



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

With the feelings of the Mother of God



During this period, the mystery of Bethlehem occupies our hearts, and Pope Francis invites us to experience it in relation to the current goings-on of the world. **“Peace to the women and men of the beloved Holy Land, the land chosen and favoured by God”**, he declares in his *Urbi et Orbi* message on the feast of the Nativity of the Lord. “May Israelis and Palestinians have the courage and determination to write a new page of history, where hate and revenge give way to the will to build together a future of mutual understanding and harmony”, he adds, invoking more widely peace and agreement between all populations who are victims of conflict in the world, and in particular for their children.

“Let us allow the Child in the manger to challenge us, but **let us also be challenged by all those children in today’s world who are lying not in a crib, caressed with affection by their mothers and fathers**”, he also said during the Christmas Mass in St Peter’s Basilica, turning our eye towards children, “who hide underground to escape bombardment, on the pavements of large cities, in the hold of a boat overladen with immigrants...”.

The following day he meditated on “the power of love” which brings God to become man in Jesus Christ, inviting us again to pray for all the children in the world, “especially those who are deprived of the joys of childhood because of hunger, war and the egoism of adults”.

This call insisted on by the Holy Father, supports what the **Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre encouraged during this period**, wishing us to spiritually engage ourselves as a priority in the intentions of the **children of migrants in the Holy Land**, who are materially supported by our Pontifical Institution.

Let us think of them **with the feelings of the mother of God**, bending down, lowering ourselves, making ourselves small before their fragility, far from the “pompous appearance” newly denounced by Peter’s successor on the occasion of these recent celebrations.

We – thanks to these children – go towards Jesus himself, we go to him with confidence, in the simplicity of life. May our inner attitude be in accordance with that of the Virgin Mary, contemplating the divine presence which attracts us with its tenderness. Also we can testify, with her, to a humble and loving God who brings himself close to all.

François Vayne

(December 30, 2016)