



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

From the Vigil to the Investiture: Slovenia's joy

In September, the Grand Master celebrated the ceremony of Investiture on the atmospheric Bled island



On September 12, 2015, the Slovene Lieutenancy prepared the fourth Investiture of new Knights and Ladies. Unlike in some European countries, the Order has been present on Slovene ground for only slightly more than a decade. The first Slovene Knights were invested in 2001 and made up a Magisterial Delegation. At the next Investiture in 2004 they were rather numerous and were allowed to establish an independent Lieutenancy.

The solemnities of the Investiture took place in Bled. The mystical image of the town is created by the islet in the middle of a glacial lake and a steep cliff with a castle from the 11th century on the top. The feeling of mystery is even deeper due to the Church of St. Mary of Assumption on the island and a view of the snow-covered Julian Alps far on the horizon.

The Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien arrived to Bled on September 11. After a working lunch he made a pilgrimage to the Church of St. Mary of Assumption on the island on a traditional boat called "pletna" and was accompanied by Lieutenant Marjana Kos, the Nuncio in Slovenia Msgr. Juliusz Janush, the Chancellor of the Order Ivan Rebernik with his wife, the Master of Ceremonies for the Investiture Msgr. Andrej Saje and the parish priest of Bled Father Janez Ferkolj.

The island of Bled was a holy place as early as pagan times and this is evident from archaeological remains. The Church of St. Mary of Assumption today is located on the very foundations of a temple to the Slavonic goddess Īva (lat. Vita). A special spiritual message is conveyed by 99 stone stairs that lead to the entrance of the church: the invitation to allow one's soul to grow closer to God. One special attraction of the church is a "wishing bell". Legend has it that each pilgrim is allowed to ring it and Cardinal O'Brien did the same... Upon a wish of the local priest, the Cardinal also signed into the Roll of honoured visitors.

On the same evening, four Slovene aspirants stood Vigil in the church on the island. The Solemn ceremony, the historic and religious importance of the island, the rich message of nature and architecture of Gothic and Baroque artists prepared the aspirants for the ceremony of the Investiture, through which they entered a new path in their Christian life. The rite of the Investiture was held the next day in the parish church of St. Martin and was presided over by the Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal O'Brien.

This important ceremony was concelebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio in Slovenia, Msgr. Juliusz Janusz, and the Mass was also attended by the member of the Grand Magisterium and Chancellor of the Order Ivan Rebernik. The new brothers and sister received expressions of support and joy from over 30 Knights and Ladies from the Lieutenancies of Austria, Northern Italy, Hungary, Poland, Eastern Spain and a representative of the Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta. On the occasion of the Investiture, Cardinal Grand Master granted promotion to four members.

Due to official obligations in Rome, the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Ljubljana Stanislav Zore could not attend the Investiture. This is why Cardinal O'Brien invested him a few days earlier in Rome and the members of the Lieutenancy are honestly grateful for his having done so. On this occasion, the Cardinal Grand Master appointed the Archbishop Zore as new Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy of Slovenia.

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