



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

“Our spiritual promise must fill all of our life”

Two Knights of the Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain – Jordi, 26 and Juan-Gualberto, 86 – bear witness to their love for the Order, telling of the “inseparable bond” that unites them to the Holy Land.



Juan-Gualberto de Balanzó y de Solá – Knight Grand Cross, 86 years – passionately recalls his commitment. Born in a family belonging to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for over a century, he himself served the Order in Spain as an Assessor, Master of Ceremonies and Chancellor.

When did you enter the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and what were the reasons for doing so?

I joined the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre on January 26, 1957, sixty-two years ago! The reasons were many, but the personal one – the most important – is my love for Jesus. I love his land, and I love the living Holy Sepulchre, a testimony of Resurrection, where I also served Mass. I can describe this place as the homeland of all Christians, although often forgotten: the Order wants to act as an intermediary between those enemy brothers who fight over it. For me the Order expresses the love of the Good Samaritan towards the local populations.

Furthermore, I have family reasons, because in my case, being part of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre represents a tradition. I have “drawn” on family sources...

Of all the commitments of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, what is the most important work for you?

I believe that the most important rule for the Order is “Ora et labora”: we must be both Martha and Mary. Our motto is summed up in serving everyone without religious or ethnic distinctions, but first

we must support the Christians of the Holy Land, since without us they would unfortunately become extinct.

In your opinion, what does the Order need to improve to make itself better known and help the Christians of the Holy Land?

The Order is proceeding very well; nowadays it has made its mission current with the true and fundamental nobility of soul that characterizes the members. I would even say that we are and belong to the vanguard of the Church. We must prefer holiness to quantity ... I think it is essential to pay particular attention when an aspiring candidate comes to our doors. It is essential that the Lieutenancy requests the candidate's presentation folder from his parish priest. It is also necessary that those who present the future Knight or Dame prove himself or herself responsible for the morality of this aspirant...

It would be desirable to avoid those people who do not feel deeply called to holiness, based on the example of Jesus. We must preach by example! There is nothing worse than salt that becomes tasteless ...

The Knight and the Dame must perceive the difference between the before and after entering our beloved Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Here I am living with humble pride my inner journey towards the Kingdom of God. The Knight's Cross – that of the first rank – must honour our dark coat, impeding evil like a shield. Our spiritual promise must fill all of our life.



Jordi Tomás – a 26 year-old Knight – tells us about his journey in the Order, expressing the joy of serving the Mother Church in the Holy Land.

“I was lucky enough to encounter the Order at the beginning of my university studies, thanks to some people in my group. I think this is the most natural way to enter the Order: the white garments worn

by the Knights attract glances and awakens sensitivities; therefore, we ask ourselves questions such as: Who are they? Why are they dressed like that? What are they doing?

That is how I started the great journey that led me to the origins of the Order's millennial history. The curiosity that the members of the Holy Sepulchre aroused in me – when I was so young – prompted me to read everything I could find about their history, I looked for various documentation and I really found joy in discovering how the Holy Land has always been linked to our faith.

Nowadays, the mission consists in making the presence of Catholic Christians in the Holy Land possible, assisting them in their material and spiritual needs. I am convinced that the greatness of mind of the Knights of my Lieutenancy – whether they are ecclesiastics or lay people – represents one of the main reasons that have made me grow in my determination to enter the Order. On the other hand, it is obvious that a considerable effort is required: to ensure that our testimony of life becomes a source of inspiration for others. I believe that the duty of all Knights and Dames of the Order is to try and fulfil in us the words of Matthew's Gospel: "By their fruits you shall know them" (Mt 7:16). I am sure that we must always act as an example, trying to offer the most appropriate help to the Holy Land.

It is a great honour to belong to the Order, but this must never make us forget the responsibilities we assume on our Investiture: not only an economic commitment but also, and above all, a line of conduct in conformity with the Gospel of Christ, which arouses curiosity in others, pushing them to want to know and learn what we are doing.

We care about the Holy Land: it is a strategic point on the globe, where East and West converge, and has been a privileged witness of the evolution of three cultures for a thousand years! This is the place where the Catholic faith took root. From Nazareth to Jerusalem, passing through Cana, the Sea of Galilee, the Lake of Tiberias, the Jordan River, Mount Tabor, Capernaum ... walking on that land offers a unique emotion, knowing that Jesus saw and lived in the same places about two thousand years ago! I believe we can also that our baptism binds us in a particular way to the place where Christ was baptized.

Collaborating with the Holy Land is not an exclusive mission of the Order, but as Knights, we must act as major representatives in the task entrusted to us. Through our activities we highlight the needs of the Holy Land in today's society, trying to arouse the interest of all those who can help us, each according to their possibilities.

We all, Knights and Dames, have something in common: on the day of our Investiture, we decided to make a huge commitment to the Catholic Church, belonging to one of its Chivalric Orders. I am deeply convinced that the Catholic Church – despite the difficulties existing in our globalized society – offers the answer to that human desire to find meaning in our lives, filling the need for transcendence. In an interconnected and increasingly digitalized world, where everything is expected immediately, the path that Jesus of Nazareth defines in the Beatitudes continues to be a current example for a full and happy existence.

As one of the youngest members of the Order, I believe that the greatest challenge that modern times asks of all of us is to make ourselves worthy of the trust placed in us on the day we entered the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Prayer assists us in this, without it, we would be as empty as false witnesses would!

Our support for the Holy Land always comes in a way that is appropriate and appropriate to the changing material and spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters in that land, where our Lord lived over two thousand years ago."

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