



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

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

## The Meeting of North American Lieutenants in Green Bay



The annual meeting of the North American Lieutenants (nine from the USA and five from Canada) took place from June 11 to 13 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in the excellent facilities of St Norbert College, thanks to the hospitality of Lieutenant Thomas Olejniczak, who is a member of the college's Board of Trustees. Set amidst lush greenery, the venue was ideal for thoughtful discussion, which took place over three days in an atmosphere of great fraternal camaraderie on the modern campus on the banks of the Fox River.

Following a day of in-depth bilateral meetings between the Governor-General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, who was assisted by Deputy Governor Tom Pogge, and each of the Lieutenants present, to examine in detail the activities and issues facing each individual Lieutenancy, two days were devoted to a general plenary debate on key issues relating to the Order and the Holy Land.

In his opening address on the first day, the Governor-General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, after conveying the Grand Master's greetings and best wishes to the participants, reviewed in detail the progress made by the Order since the previous meeting in February 2025 in Miami, in Florida, emphasizing the significance of extraordinary events that had taken place during the year, such as the election of the first North American Pope to the See of Peter, the Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome last October, the canonization of Saint Bartolo Longo, the publication of numerous writings by the Cardinal Grand Master, and the entry into force of the General Regulations and the Document on Formation. The Governor General also announced, with general approval, the forthcoming change in the office of Vice-Governor for North America, with the appointment of H.E. Shawn Cleary to succeed H.E. Tom Pogge.

Great emphasis was then placed on a careful reading of the recent pastoral letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pizzaballa, and the participants listened with great attention to the account of the situation in the Holy Land given by the Director of the Beit Jala Seminary, Father Bernard Poggi.

On the second day, a thorough collective analysis of the statistical data on the funds raised revealed an overall increase in contributions, highlighting, amongst other things, that ancillary fundraising initiatives – such as the 'Ensure the Future' campaign for schools, launched two years ago – had not,

on the whole, affected the level of institutional contributions from members arising from admissions, promotions and annual fees. There was then a very attentive and lively debate on the Cardinal Grand Master's guidelines regarding the 'Friends of the Order', guidelines which, to some extent, regulate and codify a practice that has long been established by certain North American Lieutenancies, which are particularly active in seeking financial support even outside the close circle of knights and dames belonging to the Order.

On the subject of honors and protocol, the Governor-General clarified the Grand Master's intended objectives regarding a rigorous policy on promotions (which must not be automatic) and the awarding of the Palm of Jerusalem in its various grades (which must be progressive and, at the highest grade, constitute the ultimate recognition for a course of service).

As regards the Eucharistic celebrations that accompanied each working day, it is worth highlighting the significance of the consecration of the North American Lieutenancies to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which coincided with a similar consecration of the United States on the 250th anniversary of its independence: the ceremony was incorporated into the celebration of Holy Mass in the College chapel dedicated to St Joseph, with a prayer of invocation led by the Governor General, assisted by Deputy Governor-General Tom Pogge, his designated successor Shawn Cleary and the Host Lieutenant Tom Olejniczak.

One particularly moving moment came with the testimony of a young Muslim student of Palestinian origin who had managed to leave Gaza via Egypt and reach the United States, where she is now studying Political Science. She spoke of her experiences at the outbreak of the hostilities and paid tribute to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem for assisting all Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, regardless of their faith, in a spirit of genuine evangelical solidarity.

In his closing remarks, the Governor General gave an assurance that he would bring to the attention of the Cardinal Grand Master and the entire Grand Magisterium the concerns of the North American Knights and Dames, who are strongly committed to increasing resources for the Holy Land, aware that they constitute a significant part of the entire Order, but at the same time – as the Governor General has repeatedly emphasized – united in prayer with their brothers and sisters in all the other Lieutenancies around the world.

*(Giugno 2026)*