

# JERUSALEM CROSS

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## Message from the Grand Master

### IN A SO-CALLED LIQUID SOCIETY, IS THERE STILL ROOM FOR GOD?

**M**embers of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre often ponder how to witness to their faith in today's world. Questions on this issue are regularly asked of the Grand Master, particularly when he participates in the Investitures and when he visits the Lieutenancies, as was the case recently in Belgium. Cardinal Filoni responded to this concern of the Knights and Dames with the following insightful reflection that is relevant far beyond our pontifical institution.

In a public park in Brussels, a distinguished but troubled gentleman, stopping me, asked: *What should I do to overcome my disbelief?*

Some years ago on the walls of houses and along streets, even important ones, one

often encountered an inscription: *God is there.* A statement or a provocation? In truth for an instant, those reading it would wonder: Who wrote it? Or be annoyed: Who are the vandals? But also inwardly: Do I believe? For some, it could mean something else.

Indeed, in deeply organized societies, there are none or few "free" spaces left. Many



*Meditating on the parable in which the tenants feel so much like masters that they kill the son of the landowner (Mt 21:33-46), how can we not think of the way our society behaves toward the Son of God himself?*

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sacred buildings, simple or artistically spectacular, built by craftsmen with lost skills, already intended in themselves to "speak" of God and with God, today appear mute and often empty; not infrequently serving as small museums for distracted and passing tourists, when not converted to something else: halls for "godless" conferences or entertainment, or good even for binge drinking and dormitories. Some find them a ballast because they weigh down the meagre budgets of dioceses or parishes. In Italy, fortunately, many of them fall under the care of historic buildings to which the state devotes its attention.

One gets the impression (or is it reality?) that in the West God has withdrawn having no place. Sometimes, out of outright rejection. If in the theological context it was taught that the mystery of God's revelation was like the unfolding of the heavens and the descent from above, today the

indifference, perhaps more than a rejection, suggests: we have no need of God; Heaven can close again, and leave space to something else!

However, we are scandalized by evil, whose presence and force, Benedict XVI said, comes from rejection or detachment: between peoples and tribes, war is preferred; between men and women, blind violence is unleashed; between individuals and societies, hatred is cultivated. And even among religious and political ideologies, barbaric blindness takes over. "A world without God can be nothing but a world without meaning" (Benedict XVI). The issue today is that God is reduced to hypotheses and therefore discussion of such through intellectualistic assumptions, is not only acceptable it is considered chic. But in the public and private sphere, where the assertion of absolute freedom is confused with pure individualism, God is superfluous.



Absence is marginalization, or it is reduced to a private matter, sometimes too unreal, at least until one is "touched" in the depths of one's being, where, not infrequently, things are turned upside down: If God is there, is it not because of him that evil exists?

In mental confusion, where the sense of omnipotence and "I am owed everything" predominates, a sense of limitation, which implies some humility and assumption of responsibility, is lacking. We are not "Lords" of our being and existence, but "Administrators."

The issue is that we really make ourselves lords of life, and thus faith, revelation, knowing, have no place; faith no longer gives meaning to existence, and when there is something, we downgrade it to ceremonial.

The Church also needs to resume its deepest and most authentic mission. There

is no need to create another Church or give itself another mission; attempts to make it almost a modern NGO have failed many times in the past, but also with disguised forms in current times. Changing its nature to suit the wind of occasion in so-called liquid societies only indicates serious disorientation, because without obedience to God there will be no Church.

Meanwhile: is there still room for God? Yes! But in obedience and listening due to Christ, on whom one may or may not converge; but this also happened to Christ Himself: *Therefore, many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" (Jn. 6:60).* Yet Christ's saying also elicited the most existentially honest response: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68).*

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

## The Order in Union with the Universal Church

### "PEACE IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE"

*In an interview with Gian Guido Vecchi for Italian daily Corriere della Sera, Cardinal Filoni commented on the war in Europe and the Church's diplomatic efforts to achieve peace. We republish the original Italian article translated into five languages in our Newsletter to inform members of the Order and their friends around the world.*

*The diplomat who during the Second Gulf War was the only Western ambassador to remain in Baghdad under U.S. bombing: "Cardinal Zuppi's mission is like Etchegaray's in Iraq: The Pope sends an extraordinary envoy as a sign of great care. But ordinary and extraordinary diplomacy are not alternatives: they mutually complement each other."*

"I remember when John Paul II sent Etchegaray as an envoy during the war between Iran and Iraq, the cardinal had succeeded in getting prisoners from both sides released and returned to Rome with a photo together with Saddam Hussein. When he was sent to Iraq again in 2003, he brought the photo with him and to begin the dialogue, as if to establish contact with the past, he asked Saddam: will you autograph it for me?" Cardinal **Fernando Filoni** smiles, what one wouldn't do to mediate, "but of course, one talks to everyone, cultivates good relations with everyone," says the great





*Cardinal Filoni visiting Iraqi refugees in a mission Pope Francis entrusted to him in 2014.*



diplomat. The former prefect of Propaganda Fide, who during the second Gulf War was the only Western ambassador to remain in Baghdad under U.S. bombing. "When the roar of bombs and missiles surrounded the nunciature I used to say: Keep calm, as long as we hear them it means we are alive."

**Your Eminence, the Pope chose Cardinal Zuppi as his "envoy" for his peace mission to Ukraine. In 2003 you were nuncio to Iraq and Wojtyla sent Etchegaray to Baghdad. Do you see any similarities?**

"The analogy lies precisely in the appointment of an extraordinary envoy. It is an act of high level attention to the warring parties. It means that the Pope is not only using ordinary instruments but something more, it is an important sign to those involved."

**But why does he send an "envoy" and not proceed with the Secretariat of State and Nuncios?**

"Ordinary and extraordinary diplomacy are not alternatives but mutually complement each other. The Holy Father decides this in agreement with the Secretariat of State; it is the circumstances that indicate when it is appropriate to send an extraordinary envoy "to the front line." Meanwhile, ordinary diplomacy remains present, can lend a hand with all possible discretion, provides elements of knowledge."

**Moscow has shown an openness, says**

**it "appreciates" the initiative, but the situation remains difficult. How can action be taken?**

"There are two levels to examine. The first is the ideal level of readiness, in this case affirmed by Moscow: you can get to the point where the parties say they are willing, fine. But then there is the practical level, and here other factors come into play. Even in the time of Benedict XV the warring sides expressed readiness to the appeals of the Pope, but the Great War did not stop. Saddam also sought me, but the war could not be avoided. It is a question of seeing the real will. But there is also the humanitarian aspect, the prisoners, the wounded or tortured people, and there a lot of work can and must be done."

**Can a "humanitarian" dialogue foster a political one?**

"They are different levels, but already applying international, humanitarian law would be a huge step forward. Stop the bombing of civilian areas, respect the conventions on prisoners. And this dialogue yes, it can be part of the foundations for broader peace, create a favorable climate, and it should be pursued even with special missions."

**You remained under the bombs in Irak. How do you explain the Holy See's tenacity?**

"I like to remember Monsignor Cesare Zacchi, who never left Cuba after Castro's



revolution. It was not an easy situation, but he stayed: I am here, if they want to talk to me they know where to find me. This is the logic that Paul VI explained in *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*: we are not like other realities, the nuncio expresses the presence of the Pope among the people, and a parent never abandons his children in difficulties."

**What is your reading of the mission for Ukraine?**

"Eh, it is an extremely difficult situation. With so many deaths and so much destruction, it is hard to say: let's forget the past. There has to be a real will. But peace is always possible. The Church does not back down before difficulties."

## FIVE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER TO BE CREATED CARDINALS, INCLUDING THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

On 9 July following the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis announced the creation of 21 new cardinals, whose "origins express the universality of the Church, which continues to proclaim God's merciful love to all people on earth". Several of them are members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, foremost among them the Grand Prior, His Beatitude Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Patriarch of Jerusalem, whose jurisdiction and pastoral care extend to Latin-rite Catholics living in Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Cyprus. He is also President of the Conference of Latin Bishops of the Arab Regions (CELRA).

Several other bishops and archbishops involved in the Order on various continents will also be created cardinals at the consistory on 30 September: Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Cape Town (South Africa), Luis José Rueda Aparicio, Archbishop of Bogotá, Américo Manuel Alves Aguiar, Auxiliary Bishop of Lisbon (Portugal), and 82-year-old Agostino Marchetto, Apostolic Nuncio to Belarus.

Cardinal Filoni, Grand Master, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone,



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*The Grand Prior of the Order, His Beatitude Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who will be created Cardinal at the Consistory of 30 September 2023, accompanied the Grand Master on his solemn entry into the Holy Sepulchre on 10 May 2022.*

Governor General, the Members of the Grand Magisterium, the Lieutenants and the 30,000 Knights and Dames throughout the world, offer their congratulations to the Grand Prior of the Order and to each of the new Members of the Sacred College of Cardinals, entrusting their ministry in prayer to the intercession of Our Lady of Palestine, Patroness of the Order.





## A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND TRUST

*"The Holy Land, a Place of Encounter": colloquium at Palazzo della Rovere*

An important conference was held at Palazzo della Rovere on March 11, 2023, organized by the **Centro Studi Federico II of Palermo** and the **Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre**, with the presence of numerous personalities from the ecclesiastical and diplomatic world. In their welcome address, the heads of the Federico II Study Center – **Giuseppe Di Franco**, President, and **Mario Nanni**, Chairman of the Scientific Committee – emphasized the historical contribution of Emperor Frederick II to multicultural dialogue in the Middle Ages, thanks in particular to the friendly relations established with Sultan Malik al-Kamil.

The chairman of the Italian Chamber of Deputies' Culture Committee, **Federico Mollicone**, also paid tribute to the work of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in promoting a culture of peace in the Holy Land, particularly through education, supporting the Latin Patriarchate's schools, which welcome pupils of different faiths. "The Order and its 30. 000 members, Dames and Knights, ensure their own direct aid to the various realities of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and, in particular, as we know, to charitable and educational initiatives, without any interdenominational preclusion," he stressed. He went on to note that "this is the beauty of the meaning of the



*The speakers at the conference on "the Holy Land, a place of encounter," held at Palazzo della Rovere on May 11. From left: Msgr. Rafic Nabra, Rabbi Tamar Elad-Appelbaum, moderator Elena Dini, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi and Imam Nader Akkad.*

encounter between the three religions in the Holy Place of Jerusalem and in the other territories. In difficult times like these, as the Holy Father also reminds us, it is important to make people understand that the care, the encounter, the education of children, whether they are Christians, Muslims or Jews, bears the message of spiritual union that can counteract the conflicts, wars and tensions that we are currently witnessing"

Grand Master **Cardinal Fernando Filoni**, then opened the talk by highlighting the experience of encounter exemplified by the saint from Assisi during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land: "Francis appreciated the religiosity of Sultan Al-Malik who prayed five times a day. Their encounter became a model for mutual respect and in Francis the idea of fraternity replaced that of conquest by arms, preferring the Christian witness of



life and preaching." "The Holy Land experience that opened his heart and mind, we find in the *Regula non bullata* of 1221, on his return from Palestine; he wanted his friars in the Holy Land to be "subject to every creature" and to cultivate friendship: *'If a friar by divine inspiration intends to go among the Saracens...let him not quarrel, nor have contentions, but be subject to every human creature for the Lord's sake as a Christian...'*; this opened the way apparently to utopia. The Franciscans, however, have been living and guarding, without violent conquest, Christian holy places and welcoming pilgrims for eight centuries," the Grand Master stressed. He compared this fraternal Franciscan approach to the diplomatic work of Frederick II: "If Francis' vision of the Holy Land can be said to be prophetic and at the same time radical, in another sphere the vision of Frederick II appears politically revolutionary when, a decade or so after Francis of Assisi, he came to Palestine, forced to conduct a crusade; he went on to obtain, the control and the royal crown of Jerusalem and the access for Christian pilgrims to Bethlehem and Nazareth, all without bloodshed." "Frederick II's crusade, the Sixth Crusade, was atypical because it took place – it was 1228 – without fighting; the dispute was resolved through diplomatic means, so after forty-two years and several failed military expeditions or brief successes, Jerusalem returned to the disposal of Christians, the emperor having signed a ten-year peace with Sultan Al-Kamil," Cardinal Filoni added, before explaining how the Order of the Holy Sepulchre "strengthened by the 'spirit' of Francis of Assisi and the 'vision' open to dialogue between peoples of which Frederick II was the interpreter" has a duty to contribute to the encounter, "a contribution that passes through collaboration with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, university and school education, social work, aid to refugees and the many victims of hatred and violence."

Led by the moderator, **Elena Dini** – of

the Grand Magisterium's Communications Office – the four speakers developed the theme of the colloquium, each according to his or her expertise and religious affiliation.

**Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi**, Prefect Emeritus of the Dicastery for Culture, affirmed that the encounter between God and humanity and among humans is at the heart of the universal message of Jerusalem. He pointed out that "in the Judaic tradition there is a beautiful aphorism that says, 'the world is like the eye, the white is the sea, the iris is the earth, the pupil is Jerusalem, and the image reflected in it is the temple,' thus emphasizing the spiritual effort "to converge the complete horizon toward this terminal point, the tent of encounter. Psalm 87 contains all of the cardinal points...and the psalmist painted a map with Egypt, Babylon, Palestine, Tyre, the Phoenix, Ethiopia..." he noted, recalling that in the Christian tradition "spiritually we are all natives, we are all Jerusalemites." He went on to consider that "the stones still speak" in Jerusalem and convey a solid message of hope to all humanity, outlining "the topography of salvation" in which we must all find ourselves. Three of these stones caught his attention.

"First of all, we must remember the stone of the temple, the Western Wall, which we popularly call the Wailing Wall," he said, seeing in this symbol "the representation of precisely this ideal convergence with the dream of remaining there as a psalmist says: being able to remain like the swallows and sparrows who have built their nests under the eaves. The second stone is, of course, the Christian one, the *Anastasis*, as the Greek-Eastern tradition rightly calls the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre," he added, describing for the Christian, "the great revolution of his conception of being, of existing, which is not like a river flowing toward the estuary, beyond which there is the abyss of nothingness and silence, but it is a path that has in it a beyond and another, which has, precisely, the overturned stone and the open







sky, the ascension." The third stone mentioned by the speaker is related to the Islamic tradition. "The Dome of the Rock is the place where, according to tradition, Muhammad, the Prophet, ascended to heaven from Mecca arriving in the Holy City and there he met God," Cardinal Ravasi concluded, thus summarizing the common message of these three stones: "a message of hope, of trust."

Arriving directly from the Holy City, **Rabbi Tamar Elad-Appelbaum** pointed out that in Hebrew Jerusalem, which means "search for peace," " is a name in the plural, *Yerushalyim*, with the Hebrew ending of the plural: "Im " Beloved of the three Abrahamic religions, Jerusalem," she pointed out, is "a teacher of assembling, a teacher of cure and healing, put at the gates of Eden, to remind us that they open only if we assemble together, only if we encounter, to remind us that God is revealed through his many beloved creatures and nations, and His cure is around us every day, in the human beings around us, awaiting that we encounter each other - and heal". As rabbi of a community of hundreds called Zion, she explained that this name is one of the holy names of the

Holy City, "for Zion in Hebrew means noticing our fellow wherever they are, a name aspiring to notice those who are around us". "We started Zion by first inviting Jews from all streams of ideologies to gather, encounter and know each other, then we started meeting regularly with Christian and Muslims faith leaders and communities who became true friends and partners; then we initiated interfaith text study and interfaith prayers in the public sphere of Jerusalem where hundreds of people who have never met each other came together, we started learning Arabic and created a joint interfaith distribution project for all the poor of Jerusalem, all faiths, together," she recounted, arousing particular interest in the audience.

For his part, **Imam Nader Akkad**, of the Rome Mosque, pointed out that "Jerusalem in Arabic is called 'al-Quds,' and the word 'al-Quds' refers precisely to the holy, the sacred, thus the Holy Land, the sacred city, the Holy City." He showed how "it was the Prophet's land that welcomed him after the sadness" of not being heard, at the beginning of his preaching, noting that "Jerusalem is in the heart of every Muslim and is among the





three Mosques the Prophet asked to go on pilgrimage to." The Imam then returned to the meeting of St. Francis with the Sultan, cited by Cardinal Filoni, speaking of the "conversion of the hearts of both," which gave rise to "a new stimulated culture of encounter and fraternity" and which, ten years later, was confirmed by the diplomacy of Frederick II, who opened the gates of Jerusalem to Christians. "I think the spirit of Francis and the Sultan's meeting, this Franciscan spirit in the heart of Sultan Malik al-Kamil, helped move toward a peace agreement with Emperor Frederick II," he commented, drawing a link between this historic meeting and the document on human fraternity signed on Feb. 4, 2019 by the Pope and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar. "This document is a few page of very beautiful content, because it connects all those stones together," Imam Akkad said, "it connects man with God and it connects man with his other brother, but it also connects man with the environment that welcomes everyone."

Following reflections on Jerusalem and the Holy Land as a place of encounter, holiness, healing and hope, **Msgr. Rafic Nahra**, Patriarchal Vicar for Israel - who also arrived from the Holy Land that morning together with Rabbi Tamar Elad-Appelbaum - shared his personal experience on the "peace" to be built there in the spirit of *Fratelli Tutti*. "I was born in Egypt and grew up in Lebanon until the age of 20. In school, in Lebanon, we were Christians, Muslims, Druze, together and didn't even think about it. I only discovered my friends' religion when the civil war broke out in 1975 and Beirut's neighborhoods closed. So, I could no longer visit my friends Ali and Afif, because Ali was Shiite and lived in a Muslim neighborhood and Afif was Druze. From that moment, I began to become aware of the religious affiliation that can separate, even friends," he recounted.

The civil war in Lebanon, then exile in France, left him with wounds towards other

communities. "The Holy Land, many years later, healed me of these prejudices after encounters that changed my way of seeing things, and people who I have met, and who have become dear to me: Jews, Muslims, Christians of different denominations, Palestinians, Israelis and migrants," the bishop continued, noting that "the study of Jewish religious thought has opened extraordinary horizons for me. I already had a particularly beautiful experience of such a common study during the years of my pastoral service in Catholic communities of Hebrew expression in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem. It was an initiative of Rabbi Tamar, here present, who came to propose that we study together Jews and Christians," he reported. Another project proposed by Rabbi Tamar is an expression of "interfaith charity" involving Jews, Muslims and Christians: "We collected used clothes, but in good condition, to distribute them to the needy without ethnic or religious distinction. For me, one of the greatest joys of this project, apart from the joy it gives to be close to the poor, was to make the acquaintance of wonderful Palestinian Muslim women who helped us organize this activity." At the end of his moving words, the Patriarchal Vicar referred to Jesus' words that "the lamp of the body is the eye" (*Matthew 6: 22-23*), that "the simple eye, of which Jesus speaks, goes together with the pure heart: so if we want to do something to help repair our world torn apart by hatred and violence, perhaps the first step is to heal our gaze on others, whoever they may be, and to purify our hearts, because only a healthy tree, with healthy roots, can bear healthy fruit."

**François Vayne**

The recording of the colloquium is available on our YouTube channel (with automatic subtitles available in various languages):  
<https://youtu.be/COo3hrW9LS4>



## Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

### “HAVING THE LAND OF JESUS AT HEART”

*Meeting of Italian-speaking Lieutenants in Sassari,  
 on the occasion of the Investiture organized by the Lieutenancy for Sardinia*

On the occasion of the Investiture of 23 new Knights and Dames for the Lieutenancy for Sardinia, on 29 April 2023, the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, organized a meeting with all the Italian-speaking Lieutenancies joined by those for Malta and Switzerland. On the eve of the Investiture, in the premises of the diocesan seminary in Sassari, the Governor General reported to the Lieutenants on the preparations for the Consulta next November, to which the Grand Priors are exceptionally invited, in order to further improve relations between the Order's lay and ecclesiastical components.

The Governor General returned to the Grand Master's important text on the ecclesiological significance of support for the

Holy Land (published in the Order's annual magazine), insisting that it be circulated by the Lieutenants to priests and bishops, so that the Knights and Dames' commitment to the Mother Church of Jerusalem can be better understood, without prejudice to the local Churches into which they are inserted.

After also talking about the Grand Magisterium's efforts in the field of communications and external relations, the Governor General reported on the progress of the drafting of the General Regulations – a reflection of the Order's Constitution – hoping that it will be ready before the summer and can be sent to the Lieutenants in view of the Consulta.

He then spoke of the contract signed on March 10 with a hotel company, for the rental of part of Palazzo della Rovere for 30



*The Italian-speaking Lieutenants gathered around the Order's Governor General, Ambassador Visconti di Modrone, who is strongly in favour of this kind of regional meetings to strengthen internal cohesion.*





*The Grand Master answered questions from Order members at the Investiture organized by the Lieutenancy for Sardinia, in the presence of the Governor General and the Vice Governor General for Europe.*

years (a contract that can be revised every six years): this partnership will enable the Grand Magisterium to cover all the running costs of the Grand Magisterium, as well as the costs for the restoration and maintenance of the historic building, allowing donations from the Lieutenancies to be entirely donated to pastoral and humanitarian projects in the Holy Land. The controversy stirred up by some interests opposed to this agreement has been quelled thanks to transparent communication through the media, with the constant support of the Holy See's control bodies, the Governor General pointed out.

He also announced the good news of the Order's expansion through the forthcoming creation of a Magistral Delegation in Santo Domingo and Slovakia, and promising contacts in Africa.

The exchange with the Lieutenants, attended by the Vice-Governor for Europe Jean-Pierre de Glutz, then focused on the issue of translating the Regulations and the importance of choosing the right terms in a language that is clear and understandable to all. The Lieutenants also raised the issue of their responsibility towards members whose

behavior is not consistent with their knightly promises, asking to be able to exercise their mission of discernment with authority, in the name of the principle of subsidiarity.

The Governor General recalled that the authority of the Lieutenant is not questioned, since it is he who knows best the local realities and the effects of situations on the general atmosphere of the Lieutenancy.

The day continued with a meeting with Cardinal Filoni, Grand Master, the Lieutenants and members of the Lieutenancy for Sardinia, in a spacious hall of the Seminary. Here, after the words of welcome from Lieutenant Marco Cantori and the Governor General, the Grand Master proposed a meditation from his book on the spirituality of the Order, insisting on the need to have the land of Jesus at heart, and then answered the questions of the Knights and Dames, inviting them to bear witness to the magnificent vocation to which they have been called.

He emphasized that the only crusade worthwhile in the eyes of God, is the one conducted with humility and simplicity by St Francis of Assisi when he met the Sultan, a model of behavior for all members of the Order even today.

The Prayer Vigil that same evening and then the Investiture Ceremony the following day, in Sassari Cathedral, brought together some 300 people in a familiar and fraternal atmosphere, demonstrating, if need be, how much a small Lieutenancy can promote unity and good relations between all the Lieutenancies through the "attraction of the heart", which is worth more than all the great means imaginable.

At the end of the ceremonies, the Governor General announced the promotion of the Lieutenant General for Sardinia to the rank of Knight Grand Cross, news that was greeted with great joy as proof of the respectful affection he enjoys.

**François Vayne**





## THE ORDER ALONGSIDE THE DICASTERY FOR EASTERN CHURCHES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ROACO

"**H**oly Father, I bring you the prayers of thirty thousand Dames and Knights of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem." It was with these words that Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, addressed Pope Francis on 22 June 2023, during the audience granted to the members of the ROACO (Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches). The Holy Father expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the work of hope accomplished, and then welcomed the group of young delegates from the Eastern Churches invited to share their experiences



as part of the work of this meeting. The Governor General also assured the new Prefect of the Eastern Churches, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, of the Order's continued support for solidarity projects in favour of

*Without sticking to his official speech, which is available on the Holy See's website, the Pope warmly thanked ROACO - of which the Order is a member - for its work in the service of the Eastern Churches.*



*The Governor General with Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, during the audience granted by the Holy Father to members of ROACO.*



Christians in the Middle East.

The 96<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the ROACO in Rome was held from 20 to 22 June, in the Aula Magna of the Casa La Salle, under the presidency of Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti. The meeting was also attended by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Apostolic Nuncio to Israel and Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem, Msgr. Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Apostolic Nuncios to Turkey and Iran Marek Solczyński and Andrzej Jozwowicz, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Asmara, Menghesteab Tesfamariam, the Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton, and the Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University, Brother Peter Bray. In

his address, the Cardinal Secretary of State gave a detailed summary of the Holy See's interventions in the various crisis regions of the world, while the other speakers focused on the situation in the Holy Land.

During the discussions, the Governor General committed the Order to a series of projects in Israel, Palestine and Jordan. In Israel, these concern the Community of the Beatitudes in Emmaus and the Greek Melkite parish of Saint Georges in Maghar; in Palestine, the Notre-Dame de l'Annonciation school in Ramallah and the Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem; and in Jordan, the Greek Melkite pastoral centre in the Arjan district of Amman.

## PROFESSOR BORROMEIO CONTINUES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF THE ORDER

*A testimony of friendship from the Governor General,  
Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone*



**"T**he appointment of Professor Agostino Borromeo as Lieutenant General of Honor of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem does not change the existing management balance of our Pontifical Institution. Professor Borromeo will continue to participate in the life of the Order, to which he has dedicated the commitment of so many years as Chancellor, as Governor General, as Lieutenant General and, more so, as a scholar of Church history. However, it gives me the opportunity to recall, with fraternal gratitude, the evolution of our long-standing friendship, within the framework of activities related to the Order.

*On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, the Cardinal Grand Master accepted the resignation presented to him, for personal reasons, by H.E. Knight of the Collar Prof. Agostino Borromeo, from the post of Lieutenant General of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, appointed him Lieutenant General of Honor, in recognition of his many years of commitment to the benefit of the Order.*







*The Governor General and the current Lieutenant General of Honor walking side by side through the streets of Jerusalem during a trip to the Holy Land in May 2022.*

We have known each other since we were in shorter pants. Our parents and grandparents were friends, probably so were our great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents, because our families, both from Milan, were bound by remote ties and very close to the Church.

A closeness with multiple testimonies: a Saint revered all over the world, a famous Cardinal masterfully celebrated by Manzoni and various illustrious clerics embellish the Borromeos' bond with the Church; a Pope, seven Archbishops of Milan and a General of the Society of Jesus, that of the Visconti.

Agostino's Father, Count Gian Ludovico Borromeo, a career diplomat, as a young consul in Switzerland during the war helped my grandfather, who had escaped for political reasons to Lugano, receive messages from the family. As a senior Ambassador he introduced me to the mysteries of the Career.

Agostino's older brothers used to go sailing with my older brothers. His younger brother was my playmate. Agostino, a few years older than me, was very studious and always impressed me with his deep culture, his sure faith and the finesse of his reasoning.

When he came to see me one evening at home after dinner to suggest that I join the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the reasons he proposed and the documentation he gave me meant that I did not hesitate to follow him.

It was always he who proposed me, first for entry into the Grand Magisterium, then for his succession in the office of Governor General, and I have never made a secret of the fact that, when he made this last proposal to me, I hesitated for a long time wondering if I would be up to the task of collecting such a prestigious inheritance.

We actually had different professional experiences: he came from the University, I

from Diplomacy. He a man of study, teaching, solitary reflection and in-depth study of ancient archival papers; I devoted to the service of the State and thus to diplomatic mediation, to activities of relationship and dialogue. One a free thinker the other framed by Administration. It is natural that we had different notions of organisation for the task of Governor General: in our

respective activities as Professor and Ambassador we had tailor-made for ourselves different uniforms and management formulas.

Eventually I accepted his proposal and decided that the spirit of the performance of my mandate could only be in continuity with his, even though our backgrounds were different.

The situations I had to face also turned out to be different: I am thinking of the Covid emergency, which forced us to close our offices and work remotely, the negotiating and administrative experience of the tenant turnover at the Palazzo della Rovere, the innovations introduced by the new Constitution and the new Ritual, the novelties that emerged in the technique of communication and in the management of external relations, the growing problem of the aging average age of members, the modernization of the Order in a context of progressive secularization in the world and an increasingly worrying revolution in customs.

Agostino never hesitated to accompany me with his valuable advice from the early days of my tenure and to support me in the face of criticism during difficult times.

He has thus been an important point of reference for me, as well as the entire Order, and will continue to be so as Lieutenant General of Honor. And for this we are all grateful to him, myself first."





## The Order and the Holy Land

# A RENOVATION MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS OF THE ORDER

**T**he renovation of the Shrine of Our Lady of Palestine in Deir Rafat, spiritual lung of the Holy Land diocese, was recently inaugurated by the Latin Patriarch in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio and the Australian Ambassador to Israel. This was an important event for the Australian Lieutenancies, as for the first time they were able to fund a unique project in the hope that the link between Australia and the Shrine will continue. Judge François Kunc, Lieutenant for Australia-New South Wales, gave a speech for the occasion, a brief summary of which we publish:

"As Lieutenant, I am deeply grateful that this ceremony has been able to coincide

with a pilgrimage which I am privileged to be leading that includes members of our Lieutenancy together with others from Australia and elsewhere who have joined with us. The NSW Lieutenancy was established in 1995 and currently has approximately 70 members. The significance of today for the Order in Australia is that the gift which has made possible the works we dedicate is the largest single gift through the Order from Australia, which has then also been able to be devoted to a specific project rather than to the general support of the works of the Patriarchate. I certainly hope this will be the beginning of an enduring connection between the Australian lieutenancies and this very special place. The gift, of just over A\$200,000, was made



possible by bequests from the estates of two late members of the Order, Dr Glen Coorey and his wife Suzanne. Glen was the third Lieutenant in the history of the NSW Lieutenancy.

Glen's parents were Lebanese migrants, hardworking and self-reliant, despite the challenges of life in a very different country.

He studied medicine at the University of Sydney. Upon graduation he began a lifelong career at the nearby Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

On St Patrick's Day 1959, Glen and Sue were married and directly steamed to Britain for postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Surgeons.

The Cooreys had seven children. Glen always acknowledged that his achievements were made possible by the support he

received from Sue. In life and in death, many charities and institutions benefitted from the extraordinary generosity of Glen and Sue, including the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, of which they were proud members. We would not be gathered here today without them.

The official prayer of the Knights and Dames asks that we be "convinced and sincere ambassadors of peace and love among our brothers and sisters." That is how we come here today. It is the prayerful hope of all the members of our Order in Australia that the activities which take place here at this shrine will contribute to building the peace and fraternity that is so earnestly desired by all who, for whatever reason, count this land as sacred."

## IMPORTANT SMALL PROJECTS ADOPTED FOR 2023

**E**ach year the Order of the Holy Sepulchre provides support for the institutional expenses of the Latin Patriarchate, the 44 schools and the Beit Jala Seminary. In addition to this regular contribution, some of the world's Lieutenancies choose to support small or large additional projects - through the Order's Grand Magisterium - in order to provide an increasingly serene and dignified environment for the people living in the Holy Land. In this short article we present the projects that the Latin Patriarchate wanted to prioritize for 2023. These are 11 projects (4 in Jordan, 1 in Israel and 6 in Palestine) focusing on the charitable and pastoral needs of some of the Mother Church's facilities in the Holy Land.

### JORDAN AND ISRAEL

In Irbid, Jordan, a town of about 150 families, the Church of St. George the Martyr, which is an old structure, is in need



*The church of St. Georges in Irbid, Jordan.*





of renovation especially the electrical system. The request has received the support of the **Lieutenancies for Southern Africa**, for **Scotland** and for **Malta**.

Instead in Naour, in the south-western district of Amman, originally an agricultural village but now a predominantly residential town with a growing population, the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus needs some work on both the sanitary facility and the church entrance. This project immediately found the support of the **Lieutenancy for Italy-Sicily** allowing for work to begin.

Supported for years by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the *Our Lady of Peace Center* (OLOPC) is located in the mountainous area of Khirbet Al Souq, south of Amman. Officially opened in 2004, it employs qualified therapists who provide free therapeutic and learning services to children with mental and physical disabilities and their parents. This center runs a clinic and guesthouse, hosts Iraqi refugee families, youth camps and organizes peace-building workshops. The perimeter is currently fenced by wire, which, in its current form, does not provide sufficient security for the children receiving care there, as it is a facility facing a main, high-traffic road. Therefore, it became necessary to replace the current mesh fence with a sturdier structure of masonry and steel.

Finally, near the Jordan River valley, built into the gorge of three hills, is the ancient



*The Our Lady of Peace Center, Jordan.*

agricultural town of As-Salt where, in 1866, the Latin Patriarchate established the first parish in eastern Jordan, which included a school and a convent. Because of its cultural and natural richness, the historic center of As-Salt was listed as a UNESCO World



*A view of As-Salt, whose historic centre is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.*

Heritage Site in 2021. In this precious place of universal value, where the renovation project of a convent is already underway through the support of the Grand Magisterium, the renovation of the priest's house has also been approved for 2023. A grant to start the work has already been offered by the **Lieutenancy for Ireland** and more is expected to come later this year.

With regards to Israel, for 2023 the Order wanted to focus on renovating and securing the Shafa Amr Priests' Monastery, a two-story building about 25 years old, adjacent to the church there.





## PALESTINE

Moving finally to Palestine, Aboud is a Christian village located 22 km northwest of Ramallah and 30 km north of Jerusalem. Here, the parish complex of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, consisting of the school, parish hall and convent, is a landmark complex with considerable historical value in need of renovation and upgrading of the electrical system.

In Beit Jala, two projects were accepted: the first concerns one of the houses located in the complex that houses the Latin Patriarchate Seminary, and is used by priests serving in the Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour area, where they supervise religious, educational programs, or generally provide pastoral services to parishioners. This house is in need of significant maintenance in order to continue providing shelter.

The second project concerns the parish house, which suffers from multiple problems due to the aging structure and lack of regular maintenance. This project therefore, which has already found support from the **Lieutenancy for Switzerland and Liechtenstein**, will focus on refurbishing the various rooms in the house.

In Taybeh, the Rosary Sisters' mission focuses on apostolic works in education, social work and medical care. Their house had not seen renovation work for years, so the project, which has already been adopted by the **Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain**, includes a series of upgrades to the residence to allow better housing conditions for the 4 sisters and their guests.

Zababdeh is one of the most unique parishes in Palestine because it has survived multiple threats and has been able to thrive despite difficulties over time. In fact, the population numbers more than 5,000, including 3,500 Christians.

The priests' house, which has been operating for decades, currently suffers from insulation problems that have caused plaster damage inside the building. In addition, the



*The parish of Zababdeh, Palestine, including many Christians.*

infrastructure's sanitary units are deteriorated. Therefore, reconstruction and replacement of the facilities has become necessary.

In Ramallah, one of the most active communities in Palestine where many social and religious activities and celebrations, workshops, trainings, scout and youth meetings take place, the parish has a space of about 400 m<sup>2</sup> that houses rooms that can accommodate up to 400 people. Over time, maintenance and refurbishment of the sanitary facilities and some of the halls have become necessary, which, thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for Luxembourg**, can now be realized.



*In Ramallah, Palestine, the Christian community participates actively.*



## The Life of the Lieutenancies

# THE ORDER'S SOLIDARITY DURING RECENT FLOODING IN ITALY

**"The fact that our Order and its members did their utmost to alleviate the hardships of those affected by the flooding in Romagna underscores that the spirit of solidarity is not only directed toward the Holy Places but also pervades action toward neighboring brethren in distress,"** wrote the Order's Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, to the Order's leaders in the disaster-stricken areas, hoping that news of the Order's action would be widespread as an example of

**solidarity and hope. This is precisely why we asked Angelo Dell'Oro, Lieutenant for Northern Italy, to share their experience with our readers:**

"A few weeks have now passed since the dramatic climatic events in Romagna, with disastrous consequences that have brought one of the most industrious, generous and joyful territories of the

Italian peninsula to its knees.

Floods and overflows, deaths, thousands of displaced persons and incalculable economic damage; this is the news we received and are receiving from the media day by day, testimonies and stories that I collected directly on the days of June 3 and



4 during my visit to the Romagna Section and the San Marino group of our Lieutenancy.

The presence of our brethren was immediate and each of them put their expertise and more at the service of the community. They all did their utmost in helping those in need: initially in rescuing people in a situation of grave danger, even







*The aftermath of the flood in Northern Italy prompted great national solidarity, in which members of the Order took an active part.*

carrying a few items that could give people a sense of belonging and at the same time of hope to safety. Later they collaborated in clearing the affected areas, removing the mud that covered everything.

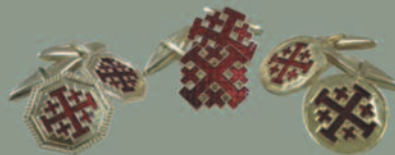
We cannot then omit an important piece



**GUGGIONE**

SINCE 1975

DECORATIONS OF KNIGHTLY ORDERS



Order of the Holy Sepulchre  
Papal Equestrian Orders  
Order of Malta

Italian Dynastic Orders and Orders of the Italian Republic

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## PRINCESS ASTRID OF BELGIUM AND HER HUSBAND WELCOMED INTO THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

**O**n June 8, at a solemn ceremony in the Capitular Church of Notre-Dame des Victoires in Brussels, the Grand Master conferred the insignia of Grand Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem on Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid, Princess of Belgium, and her husband, His Imperial and Royal Highness Archduke Lawrence of Austria-Este, Prince of Belgium. The ceremony was held in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium and Luxembourg, Archbishop Franco Coppola, the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, the Lieutenant for Belgium, Damien de Laminne de Bex, the Chancellor, Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli, and other dignitaries from the Belgian Court, the Order and the Belgian Lieutenancy.



*In the Order's chapter church in Brussels, the Princess and Prince of Belgium received the Order's insignia from the hands of the Grand Master.*



The conferment is part of a historical tradition in which the families of the distinguished honorees have always been very close to the Church and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

In her speech of thanks and appreciation, Princess Astrid renewed her and her husband's commitment to the culture of peace in the Holy Land, promising to return soon to visit the Holy Places. "It is with deep emotion that my husband and I





receive today the insignia conferred on us by your Order," said the Princess, recalling that her family and country have always had excellent relations with the Holy See. "Under the reign of King Baudouin, Belgium played a very active role during the Second Vatican Council, thanks to Cardinal Suenens," she pointed out, recalling that thanks



*Investiture of new members in the church of Notre-Dame des Victoires in Brussels, in the presence of the highest authorities of the Order, on June 10.*



Bishop of Antwerp, Bishop Johan Bonny. The celebration was preceded by a meeting of the Chapter of the Lieutenancy, during which the Grand Master and the Governor General met with the Knights and Dames, spending a long time with them and answering their questions.

The Investiture of eight new Belgian members of the Order took place in the same church on June 10, in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium, the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union and Bishop Guy Harpigny of Tournai. The ceremony was followed by a gala evening at the *Cercle Royal Gaulois*, attended by several foreign Lieutenants and the highest dignitaries of the Order.

These meetings in Belgium also gave the Governor General the opportunity to organize a working lunch with the Lieutenants in attendance. It was attended by Lieutenants from Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Eastern Spain, who were able to discuss a range of issues such as mutual invitations, participation in joint pilgrimages, the link between the lay and ecclesiastical components of the Order and the best use of resources in the service of the Mother Church in the Holy Land.

to King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola, she and her husband had the privilege of meeting many personalities whose lives deeply inspired them and strengthened their faith. The Princess concluded her brief speech by thanking the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, "of which my husband and I are now happy to be members," and praising "the essential role played by its members, who work tirelessly to protect the Holy Places that are so often threatened, defending the presence of the Catholic Church and the Christian community, which is regularly at risk in the Holy Land."

The following day, also at Notre-Dame des Victoires Church in Brussels, the Grand Master participated in the Lieutenancy's moving prayer vigil, celebrated by the





## THE ORDER GROWS IN MALAYSIA

**I**n Malaysia, a country where Islam is the official religion, the Order is blessed to have 62 Knights and Dames in its Penang Section, which is part of the Lieutenancy for Western Australia. The Section keeps growing as another 10 candidates have submitted their applications to join the Order in 2023.

"Interest in the Order was initiated in 2014 by the late Alan Voisey, a Knight of the Order, when he resided in Penang. Supported by then Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Michael Cheah and formally presented by Lieutenant of Honor Robert Peters of the Lieutenancy for Western Australia, Bishop Sebastian Francis gave his blessing so that members of his Diocese could join the Order," says Kevin Susai, current Lieutenant for Western Australia, recalling the beginnings of the Penang Section. The first group of 13 members received their Investiture at St. Mary's Cathedral in Perth on November 8, 2014, and when membership grew to 25 on February 7, 2019, the Grand Magisterium approved the creation of a Section.

Commenting on the international nature of his Lieutenancy, Kevin Susai shares, "The relationship between the Penang Section and the entire Lieutenancy is based on the recognition and mutual respect of the cultural and traditional differences between Australia and Malaysia in order to create a positive, collaborative and cooperative relationship that has led to the growth of the Section within the Lieutenancy for Western Australia for the good of the Order."

For several years, the Section was led by President Anna Wong, who took the Section from 14 to 60 Members then passed it, on March 1, 2023, to her successor, Dr. Luis Chen, the new President, who has also been an active member of the Order since 2014.

This Malaysian section of the Order was

extremely active even during the Covid years, with regular monthly meetings on Zoom and charitable activities such as fundraising for a local hospital where there was a shortage of beds. In addition, on January 9, 2023, the Section joyfully participated in the ceremony during which St. Anne's Church was elevated to the rank of minor basilica.

"Cardinal William Goh of Singapore was the main celebrant. The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, bishops from



other Malaysian dioceses, as well as political and civil authorities were present," says Lieutenant Kevin Susai. "Members of the Order had the honor of sitting before the altar. We were also proud that Fr. Michael Cheah, the Prior of the Penang Section, read the Bull to formally declare St. Anne's Church a Basilica. I believe the large presence of the Order's cloaked members entering the church, complemented by the formal welcome by Bishop Sebastian Francis and the presentation of the Order to the congregation, certainly had a positive impact on the bishops present," he concluded.



## FEELING PART OF A GLOBAL FAMILY

*A Knight and a Dame of the Southwestern U.S. Lieutenancy  
 visit the headquarters of the Grand Magisterium*

In the inspiring book by the Grand Master of the Order, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, "*And the House Was Filled with Fragrance of the Perfume. A Spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre*," His Eminence reminds us that "Jesus is alive and accompanies us as travelers. He makes himself known in the signs of the Spirit; he 'warms' the heart, giving meaning to our questions."

As travelers from the U.S. Southwestern Lieutenancy and pilgrims to Rome, we were blessed to feel the welcoming presence of Jesus in each person we met during our visit to the beautiful Palazzo della Rovere, and we want to express our deep appreciation for the gracious hospitality shown to us in May.

We had the pleasure of meeting several members of the Order's staff in Rome and were especially honored to be able to meet and pray together with Cardinal Fernando Filoni and the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, along with the rest of the staff during the daily midday prayers. As we were all together in the magnificent Grand Master's Hall, characterized by the beautiful high and ornate ceilings and centuries of abundant history, we were welcomed as privileged guests of honor. Most importantly, we felt a deep sense of joy and peace, unmistakable signs of the Holy Spirit's gentle presence and power fully



alive and filling this ancient and historic Palace, as Cardinal Filoni led us in prayer, including the Prayer for Peace in the Holy Land.

In particular, as we prayed with them in the magnificent della Rovere Palace and throughout our visit, we were reminded that it is indeed a great privilege to be Knight and Dame of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem.

We, and all those fortunate enough to belong to the Equestrian Order, have the great responsibility and honor of supporting the Holy Catholic Church and the Christian presence in the Holy Land. How fortunate we are to help carry on this Mission of the Order through pilgrimages, friendship with Christians living in the Holy Land, financial support and daily prayers!

Also, during our visit to Rome, we were given a beautiful card with an image of the Virgin Mother Mary containing a prayer written by Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Now this card is a daily reminder for us of how much work there is still to be done for Christ in the land where our Lord walked and lived and how our faithful prayers are needed now more than ever.

**Knight Stanley D. and Dame Camille  
 B. Schardon**  
*Southwestern U.S. Lieutenancy*





## INVESTITURES IN MILAN AND CATANIA, IN THE PRESENCE OF DIGNITARIES OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

**P**receded by the Prayer Vigil on May 12, celebrated by Prior of the Lombardy Section Monsignor Claudio Antonio Fontana, the Investiture Ceremony of thirty new members of the Lieutenancy for Northern Italy was held on May 13 in the Church Santa Maria della Pace in Milan, presided over by Grand Prior Monsignor Maurizio Malvestiti, Bishop of Lodi.

Governor General Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, Vice Governor for Europe Jean-Pierre de Glutz Ruchti and numerous guests from other Lieutenancies were present at the Ceremonies. In his speech, the Governor General recalled that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is not an Order that rewards merit, but is a contributory Order, which one enters by free choice, attracted by the charitable purposes of this institution, which refers to the deepest mystery of our faith, the resurrection of Our Lord. "Our commitment," continued the Governor General, "unites us with so many brethren scattered around the world, inviting those present not to forget the beauty of this fraternity, which should make us go beyond our particular circumstances in an ecumenical vision."

On the same days, the Prayer Vigil and the Investiture of the new Knights and Dames of the Italy-Sicily Lieutenancy were held in Catania. The Prayer Vigil was held in the Chapter Church of San Giuliano, with the Prior of the Catania Section, Bishop Salvatore Gristina, present. At the



*Above, the reception of new members in the church of Santa Maria della Pace, Milan.*

Investiture that took place in the Cathedral Basilica of Catania, the Governor General of the Order delegated the Treasurer of the Grand Magisterium, Saverio Petrillo, as his representative.

The solemn rite, presided over by Cardinal Paolo Romeo, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy, was followed by the Eucharistic celebration of thanksgiving concelebrated by Archbishop Luigi Renna, Metropolitan Archbishop of Catania and member of the

Order. Bishop Salvatore Rumeo, Bishop of Noto, who received the Investiture, took part in the concelebration. Guests of the Italy-Sicily Lieutenancy included the Lieutenant of Southern Tyrrhenian Italy, Giovanni

Battista Rossi; the Lieutenant of Southern Adriatic Italy, Ferdinando Parente; the Lieutenant of Italy-Sardinia, Marco Cantoni; and the Lieutenant of Malta, Roberto Buontempo. The two days ended with a fraternal moment of joy and celebration.



*Treasurer Saverio Petrillo represented the Grand Magisterium at the Investitures held in Catania, Sicily.*



## Culture and History

# THE CHAPTER CHURCH OF THE LIEUTENANCY FOR FRANCE, IN PARIS

**A**fter the siege of Jerusalem (1187) and Acre (1291), pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre were interrupted and then gradually resumed following the Crusades. At the time of the kings of France, the tradition of Investiture at the tomb of Christ continued in the presence of the Friars Minor. In France, the Knights grouped themselves geographically into brotherhoods and then into the Royal Archconfraternity of Paris, with no Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre yet existing except at the local level. In fact, long before the founding of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem with the statute of 1847, the Order in France existed only through the personality of its members, the so-called Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, who constituted themselves as a chapter and then as a Royal Order.

In contemporary times, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the general delegate of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in France – this was the function of the Lieutenant at the time – grouped all the Knights into a “Chapter of the Province of France.” In 1909, his successor to this office wrote to the Archbishop of Paris asking to restore “in favor of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the ancient custom of keeping vigil over the Sacred Relics of the Passion, known as the relics of Saint-Louis, in the church of Notre-Dame de Paris during

Holy Week.” In reality, this custom had no real basis, as it was based solely on an exceptional authorization granted in March 1845 by Monsignor Affre, Archbishop of Paris, to ensure the custody of the Holy Crown in that year and, more generally, of the relics of the Passion. At the same time, the Knights were granted the possibility of continuing this service even when the relics were transferred to the Sainte Chapelle, a project that did not come to fruition. In fact, this custom for the custody of the relics during Holy Week would be granted again and permanently to the Knights in 1920. If the church of Notre-Dame de Paris and the Sainte Chapelle are mentioned, it is because, from the Revolution onwards, the Knights did not have an officially assigned place for the performance of their duties, and the latter two places could have filled this



*The relics of St. Helena, patroness of the Order, are venerated in Paris in the chapter church of the French Lieutenancy, located on Rue Saint-Denis.*







*A meeting of the Lieutenancy for France with the Grand Master of the Order in the Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles church in Paris in September 2022.*

function. However, the Knights did have at their disposal the church of Saint-Roch and then the chapel of Notre-Dame du Salut for their celebrations, but apparently without the title of "capitular."

Therefore, prior to 1927, the French Knights did not benefit from a church to host their ceremonies. The former Collegiate Church of the Holy Sepulchre, rue Saint-Denis, and the church of the Grands Cordeliers, later headquarters of the ancient Archconfraternity, had disappeared with the Revolution, and the chapel of Notre-Dame du Salut was only a temporary venue. 1927 marked the centenary of the translation of St. Helen's relics to the church of Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles, rue Saint-Denis. Being invited to this celebratory occasion, it seemed an exceptional occasion for the Knights to hope for the allocation of this place, which in fact

would become the capitular church of the Lieutenancy, at a celebration on October 16, 1928, presided over by Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Paris, in the presence of numerous ecclesiastical and Order of the Holy Sepulchre dignitaries. The chapel of the baptismal font was granted to the Lieutenancy as a private chapel; a commemorative marble plaque was placed at the entrance. At that time, the Archbishop of Paris was appointed "Grand Chaplain and High Protector of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in France."

Regarding the attribution of the church of Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles to the French Knights, several legends have circulated and no doubt continue to circulate, creating a twofold confusion. The first would illustrate that in 1820 it was the Hierosolymitan Knights of the Holy Sepulchre who allegedly donated the relics of St. Helena to the church of Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles; this is not the case, since this donation was made

by the so-called "Royal Military Hospitaller Order of the Holy Sepulchre," which, by the way, had a dispute with the Knights at the time. The second approximation would suggest a restitution to the Knights of the church of Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles; however, prior to the Revolution, the church had never belonged to the Knights as did the nearby ancient Collegiate Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This geographical circumstance symbolically reconnected the Knights to their past, especially since in Saint Leu-Saint Gilles they found memories from the ancient collegiate church.

**Jean-Marie Faugère**  
*Lieutenant for France*

[Rif.: Jean-Pierre de Gennes, in *Les chevaliers du Saint-Sépulcre de Jérusalem*, Edition Mémoire et Documents]

