy referred to the central leadership in Rome and generally did not share experiences or engage in dialogue with other Lieutenancies. As a consequence, this has resulted in a sort of self-referentiality within each local entity of the Order, which, in its autonomy – and sometimes in its isolation – has occasionally developed customs and procedures that are entirely different from those adopted by other Lieutenancies.

By attending various ceremonies, I gradually noticed some differences that did not contribute to a unified image of the Order; instead, these instances seemed to highlight a somewhat “regionalization” of the rituals. Moreover, alongside these formal ceremonies, there were no planned moments for broader meetings, reflection, and dialogue with a common framework.

I therefore considered it appropriate to raise the issue within the Presidency of the Grand Magisterium and – having received favorable support – propose to the Grand Master to activate new methods aimed at encouraging “transversal” dialogue. The main goal was to promote meetings between similar Lieutenancies that share common problems or, due to distance or size, need to collaborate with larger Lieutenancies. Additionally, there was a growing awareness that meetings based on continental geographic areas (especially in the case of Europe) were too large to allow for effective debate, let alone dialogue between participants. All of this has led me to promote sectoral meetings among similar Lieutenancies. Thus, within the European area, meetings were organized among Iberian, French-speaking, Italian-speaking, English-speaking, German-speaking, Nordic countries, and Central and Eastern European Lieutenancies. Similarly, regional meetings are regularly being held among North American, Latin American, Asian, and Pacific Lieutenancies.

A significant communication effort has been made in this regard over the past few years, thus promoting greater uniformity in behavior and a stronger sense of belonging to the Order. Small self-referential “fiefdoms” have disappeared, while fostering the development of a large family where dialogue and sharing are the norm.

This process has especially benefited medium and small Lieutenancies, or those geographically more isolated, which have drawn lessons, support, and inspiration by aligning themselves with the experience of more structured Lieutenancies with greater international outreach. Thus, we have seen interesting experiences, such as shared ceremonies between several Lieutenancies from the same geographic area, meetings and roundtables, joint pilgrimages to the Holy Land or other inspiring places of worship. In some cases, “transcontinental” invitations have brought Lieutenancies from distant areas closer together in both form and spirit, which has enhanced their sense of belonging to the Order. During the 2023 Consulta, there was a deliberate effort to compose working groups that would bring together representatives from distant Countries.

The custom of exchanging invitations between Lieutenants has developed to such an extent that it warranted the creation of certain general guidelines (already largely followed by the Lieutenants, and which I repeat here for the benefit of all) to guide its regulation on a managerial and administrative level.

The following are some guiding principles, approved by the Cardinal Grand Master:

1 - Each Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate is free to invite representatives to attend their ceremonies from other Lieutenancies with whom they wish to maintain a special dialogue. This allows for the sharing of experiences and issues that can be jointly addressed, offering participation in social events and covering some logistical expenses. However, it is customary that travel and accommodation expenses generally remain the responsibility of the guests.

2 - The expenses to cover a spouse, friends, or family members accompanying the Lieutenant are of a private nature and must be covered by those individuals.

3 - In selecting Lieutenancies to invite – while maintaining the welcome relationships of proximity and often friendship that may develop – it is also advisable to consult the Governor General or the Vice Governor General. They, having an overall view of the issues affecting the area in question, can provide appropriate suggestions aimed at fostering truly useful dialogue. Ideally, such invitations should not be repetitive but, rather, as varied and innovative as possible to allow for the dissemination of experiences.

4 - Any Lieutenant invited to the ceremonies of another Lieutenancy may delegate a member of their Council to represent them. In this case, the treatment received by the delegate will be equivalent to that of the Lieutenant's.

5 - When the invitation concerns an Investiture ceremony conducted by the Cardinal Grand Master, it is appropriate for the invited Lieutenancies to have the opportunity to attend every meeting, discussion, or debate organized for the occasion.

6 - It is advisable that each Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate inform the Governor General of any invitation to particular Authorities or the organization of special events related to their ceremonies.

7 - In the case of side events associated with an Investiture ceremony or sectoral or regional meetings of Lieutenancies, I wish to emphasize that the participation of guests or relatives who

are not members of the Order should be carefully considered. Such participation should not alter the pedagogical nature of the meeting and should not preclude or interfere with a calm discussion among actual members. These meetings, far from being social or convivial in nature, should serve as moments of common reflection, discussion, and commitment, which are not well suited to the presence of non-members, even if they are family members.

Leonardo Visconti di Modrone

Governor General

(October 2024)