



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

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

## The Return of the Crown of Thorns to Notre-Dame of Paris



Following the fire in 2019, the reopening ceremonies of Notre-Dame de Paris were undoubtedly a momentous event. The Cathedral holds profound symbolic value for Catholics in France and beyond, which the reopening united in universal communion. Due to the presence of heads of state and official delegations, the participation of the Order had to be limited on December 7 and 8 to the opening of the doors and the first Mass. Nonetheless, a dozen members of the Lieutenancy for France were able to attend.

The Order enjoyed a greater presence on Friday, December 13, for the transfer, exposition, and veneration of the Crown of Thorns. For the event, there were around 250 Knights and Dames present, including delegations from Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, and Croatia. The Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy for France, who traditionally guard the Sacred Crown, accompanied its return to Notre-Dame during this deeply moving celebration.

At the conclusion of these beautiful ceremonies, I wish to speak on behalf of my fellow Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy for France to thank all those who joined us in prayer, whether in person or via the televised broadcast, particularly from the Holy Land. I also invite you to extend your gratitude to everyone—especially the artisans—who contributed to the reopening of Notre-Dame de Paris for worship. This cathedral is a witness to centuries of Christianity in “old Europe,” which today finds itself gravely wounded in its faith, a faith that remains integral to its history and heritage. The renewal of Notre-Dame is a magnificent testament to Hope, the Hope that guides us in every step we take toward the heavenly Jerusalem.

**Christian Piotre**

*Lieutenant for France*

*(December 16, 2024)*