A look at the current situation of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in the United States

Investiture ceremony at the Church of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, California.

It is gratifying to witness the joy of our Members as they celebrate their Annual Meetings and Investitures. Members are happy to be together, renew friendships, and welcome new Members.

After a successful Lieutenants Meeting this past June in Pasadena, California with Lieutenants and spouses from all North America, we are on a path to regain momentum to grow and develop the Order in our Lieutenancies. The theme of the meeting was the Spirituality of the Order as articulated by His Eminence Cardinal Filoni in his book: The House was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume: A Spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre; with a special emphasis on the Eucharist.

During the June Meeting, we spent an entire day on developing Goals and Objectives to renew and grow the Order. These Goals and Objectives are being developed further through ongoing discussion and will be distributed to all North American Members.

Grand Master Cardinal Filoni spoke to us on the importance of Spirituality as Members of the Order and challenged us to enhance our personal sanctification and that of our Members. We also discussed the importance of the Eucharist and ways to restore belief in the True Presence of Our Lord in our respective communities.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), at their regularly scheduled meeting last November, adopted a document entitled, The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church; and set in motion a three-year effort to renew appreciation for the True Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist. This Eucharistic theme has been at the heart of many of this year's Annual Meetings and Investitures in North America. As believers, Knights and Dames can and will be strong supporters of our Bishops in this three-year effort.

On May 1, 2020, the United States and Canada rededicated our two countries to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Archbishop José Gomez, KC*HS, Archbishop of Los Angeles and the Grand Prior of the USA Western Lieutenancy, as Chairman of the USCCB led the United States Bishops in this rededication. At the same time, the Most Reverend Richard Gagnon, KC*HS, Archbishop of Winnipeg and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops led the Canadian Bishops in this rededication. We pray that with this rededication, Our Lady will watch over and bless our two countries.

Members from all over North America participated in a pilgrimage dedicated to Our Lady of Palestine at the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament founded by Mother Angelica in Hanceville, Alabama.

Over the last several months, most of our Lieutenancies held their Annual Meetings and Investitures. We saw record attendance with a large number of Investees and Promotions. Members enjoyed the opportunity to gather and share friendships. Examples of some of the larger Annual Meetings and Investitures are 600 Members in attendance in the Western Lieutenancy, 750 in the Northern Lieutenancy, and 900 in the Southwestern Lieutenancy. Special thank you to the hundreds of Members who volunteered their time to handle the logistics and make these Investiture weekends so very enriching.

At the Consistory in Rome in August, Bishop Robert McElroy, a Member of the Order and Bishop of San Diego was elevated to Cardinal by the Holy Father, Pope Francis; and elevated to Knight Grand Cross by the Order.

In mid-October, Members from across North America attended a Pilgrimage dedicated to Our Lady of Palestine held at Mother Angelica's Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Alabama. This Pilgrimage was hosted by the Southeastern Lieutenancy. The Pilgrimage consisted of presentations on the Blessed Mother, and a special Mass at the Shrine which was presided over by Bishop Steven Raica, KC*HS, the Bishop of Birmingham, Alabama. Mass was broadcast online and recorded. The recording of the Mass can be viewed on the North America website noted below.

In October, the monthly North America broadcasts resumed. The October Broadcast featured Bishop Andrew Cozzens, KC*HS, who has been tasked by the USCCB to lead the three-year Eucharistic renewal effort. Bishop Cozzens is the Bishop of Crookston, Minnesota and is a very dynamic, young Bishop who is ideal to lead this renewal effort. All of these monthly broadcasts are recorded and can be watched live or at a later date on the North America website: https://eohsjnorthamerica.org.

P. Thomas Pogge, KGCHS

Vice Governor General for North America

(December 2022)