



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Joining an Investiture Weekend retreat “remotley”



Valencia Yvonne Camp, Lieutenant for USA Middle Atlantic, tells us about the spiritual experience in her Lieutenancy. Her story is interesting for all members of the Order because it illustrates how, around the world, rather than admitting defeat by the pandemic, Knights and Dames were able to remain close to one another through prayer, and continue to be united in the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Middle Atlantic Lieutenancy, USA, celebrated the 25-year anniversary of its first Investiture Weekend in 2019. Its creation and establishment were approved in 1993 and dioceses from the Eastern and Southeastern Lieutenancies were ceded to form the Middle Atlantic Lieutenancy. Commemorating our 25 years as a Lieutenancy, we were blessed to return to the site of our first Investiture Weekend liturgies which were held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington in 1994.

However, 2020 was quite a jolt: activities planned for the 2020 Investiture Weekend were cancelled due to Covid-19. Rather than lose the momentum we have built in the Lieutenancy, the leadership looked on this moment as an opportunity. If we couldn't gather in person, we could personally be present through prayer and spiritual exercise in a unique and special way during that weekend.

The Middle Atlantic Lieutenancy initiated a Spiritual Reflection Series in 2018. To foster the spirituality of the Lieutenancy, spiritual reflections are sent throughout the year on Solemnities, high holy days and holidays. The spiritual reflections are sent Lieutenancy-wide to the Knights and Dames via an internet platform (“*Constant Contact*”) and US mail, as well as made available on our website. The reflections provide an opportunity for Knights and Dames to quiet our busy day and be united in prayer and reflection throughout the days and seasons of the year. These are also an opportunity to engage our Knight Chaplains more fully in the life of the Lieutenancy.

In addition, again starting in 2018, books have been distributed during and following our Investiture Weekend. In 2018, we provided the books “Advent with the Saints” and “Lent with the Saints”. In

2019, the book “The Parish as a School of Prayer: Foundations for the New Evangelization” was provided. These books provide for personal reflection and growth.

The Lieutenancy built on these two initiatives to rise above the potential isolation of the COVID year. Even though we could not gather physically, there are no barriers to our gathering spiritually! To preserve the Investiture Weekend spirit, foster unity, and pray for relief from this pandemic, the Lieutenancy created an “Investiture Weekend Retreat – An Opportunity for Structured Private Prayer” for the same weekend during which our Investiture activities would have taken place, on October 23 and 24, 2020.

The “Investiture Weekend Retreat” asked the Knights and Dames to be united at designated times throughout those days for prayer and spiritual reflection. The theme was “Father of mercies and God of all comfort” taken from the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, second Encyclical letter by Saint Pope John Paul II, published exactly 40 years ago (on November 30, 1980). The retreat program with schedule, prayers and reflections, letter of invitation and explanation, and a special prayer card was mailed to all the Knights and Dames to facilitate participation.

From the comfort and safety of their homes, Knights and Dames (with their families and friends) could follow the schedule which included the times to pray and read the reflections. At the appointed time, our members were joining together across 12 dioceses in 12 states and two time zones. These unifying times of prayer and reflection allowed Knights and Dames to share prayer individually but together. It is like Investiture Weekend, but with one important difference: all the Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy had the opportunity to “attend,” even those who for reasons of age or infirmity or other business cannot attend Investiture Weekend.

The twelve spiritual reflections offered over two days were presented by a Knight Chaplain from the different dioceses in the Lieutenancy. There were also morning and evening prayer, as well as the recitation of the Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy both days. The schedule allowed for attendance or participation at the Noon Mass as appropriate to health safety guidelines of their jurisdiction, preceded by the Angelus.

Rather than be defeated by the pandemic, this Investiture Weekend Retreat allowed us in an unexpected way to be close to each other in prayer and walk together the spiritual path of mercy.

Valencia Camp

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