



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

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

## Dame of the Order and boxer: the story of Teresa



“Order and discipline”: these words have been my constant companions throughout my life! I am the proud daughter of a Marshal of the Carabinieri and, since I was a child, I was brought up to respect the rules, hearing one single phrase repeatedly: “Order and Discipline!” These words, a sort of constitutional law in the Mascione house, have shaped me, both spiritually and culturally, over the years.

I was born in Padua and raised from the age of two in Campobasso. After graduating as an accountant programmer, and dreaming of a great career, I enrolled at the university graduating in the field of law. I then obtained a qualification to practise law and I started, at a very young age, a professional and working career in the insurance field, first with a Broker and immediately afterwards in an insurance agency where I still work today.

I am particularly proud to have joined the Order with which I had unknowingly come into contact many years ago when, as a child, I started attending the Church, the choir, the oratory, the catechism preparation course for my first Holy Communion and to meet Jesus in my first contact with the Gospel. As our Grand Master Cardinal Fernando Filoni underlined, “belonging to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre does not happen outside the Church, but in it.”

A few years ago, I met some members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, as the offices of the Abruzzo-Molise Section and the Delegation of the Order are in my city. These were very special people including the Head of the Section, the Knight Commander with Star Carmine De Camillis, who invited me to come to their meetings, and to whom I owe my presentation to the Order. At the first spiritual meeting to which I was invited, I was able to learn more about their nobility of soul, their loyalty and dedication to the Order, their commitment to witness, faith and charity towards the Holy Land. I was drawn to them, so much so that I asked in committed and frank terms to be allowed

to start on the path of formation and preparation during which the firm passion and determination to be part of this wonderful world of solidarity and love got rooted in me.

Being a Dame of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a great honour for me. It represents a constant and continuous commitment to the Catholic Church and individual Christians, not only financially but above all spiritually, because “joining the Order means being convinced of the spiritual value of membership and, at the same time, of the very great value of charity.” (cit. F. Filoni, And the whole house was filled with the fragrance of perfume).

A great desire, as soon as the socio-economic and political situation improves, is to be able to go to the Holy Land with my brothers and sisters, to see the Holy Sepulchre, to touch and walk through the places where Jesus lived. Being able to see the charitable and social works carried out through the tangible contribution of material and spiritual solidarity that we send to support our Christian brothers and their families who live there in difficult circumstances is a human and faith encounter that I cannot wait to experience. I want to tell others about it, as a Christian testimony, part of a centuries-old history, in places where time seems to have stood still.

Discipline, technique, education, order are also an integral part of the sport that I have been practising for several years in my free time, boxing.

I approached this discipline gradually because I was fascinated by a lifestyle that always creates new challenges to face and the ability to react to blows. Fighting is not just a physical action, but it forms, enriches, makes us grow, it is a psychological reaction in the face of adversity, those situations where it does not matter whether we win or lose, but which teach us courage and respect.

There is always a lot of confusion and almost ignorance when people compare boxing to street fighting. We should look at this sport with more humanity, break down the stereotype of violence represented by physical sport, but use the right term to define it: the noble art of boxing. All this is understood at the end of a match: the embrace of two boxers at the end of the fight. A gesture that shows that beating your opponent is not synonymous with superiority but with determination and mutual respect.

Behind every match, there are many sacrifices, especially when you are no longer as young as you once were, like me, and when work takes up most of your day, but those very sacrifices lead you to victory, and helped me personally to win the title of Italian vice-champion of light boxing in 2019.

In Greek culture, the word “athlete” identified a more complex figure than the simple sportsman, rather it embodied all the virtues and values of the human being. I can say that I feel like an Athlete, with a capital A both in and out of the ring, because sport, as a source of principles, can be a place of inspiration for others. It can revitalise civic commitment to society, be a place for integral development, where a person can learn about the faith and Christianity in exercising the various disciplines. In this perspective, the European Code of Sports Ethics was developed, the fundamental principle of which is fair play, which incorporates the concepts of friendship, mutual respect, honesty and team sporting spirit. Every day I try to pass it on to my teammates, especially the younger ones, so that they can “give the best of themselves”, an expression used several times by Pope Francis and Cardinal Kevin Farrell in his Vatican document on sport. I hope to stimulate my teammates to become better people in the world in all aspects of life, because the sporting effort to achieve set goals can be compared in the context of faith, to the commitment to the Church to maintain a Christian life focused on doing good, and loving your neighbour.

**Teresa Mascione**

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