



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Annual meeting of European Lieutenants in Rome



During the meeting of the Lieutenants, Collars of the Order were bestowed upon the Vice Governor Generals Patrick Powers and Giorgio Moroni Stampa, as well as the Lieutenant General Giuseppe della Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto

The European Lieutenants of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre held their annual meeting at the headquarters of the Grand Magisterium in Rome, June 27 and 28, 2016. Welcoming them, the Grand Master Cardinal Edwin O'Brien spoke of the importance of **the imminent Jubilee pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Pompeii, October 15, in the footsteps of Blessed Bartolo Longo**, the first lay member of the Order to be beatified, a model of holiness for all the Knights and Dames. European Lieutenancies are particularly invited to send their delegates on this pilgrimage, organized by the Italian Lieutenancies.

Following on from this, the **Governor General, Agostino Borromeo**, spoke of giving priority to prayer and Christian formation, thanking the cardinal for his "fruitful stimulus of the Order's spiritual development," seen in his actively taking part in Investitures on all five continents. The Governor then spoke of how the members of the Order, encouraged to become increasingly involved in the commitments they have taken on, were more generous than ever considering that donations have reached, for the first time, more than 13.5 million euro (here we must take into consideration the past year's fluctuating currency exchange rates).

The continued growth and expansion of the Order, especially in Eastern Europe and Latin America, was outlined by the newly appointed Chancellor, Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli. He also unveiled the new website of the Grand Magisterium, in five languages, which will foster the Order's international communications (www.oessh.va).

Engineer Pier Carlo Visconti, gave a presentation of the Grand Magisterium's financial budget, noting **a favorable trend and a positive year**, thanks to reduced costs and increased revenue. Pierre

Blanchard, a member of the Grand Magisterium, went on to explain that this positive result is also the fruit of the Grand Magisterium's prudent management of revenues in favor of the Holy Land.

Archbishop Antonio Franco, Assessor of the Order, then gave an outline of the financial situation regarding the **San Giovanni Battista Foundation**, the institution established by the Holy See to support Catholic universities and in particular that of Madaba, Jordan, to promote a culture of encounter. Last year Lieutenancies responded to the Grand Master's call to support this Church institution, whose development is promising and, through the Foundation, the Secretariat of State has provided a loan that the Latin Patriarchate will have to repay over five years.

Other topics that were covered include the **frustration expressed by Lieutenants in the delay in the reconstruction of Gaza**, despite considerable funds having been allocated. However, for the moment the Israeli authorities generally continue to prohibit the export of products that are not food, clothing and medicines to this territory. The Lieutenants are also interested in the **evolution of the social reality** in Israel, a country that sees the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in expansion due to the number of migrant workers, in particular from Asia, whose children are educated in Israeli schools.

The president of the Holy Land Commission, Thomas McKiernan, gave a presentation on the Order's involvement with the Vicariate for migrants in Israel, in helping the younger children of immigrants through the establishment of a professionally organized daycare center. He also spoke in detail of the other **projects of the Grand Magisterium in the Holy Land for 2016**: a kindergarten in Jordan that will allow the development of a school, the expansion of a playground at another school, building work for a nursing home in Taybeh, Palestine, and an increase in teachers' salaries in the Patriarchate schools, which is vital in order to preserve the quality of education.

In this context the Commission has proposed a five-year plan to simplify the management of schools and to improve provisions for social security contributions and staff pensions, to the Patriarchate. **"We want to be part of the solution, not the problem,"** said the Vice Governor General in America, Patrick Powers. He was referring to the issue which faces the new apostolic administrator, **Father Pizzaballa**, one he will have to attempt to resolve. In fact, Fr. Pizzaballa joined the group over dinner Monday night, honoring the Lieutenants and the whole Order with his presence. Through his cooperation, the Order can count on a healthy coordination of aid, with each Lieutenancy being able to devote 10% of its resources to projects other than those of the Latin Patriarchate, for example to aid the Catholic communities of the Greek-Melkite and Maronite churches.

The meeting was followed by a lengthy exchange on **how to reach out to the nonactive members of the Order**. Some of these are very old but still in communion of prayer with the Holy Land, while others have distanced themselves, even morally. In this regard, a committee chaired by the Chancellor will present proposals to the Grand Master.

Concluding, Cardinal O'Brien spoke of his desire that ordained members of the Order be increasingly integrated into the **spiritual accompaniment of Knights and Dames' missions**, especially during this Year of Mercy, the door of which is still open until the feast of Christ the King, November 20 next.

(July 26, 2016)