The post-pandemic watchword: dialogue

The development of international relations of the Order

With the end of the pandemic emergency, we need to revive those external contacts and events that will help people know about the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and its charitable action in the Holy Land. In a word: dialogue.

A dialogue implies speaking whilst also actively encouraging the other person's response. The encounter presupposes a physical closeness, which has been so lacking in recent times, so that today the need to speak to each other according to the golden rule in the biblical book of Sirach is all the clearer: "Do not answer before you listen, and do not interrupt when another is speaking." (11:8).

In the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, this renewed dialogue has taken on different forms.

Every day, the Cardinal Grand Master welcomes priests who are visiting Rome. He discusses the evolution of the Order with them, taking into account what they have to say about the differing opinions of the faithful all over the world, while reinforcing their feelings of being part of the Order.

It is often Cardinal Filoni's past experience as an expert on the problems in the Far East and China in particular, or as a nuncio in important Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq or Jordan, which generates the requests for these meetings.

Thus, thanks to the prestige and charisma of the Grand Master, the reference point that the Order represents in the complex international context of dangers and tensions, is strengthened.

The Governor General, in turn, drawing on the experience acquired during his 46 years in the diplomatic service of his country has, in recent months, expanded his connections with members of

the diplomatic corps in Rome. Of particular note is the connection with the new Italian Ambassador to the Holy See, Francesco Di Nitto, a former colleague of the Governor and a good friend and expert of the Order, who has also previously served as Consul of Italy in Jerusalem. But the Grand Master and Governor's connections also extend to representatives of countries in areas where the Order could open new Lieutenancies, in Africa, Latin America and the East. The meetings are sometimes bilateral, sometimes collective, with small groups of ambassadors from the same geographical area or the same language.

There is no shortage of contacts with the political authorities either. Among the most important, is the audience granted by Philip VI of Spain to the Cardinal Grand Master for the presentation of the Collar of the Order to the Spanish sovereign, on 1st April 2022 at the Zarzuela Palace, an audience that was preceded by meetings at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Madrid for the Governor General. Then, the month before, there was the invitation from the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Vincent Keaveny, to a solemn banquet at the prestigious Mansion House, in honour of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. More than 250 guests attended the banquet, at the presence of the Governor General, the Vice-Governor General, Enric Mas, the Lieutenant for the England and Wales, Michael Byrne, Lieutenant for Ireland, Peter Durnin, and the President of the Holy Land Commission, Bartolomew McGettrick.

In this respect, the Palazzo della Rovere also receives members of the Government or representations of foreign parliamentarians.

In addition, after the long interruption due to health restrictions during the pandemic, researchers and art lovers have been able to resume their guided tours of the Palazzo della Rovere, and events take place once again in the splendid rooms of the building.

With the completion of the restoration work, carried out under the careful supervision of the Superintendent, the Pinturicchio frescoes and the famous *Demi-gods* ceiling are attracting more and more Italian and foreign visitors. Now, with the lifting of restrictions and the reopening of borders, visitors are returning to Rome in large numbers, curious to discover monuments that are not usually open to the public.

Recent events held in the halls of the Palazzo della Rovere include book presentations, film previews, debates and round tables on subjects dear to our faith, interviews and recordings of films intended for broadcast around the world.

The initiatives are therefore very diverse, but they all have one very specific objective: to make the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and its charitable action in the Holy Land known through modern technologies and the prestigious instrument of the palace assigned to the Order by Pius XII in the already distant 1950s. In the well-known Gospel parable, the master who is leaving for a long journey assigns different amounts of talents to his servants, so that they can make them fruitful according to their abilities. In the same way, the Order also wishes to make the best use of the precious "talent" represented by the palace that Cardinal Domenico della Rovere had built to welcome his most illustrious guests with dignity and which, during its long history, has hosted sovereigns, princes, cardinals and artists.

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