



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

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

## To be a Religious and a Knight: “A Vocation within a Vocation”



***“My journey within the Order began in reverse,” says Father Raffaele Di Muro, O.F.M Conv., president of the Pontifical Theological Faculty ‘San Bonaventura’ Seraphicum, managed by the Order of Conventual Franciscan Friars. In this interview, the Religious-Knight shares how he became part of the Order and how he experiences this “vocation within a vocation.”***

### **Father Raffaele, how did you become involved with the Order of the Holy Sepulchre?**

My journey within the Order began in reverse. I had previously read an article by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master of the Order, about the possibility for religious men and women to become Members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. I experienced a calling and decided to discuss it with the Cardinal, who encouraged me further. As a Franciscan, I clearly have a profound love for Holy Places. However, as Conventual Franciscans, we do not have a direct presence in the Holy Land, so for me, it was a matter of understanding how I could help and offer support – how I could be a “guardian” of the Holy Sepulchre even from here. From the Cardinal’s encouraging words, I then moved on to contact the Lieutenancy, followed by the local Delegation (St. Luke), which guided me toward the Investiture.

### **You are a Conventual Franciscan friar. How did this calling come to you?**

I am originally from Lucera (province of Foggia) and share my hometown with Francesco Antonio Fasani, a Franciscan saint. I have always been fascinated by his life, and when I felt called to

consecrated life, the Franciscan order naturally presented itself as the path to follow. The getting to know more about St. Maximilian Kolbe's life further strengthened my resolve in this choice. After my novitiate, I was sent to the Seraphicum in Rome for my academic and religious formation, as well as for priestly training. After my ordination as a priest, I was assigned to Benevento for nine years before returning here, where I have held various roles (formator, professor, and, since 2020, president). For six years, I also served as president of the Militia of the Immaculata, an international public association of the faithful of pontifical right inspired by Father Kolbe's work and his missionary and Marian charism.

**How would you describe your experience of membership in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre as a religious?**

At first, I did not think it was possible to belong to two orders. However, I then realized how this enriches my life as a Franciscan. When I felt drawn to the reality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, I asked for permission from my General Superior, who did not hesitate in granting it. In my community, everyone is aware of my membership, which I experience as a "vocation within a vocation." One must feel called to be a Knight or Dame, and have a special love for the Holy Land. One must be, as I would put it, "kneaded with the Holy Land." Regarding life within the Order, we now hold most of the meetings of the St. Luke Delegation – to which I belong – here at the Seraphicum. The meetings take place bimonthly on a Saturday afternoon, and we offer a conference on spiritual or ecclesial themes, followed by the Eucharistic celebration and a time of fellowship. I have the pleasure and honor of giving some of these conferences, thus offering a service to the Knights and Dames with whom we grow in fellowship and closeness.

**You received the Investiture in December 2023 from Cardinal Filoni. Was there anything in that experience that particularly moved you?**

What struck me the most was the intensity of that celebration. To be honest, I did not think I could experience such emotion again after my priestly ordination. I can't point to a single moment; it was everything all together. The celebration is very long but rich, and every moment has a particular meaning that I fully savored.

**How do you hope to see the Order evolve in the coming years?**

The Cardinal Grand Master has given a strong push in the field of spirituality, which is becoming more and more defined and outlined. I expect that in the coming years there will be an increasing awareness of the beauty of this aspect for the Knights and Dames. I wish for each of us to experience the spirituality of the Order because that is where the future of this Pontifical Institution lies.

**Interview by Elena Dini**

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