



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The annual meeting of European Lieutenants (June 2018)



Daily Mass in the Church of *Santo Spirito in Sassia*, preceded the working sessions of the European Lieutenants and the authorities of the Order who gathered at the Grand Magisterium headquarters in Palazzo della Rovere, Rome, on June 13 and 14.

In welcoming the Lieutenants, **Grand Master Cardinal O'Brien** insisted on two points, the place of ecclesiastics and youth in the Order, hoping for a broad sharing of experiences on these issues during the course of the two days. In his speech, the **Governor General Visconti di Modrone** had a special greeting for the bishop of Lodi and Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for Northern Italy, Msgr. Malvestiti, before mentioning the next five-year Consulta, dedicated to the role of the Lieutenants in the current context. He spoke of the important meetings held in Buenos Aires - for the Lieutenants of South America - and Toronto - for the Lieutenants of North America - in which he took part, underlining his desire to promote harmony and coordination between all of the Order's peripheral articulations, in a common spirit of generosity towards the Holy Land. The Governor General highlighted the need to maintain a good level of contribution (which decreased slightly last year), especially considering that the Order's mission now extends to the biblical territories, in connection with the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, without naturally calling into question the constant commitment to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The **Lieutenant General Borromeo** then spoke of various matters entrusted to him, including the Order's new Constitution, which is still being discussed with the Holy See. He also explained that the overarching aim of the Vatican Foundation St. John the Baptist - presided over by Cardinal Edwin O'Brien - is the development of the University of Madaba in Jordan. He then explained the situation regarding the hotel on which the Grand Magisterium is working, in order to legally recover all property rights. The Lieutenant General - also in charge of the new Lieutenancies - welcomed the ongoing projects in Slovakia, Lithuania and Chile, a country that has an extensive Christian community of Palestinian origin.

The meeting continued with the presentation of the accounts by **Dr. Petrillo**, president of the Grand Magisterium's financial commission (over 14 million euros sent to the Holy Land in 2017 with recourse to reserves, of which more than 4 million for institutional expenses of the Patriarchate and more than 3 million for schools). The Lieutenants expressed their members' desire for greater information on the destination of their donations and therefore the need to establish more relationships at the local level, especially with the scholastic institutions. **Engineer Rinaldi** detailed the projects of the Grand Magisterium, highlighting the success in the Lieutenancies of the new "small projects" - intended to improve the lives of people - proposed by the Latin Patriarchate in 2018. In the same direction, **Professor McKiernan** - president of the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium - confirmed the importance of enhancing the "human capital", underlining how much the Holy Land's educated youth are the bearers of hope.

The administration of the 45 schools is indeed a priority, as stated by **Sami El-Yousef, chief executive officer of the Patriarchate**, recalling that this vast school network involves about 19,000 students and 1500 employees. "The Apostolic Administrator Msgr. Pizzaballa wishes to emphasize education, humanitarian aid and pastoral works, abandoning all business activities that are not part of the Church's mission", Sami El-Yousef stated clearly during his presentation which was characterized by professionalism and transparency. The comparative analysis of the annual reports of the Lieutenancies and the resulting debate revealed the need to always pass through the Grand Magisterium for the transfer of donations, with a view to better global management.

During the meeting, the question of the criteria concerning the qualification of active members was raised: given the complexity of the issue, a number of suggestions for solutions will soon be submitted to the Grand Magisterium, as decided by the Governor General. After some considerations concerning the current statistics of the Order communicated by **Chancellor Bastianelli** (in Europe 9300 Knights, 2400 Dames and 1700 ecclesiastics, out of a worldwide total of 29,000 Knights and Dames, of which 9000 Dames and about 4000 ecclesiastics), as well as various communication projects and perspectives ahead of the Consulta, the Lieutenants held a lengthy discussion regarding **the role of priests in the Order and the integration of young people**. The participants gave special attention to the experiences of new generations in France, Belgium and Portugal, with for example the planning of periods of service among the populations in the Holy Land.

Cardinal O'Brien - after listening to all these stories, full of experiences - asked the Lieutenants to give greater impetus to the role of the priests of the Order for the spiritual formation of members, especially through the organization of retreats. The recently established spiritual commission of the Grand Magisterium will have the mission to provoke initiatives in this area.

François Vayne

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