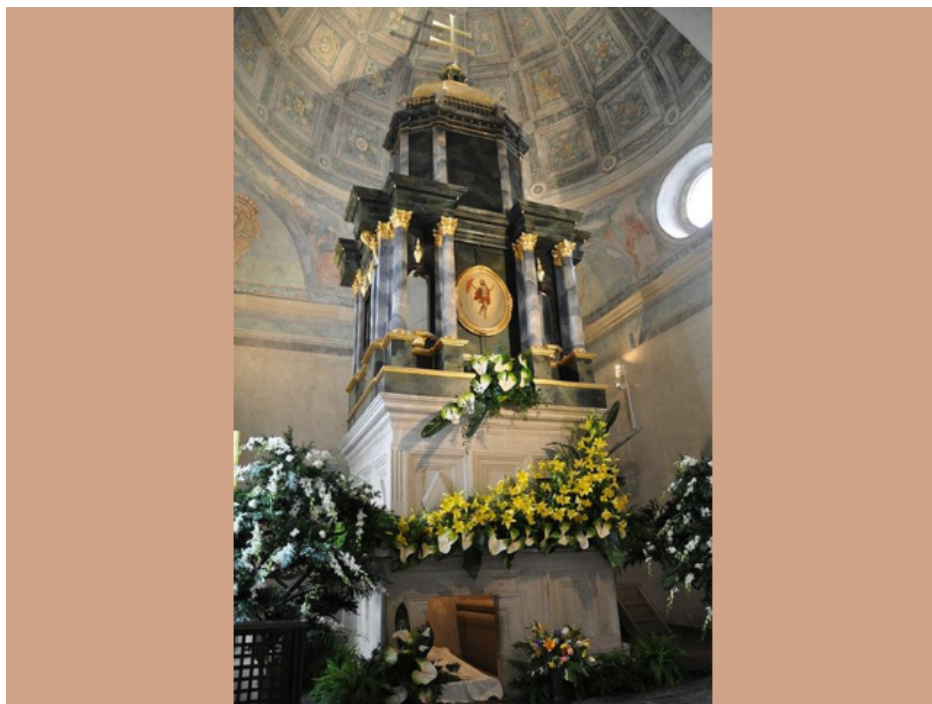




GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The Grand Master of the Order at the 8th Jerusalem Days in Miechów, Poland



The reproduction of the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre in Poland, which dates back to the 16th century, is the focal point of a major pilgrimage that takes place every two years.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, in the presence of Father Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land, was invited to preside over the Jerusalem Days in Miechów, held in the Polish city near Krakow, from September 13 to 15, 2024. Miechów is home to the famous Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, which houses a replica of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem dating back to the early 16th century. For centuries, it has been a destination for faithful pilgrims eager to proclaim and praise the Risen Christ. Next to the Basilica is the monastery that served as the main seat of the Order of the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem from 1163 to 1819. Since 2010, it has been the spiritual and historical center and chapter church of the Lieutenancy for Poland of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, established in Poland on December 8, 1995. The Jerusalem Days are celebrated in conjunction with the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This celebration is especially dear to the members of the Order and this year was presided over by Cardinal Filoni. At the beginning of his homily, he said, “For centuries, the Basilica of Miechów has been a sacred place that invites reflection on the mystery of our Redemption; it is a permanent meditation on the mystery of the Lord’s Death and Resurrection, and, liturgically speaking, even more so on the day when the Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.”



The Mass at Miechów presided over by the Grand Master of the Order.

Also gathered for the occasion were members of the Polish Lieutenancy of the Order and all other participants in the Jerusalem Days. The event has been held biennially in Miechów since 2010 with the special intention of praying for the Holy Land. The Grand Master went on to say, "Since the faith in the Risen One, the Son of God, was preached in this noble land of Poland, God Himself has cast His benevolent gaze upon those who dwell here. Historically, with the spread of veneration for the Holy Sepulchre in 16th century Miechów, there was a desire to replicate the Aedicule of Christ's Tomb. In reality, the Lord's Holy Sepulchre does not represent just one of the many, albeit significant, places in the life of Jesus, but the symbolic place that encompasses the mystery of His painful Passion and glorious Resurrection; the place where the entire mission of Christ found its fulfillment, as Jesus Himself said, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (John 12:24)."

The Jerusalem Days in Miechów, which commenced 14 years ago, serve as an important bridge between the Holy Land and Poland. One of the reasons for organizing this periodic event is to promote aid to Christians in the Holy Land, particularly through the activities of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. These activities include humanitarian assistance, medical aid, scholarships, and pastoral care for the disciples of Christ in the Holy Land. Each edition of the Jerusalem Days features a charity collection for the orphanages of the Homes of Peace on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and in Bethlehem, run by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth.

On September 13, during this event, a special exhibition was inaugurated at the National Museum in Krakow. The exhibition showcased masterpieces and valuable works from the Treasury of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Terra Sancta Museum, which had been donated by Polish pilgrims to the Custody of the Holy Land.



The Knights and Dames of the Order were well represented during the recent Jerusalem Days in Poland, particularly at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14.

During this spiritual gathering in the “Polish Jerusalem” of Miechów, progress on the second phase of conservation and restoration work within the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was presented and discussed. The work there includes the renovation of the flooring, protective interventions on the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre, support for archaeological excavations, and the study of the materials that have been discovered there. These contributions are all thanks to the work of the Centro per la Conservazione ed il Restauro dei Beni Culturali (Foundation Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage) “La Venaria Reale” in Turin and the Department of Antiquity Sciences of “La Sapienza” University in Rome.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, celebrated on September 14, 2024, marks the 75th anniversary of the canonical legal status granted to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem by Pope Pius XII, through the Apostolic Letter *Quam Romani Pontifices* on September 14, 1949. Andrzej Sznajder, the Lieutenant of the Order for Poland, is a key figure in the organization of Jerusalem Days in Miechów, alongside Canon Franciszek Siarek, priest of the Parish of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów, and Stanisław Osmenda, President of the Organizing Committee. He emphasized, “Gathered together, we asked God for peace and reconciliation for all those who live in the Land of Jesus, which once again finds itself at the center of a grave political and military crisis, overwhelmed by an unprecedented wave of violence.”

(September 2024)