



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

50 years in the Order for the Lieutenant for Central Italy Luigi Giulianelli



Knight of the Grand Cross Engineer Luigi Giulianelli, Lieutenant in charge of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy, celebrated his 50 years of presence in the Order in 2017. Through his testimony we retrace these decades within the history of the Order in one of its Lieutenancies.

What motivated you to enter the Order?

Initially I took this path inspired by my father's family tradition. I was very young when I joined the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, 50 years ago, December 21, 1967. My father passed away soon after that, at the age of 61, and the Lieutenant of the time, the lawyer Ciocetti, called me to invite me to be more present within the life of the Lieutenancy, asking me to take on the role of Master of Ceremonies, which I held until October 8, 2017.

In all these years is there a particular moment that you carry in your heart and which bolstered your commitment to your mission within the Order?

Every Investiture, every time a new Knight or a new Dame enters the Order is a moment of joy. I have had the grace to experience many Investitures and each ceremony is different from the last. Another moment that I remember with particular warmth is the international pilgrimage that I led to Lourdes in 2005. The many Knights and Dames present, there at the grotto in front of Our Lady, the intense ceremony and the whole context gave me a great impulse and renewed my commitment within the Order. In these 50 years I have never missed an important ceremony and for this I am grateful.

It can be said that the Order has become a bit like a family ...

Certainly. First of all because I had the good fortune to always collaborate with people, Lieutenants, with whom I came to create a family atmosphere: Ciocetti, Alberti Poja, Lamberto Cantuti Castelvetri, Mario Cantuti Castelvetri, Consoli Palermo Navarra and Petrillo. We have always established relationships marked by respect. Being part of the same family can also be felt in the Lieutenancy meetings on the first Friday of the month at the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, in Rome, with the Grand Prior and at other spiritual moments (retreats and preparation for important liturgical moments in the life of the Church). There are also opportunities for even more spontaneous encounters and fraternal sharing. Moreover, since Rome is the operative arm of the Grand Magisterium, I have participated in many initiatives also in this environment, thus having the possibility to build relations also with the Order's central body.

For a member of the Order, pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a decisive experience. Is there any place that was particularly meaningful to you in this land to which all Knights and Dames are deeply attached?

The place where one ponders one's life is without doubt the Holy Sepulchre. Entering the shrine one at a time and kneeling before the empty Sepulchre of Christ for a few minutes is a unique experience. Coming from a very Catholic family, for me it was a moment of confirmation of my faith. I also had the good fortune to visit these places with Msgr. Natalino Zagotto who had been in the Holy Land more than 100 times: it is important to discover the holy places under the guidance of someone who knows them very well.

Is there a passage from Scripture that particularly speaks to you?

I am particularly fond of the Scriptures of the Vigil of Arms and of Prayer with its three readings and three psalms that speak of Jerusalem. Through them one sees Jerusalem as a point of arrival both on earth and in heaven. The readings then conclude with the Gospel of the Resurrection.

How did you feel following your appointment as Lieutenant?

Over the years I have been a Master of Ceremonies, President of Lazio, Secretary and Chancellor and now I have been asked to take on the role of Lieutenant. At first I was hesitant but then I saw that there was really a lot of expectation around me and so I decided to accept. I was deeply moved especially when the Governor General gave me the decree with which His Eminence Cardinal O'Brien appointed me Lieutenant for Central Italy. What pleased me the most was the context: all the Knights and Dames – whom I have invested over the years – were happy and this encouraged me.

The Order has a long history but, like the whole Church, lives in step with the times, opening itself to change, paying attention at the same time to keeping itself in line with tradition. What changes have you witnessed in these 50 years?

Our ceremonies have always remained the same and this helps us to maintain the tradition and actualize it year after year without it becoming just "history" but a living part of the "present". But what changes is the new members: we have more and more young people who are asking to become part of our Order. In the last investiture more than 40% of those admitted were under the age of 40.

We have also noticed a growing need for spirituality and so we decided to give the preparation for Investiture (which lasts a year) a purely spiritual emphasis, thanks to the support of the Priors.

Interview by Elena Dini

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