



ORDO EQUESTRIS  
SANCTI SEPULCRI  
HIEROSOLYMITANI

# FORMATION DOCUMENT



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To the Most Eminent/Excellent Grand Priors and Prior Bishops  
To the Most Reverend Ecclesiastics Members of the Order  
To Their Excellencies the Lieutenants,  
To the Magistral Delegates,  
To all Knights and Dames,

Following the Order's Consulta held in November 2023, during which the *Instrumentum Laboris* on the "Formation" of Members was studied, we are pleased to submit the present text for your consideration. This document is the result of a thorough reworking of the previous *Instrumentum*.

The **Formation Document** serves as a guideline for admitting new Knight and Dame Candidates to the Order, as well as for the ongoing development of our Members. It ensures uniform preparation without limiting the valuable local contributions tailored to individual needs and situations.

We ask every Candidate and Member of the Order to keep on file a copy of this fundamental document, along with the texts of the **Constitution** and the **Order's Spirituality**. Additionally, we request that those in positions of responsibility within the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations carefully study the document and ensure its implementation.

This long-awaited document has been translated into five languages, with the Italian text remaining the one to be used for reference.

The text here presented, signed on the Solemnity of Pentecost, has been approved *ad biennium*, and takes immediate effect.

During this time, brief observations with regards to the text can be submitted to the Grand Magisterium.

We express gratitude to its authors and all those who have generously contributed to its preparation.

Leonardo Visconti di Modrone  
*Governor General*

Fernando Cardinal Filoni  
*Grand Master*

## Introduction

1. The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem welcomes as its Members men and women, lay and consecrated, who are eager to live the Christian faith to the full with a special commitment to the Holy Land.
2. The unifying core is the glorious mystery of Christ who died and rose again: from the time of the Empty Tomb, Jesus now reaches every man and woman in every place and time. The *Empty Sepulchre* for a Knight and a Dame represents the point that unites and invites them to look to that *Land* that welcomed the Lord's earthly life and for which today they are called to support the "*living stones*," namely that Patriarchal Church of Jerusalem, *Mother Church* of all Churches. St. Paul taught that we should show generous solicitude towards it (cf. Acts 11:27-30; 1Cor. 16:1-4; 2Cor. 8:3-4); a solicitude then entrusted by the Supreme Pontiffs specifically to the *Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre*, which makes it its own. For let it not be forgotten that the Knights and Dames place themselves in the ideal continuation of those men and women who followed the Master, listened to his teaching, offered him hospitality and followed him to the Cross; then, when risen, they assumed his mission as *Koinonìa*, that is, the Community of faith, or even *Ekklesia*, that is, the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, definitively fulfilled at Pentecost by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and sent to preach the Gospel to all nations.
3. The following pages briefly address the most significant aspects of formation, summarized as follows:

### Part One

- I. The *Theological* Dimension of the Identity of a Knight and a Dame: the Mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection
- II. The *Ecclesiological* Dimension of the Order
- III. *Adherence to and Participation* in the Mission of the Order
- IV. Specific contents of Formation:
  - a. Knight and Dame: A Lifetime Project
  - b. Prayer, Eucharist and Spirituality
  - c. The Mystery of Charity
  - d. The Holy Land
  - e. Our Nature and Symbols
  - f. A Journey in Faith

### Part Two

- V. The Subjects of Formation:
  - a. Candidates: Initial Formation
  - b. Members: Ongoing Formation
  - c. Leaders serving the Order
  - d. Ecclesiastics, Religious Men and Women
- VI. Some Key Aspects of the Life of the Order
  - a. Vigil and Investiture Ceremony
  - b. Pilgrimages
  - c. Fraternal Dimension
- VII. Young People: Aspects of Formation

## PART ONE

### I. THE *THEOLOGICAL* DIMENSION OF THE IDENTITY OF A KNIGHT AND A DAME: THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

4. The Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem know that their identity is rooted in the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus offers his life on the cross: "*I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord*" (John 10:17-18). With these words brought to us by the evangelist John, Jesus' death on the cross theologically appears not simply as the drama of an ignominious and unjust torture before men,<sup>1</sup> but as the price of our ransom and Christ's once-for-all offering to the Father (cf. Heb. 10:10). The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reveals that Jesus himself is the one who unveils the meaning of the offering through, as it were, a *metahistorical* dialogue, that is beyond the confines of time, between the Son and the Eternal Father. Before entering this world, the Son says: Since thou, Father, hast not desired sacrifices nor sin offerings, but a body hast thou prepared for me; therefore I said, Behold, I have come to do thy will, O God. (cf. Heb. 10:5-7). It is, therefore, from the content of that *divine dialogue* that we understand the true meaning of Christ's death, and this helps to completely change the idea about Jesus' death, which does not take place because of the fallen nature of Adam's sin, but because of a supreme *Act* of immeasurable love toward that humanity created by God and which had turned away from Him; consequently, Christ's offering of Himself to the Father is Christ's *Gift of reconciliation and salvation* for us.
5. What the wisdom of the Church conveys is not only the mystery of Christ's death, but of *death and resurrection intimately linked*. The Lord's death thus becomes the seed from which the resurrection sprouts; in this mystery we all find life. Therefore, woe betide us if we stop only at the moment of the Cross, whose image the Knight and the Dame wear on their cloaks, forgetting that death has been defeated: in the risen Christ we have become a baptized people, that is, reborn to *another* life, as St. Paul explains very well in the Letter to the Colossians.<sup>2</sup> In formation, therefore, it must never be forgotten to emphasize the vital link between the Cross and the Empty Sepulchre, a Sepulchre that, for those who visit it even today on their pilgrimage, smells of a new life to be lived and witnessed to. This is central to the identity of the Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.  
By vocation, since time immemorial, the Order has thus committed itself to be *special custodian* of that Sepulchre which represents "*a sign of the boundless love of the Crucified One, who keeps nothing for himself and who therefore cannot be held back by the snares of death; it is a sign of the victory of the Risen One in whom we too find life and of the power of the Mystery of his Body and Blood that unites us all as his members.*"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ref. FILONI F., *The House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume. A Spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre*, 2020, p. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Ref. Col. 3:1-17: "If you have risen with Christ, seek the things above ... When Christ, your life, is manifested, then you also will be manifested with him in glory ... Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, with feelings of mercy, kindness, humility ... As the Lord has forgiven you, so do ye also ... And be thankful! May the word of Christ dwell among you abundantly ..."

<sup>3</sup> FRANCIS, *Address of the Holy Father to the participants of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem*, Vatican.va, Nov. 9, 2023.

6. From an existential point of view, so often human beings experience division and suffering and, not infrequently, cry out their unhappiness almost believing God to be the cause of their ills. As mentioned, in truth Jesus shows in the offering of himself that God is neither the cause nor does he ask us for anything. Mentioning again the Letter to the Hebrews, the sacred author affirms that God asked for neither holocausts nor sacrifices for man's sin (cf. Heb. 10:5), but rather sent His Son, who invites us to conversion of heart and mind in order to fully experience reconciliation in its threefold dimension: personal with ourselves, with others and with God.
7. From the height of the Wood of the Cross, "*Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'*" (Lk. 23:46). There Jesus performed the act of true reconciliation, surrendering his Spirit to the Father and opening the way for all of us, his brothers and sisters. Let us therefore teach our Members of the Order to live the experience of divine and fraternal reconciliation in the light of the Cross of Christ and the Empty Sepulchre, the great mystery of our salvation.

## II. THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE ORDER

8. We would now like to emphasize that membership in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre does not take place outside the Church, but within it.<sup>4</sup>
9. In 2022, a text was circulated in which it was emphasized that, in addition to the necessary practice of the evangelical virtues, the Knights and Dames assume the institutional task, entrusted to the Order since the time of Blessed Pius IX, of manifesting its solicitude toward the Land of Jesus; it is not a task left to the goodwill of some more or less sensitive people; there is much more. It is an assignment entrusted to it because of the responsibility that the Church has towards the Places of the Lord and, in particular, towards the Mother Church of Jerusalem, so that those Places do not become sites of the archaeology of the faith. It is our responsibility that the Mother Church does not remain deprived of its vitality; all the more so in complex and difficult times in which the Church believes that charity and witness to the possible peaceful coexistence among the different communities inhabiting the Holy Land must emerge.
10. On behalf of the Church, therefore, the Knights and Dames have been called by the Pontiffs to take on this duty as a gesture that is both personal, but also a gesture of the participation of the Churches to which they belong. In fact, with the participation of the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre present in so many Countries, it is the same ecclesial reality to which they belong that, in some way, becomes part of the task of *permanently* supporting the Mother Church of those Places dear to Christ and where, not infrequently, bishops and priests accompany their faithful on spiritual pilgrimages, who then preserve an indelible memory of that experience.<sup>5</sup>
11. This mission entrusted to the Order has its roots at the beginning of the life of the apostolic Church, in fact "*the Apostles had urged the charity of the primitive Christian communities of Antioch, Greece, Galatia and Macedonia to remember the 'saints' in Jerusalem and to keep*

<sup>4</sup> Ref. FILONI, F., [The ecclesiological significance of supporting the Holy Land](#), Oessh.va, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Ref. FILONI, F., [The ecclesiological significance](#), cited above.

*collections, which he (Paul) later described as generous, indeed 'beyond their means' (2 Cor. 8:3-4). [...] St. Paul himself, moreover, also teaches us how to make this gesture of dutiful generosity: Let it be ready as a true offering and not (made) with meanness [...]. Let each one give according to what he has decided in his heart, not with sadness nor by force, for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Cor. 9:5b.7)."*<sup>6</sup>

12. Therefore, the importance of the formation of the Knights and Dames in this ecclesial sensibility must be insisted upon so that all may know that they have a place in the Church<sup>7</sup> and, being vested with a specific mandate, feel that they are part of a lofty mission to which they contribute their *offerings, involvement and prayers*; finally, let them always be aware that they are an instrument of good and peace for the communities inhabiting the Holy Land: Christians, Jews, Muslims and others.
13. "Sentire cum Ecclesia – *which means having a sense of ecclesial communion; thinking, speaking, and acting in order to make the Church grow in depth and extension in fidelity to the Risen Christ – will always be the guiding principle for a Dame and a Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.*"<sup>8</sup>
14. Next, we should not underestimate the reading of fundamental texts of the Magisterium, which show us the way in our relations with the other communities present in the Holy Land: the Conciliar Decree Unitatis Redintegratio on ecumenism, the Declaration on the Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions Nostra Aetate, and the more recent Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.

### III. ADHERENCE TO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE MISSION OF THE ORDER

15. The risen Jesus calls us to be witnesses of his love, and this dimension is an important element of our lives as Members of the Order. Becoming a Dame or Knight *is not simply an honor* due to the prestige of the Institution, nor an *opportunity for advantage*, or *aggrandizement* because of the insignia we receive. It is a call to service, from an ecclesial perspective as mentioned above, which can and should be offered to anyone who wishes to experience this participation. As explained in the Constitution, although "*membership of the Order is, in the first place, for the lay faithful, it is also open to the clergy, especially those engaged in fostering the spiritual growth and progress of all its members. The Order gives primary importance to the vocation to holiness of every Christian and aspires to be an instrument for the development and deepening of personal sanctification, as well as an environment in which faith is practiced and lived in all its aspect.*"<sup>9</sup>
16. Therefore, even before going into detail about the formation of those approaching the Order, it is important to clearly present our *vocation and mission* to potential candidates, whether lay or clergy. In communicating with possible candidates for entry into the Order of the Holy

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<sup>6</sup> FILONI, F., *The ecclesiological significance*, cited above.

<sup>7</sup>"The Order is a Central Body of the Catholic Church, has public juridical personality in the Canonical Order and is a Vatican juridical person," *Constitution of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem*, 2020, Introduction, p. 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> FILONI, F., *The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> *Constitution*, cited above, Introduction.

Sepulchre, it is good from the outset that they feel inspired to join precisely because of these reasons.

17. To this end, we wish to recall what is outlined in the Introduction of the Constitution regarding the purposes of the Order; purposes that must be shared as a starting point with those who show interest in being a Member: "*The Order, with its structure and activities, participates directly in the Roman Pontiff's solicitude for places and Catholic institutions in the Holy Land. Its goals spring from papal teachings and are located in the general context of the ends of charity, apostleship and service to the dignity of the human being that are specific to the Catholic Church. In particular, the link with Jerusalem, which is specific to the Order, requires responsibility for its Holy Places (cf. Gal. 4:26).*"<sup>10</sup>
18. In the contemporary context, which is often characterized by volatility and propensity for change, it is important to remember that:
  - a. Membership in the Order is not an occasional commitment; it entails stability. Once requested, accepted and received, Investiture is considered forever.
  - b. Once a member of the Order, action may be taken against the Member in the event of serious violations of the commitments made. Moreover, it should be well understood that the *suspension* formula has first and foremost a pedagogical value, that is, to allow for reconsideration and renewed personal disposition to participation in the life of the Institution.
  - c. As a rule, except in cases of expulsion provided for in the Constitution for serious and well-founded reasons,<sup>11</sup> the Knight or Dame *leaves* the Order only through *voluntary resignation* acknowledged by the Grand Master, if he or she has lost the original active and participatory will.
19. Recounting the beating heart of the Order, as a Pontifical Institution and in relation to its mission, must be able to arouse new membership through the involvement of each Member.

#### IV. SPECIFIC CONTENTS OF FORMATION

20. Formation is a complex process that has a beginning but no end. Let the desire be evident within the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations to continue to grow, to form, to learn, and to ensure that what is learned is increasingly an integral part of the life of the Knight and Dame and, consequently, of the life of the Order's entire structure at the local, regional, and national levels.

##### *a. Knight and Dame: A Lifetime Project*

21. The membership of a Knight or Dame in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is rooted in the fundamental commitments set forth in our Constitution: personal renunciation, generosity, courage, solidarity, concern, involvement and cooperation<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Constitution, cited above, Introduction.

<sup>11</sup> See Constitution, cited above, Art. 39.1c.

<sup>12</sup> See Constitution, cited above., Art. 4.

22. The mandate given to the Order is written in the Constitution, which "*requires of its members solicitude in extending their aid to the most vulnerable and less fortunate and, in particular, in the exercise of solidarity in favor of the peoples of the Holy Land.*"<sup>13</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the generosity of the Knight and Dame is an all-encompassing generosity that does not end in the Holy Land but becomes a characteristic element of their presence in the Church. What we so often witness in our Members is a *multiplied* generosity that desires to take to heart the needs of all those most in need. Just as Mary of Bethany anointed the feet of Christ a few days before Easter, so today we too are called to care for and refresh the weary feet of the Church in its human dimension, there where it needs it most.
23. The involvement of Members of the Order is therefore a central element that extends to all levels of their ecclesial presence. This "*involves the obligation to be actively committed and take part, with enthusiasm and generosity, in activities in the field of charity, evangelization and ecumenism promoted by the local Churches. Members must be aware of the spiritual and ecclesial meaning of their membership of the Order and be witnesses to ties not only with the universal Church and the Holy Land but also with the dioceses and parishes to which they belong.*"<sup>14</sup> Membership of the Order clearly does not displace the local communal dimension in the Churches to which they belong, but rather strengthens it by being an extra service that the faithful offer and can bring back and share within their own diocese, as so often already occurs.
24. Starting from this principle, all the efforts made by the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations to contribute to the formation of their Members in the ecclesial sphere are significant. This includes the careful and in-depth reading of the Holy Scriptures, the basic knowledge of doctrine and morals wisely set forth in the text of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, etc. Deepening one's knowledge of these areas are fundamental to the life of every Christian, and all the more so of a Knight and Dame of the Order. Depending on local needs, it is good for the Councils of the local units of the Order (local Sections and Delegations) to offer possibilities for formation in this regard.

#### ***b. Prayer, Eucharist and Spirituality***

25. Prayer is the basis of our life; it nourishes us, accompanies us, directs us. "*The breath of faith is prayer: we grow in faith inasmuch as we learn to pray. After certain passages in life, we become aware that without faith we could not have made it and that our strength was prayer.*"<sup>15</sup>
26. Therefore, in the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations, Sections and local Delegations, the dimension of prayer cannot be lacking and care must be taken to help the Members of the Order grow and be formed in prayer and spirituality. Always let the Master of reference be Christ. In fact, "*Prayer belongs to the life of Jesus, and this aroused in the disciples the desire to imitate Him. And so, He not only recommended it but also taught how to pray. The Our Father, the prayer par excellence, became its content and guide, The Lord then also taught*

<sup>13</sup> Constitution, cited above, Art. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Constitution, cited above, Art. 4.

<sup>15</sup> FRANCIS, General Audience, Vatican.va, April 14, 2021.

*how to pray: without hypocrisy, in confidentiality, without wasting words. Lastly, 'keeping vigil' in prayer appears in the Gospels as an evident constant of the Lord before the most important moments.*"<sup>16</sup>

27. The Eucharist then must have a central place in the life of a Knight and Dame: "*It is the most precious gift left by Jesus to His disciples, whom He asked to repeat it: 'Do this in remembrance of me.'* In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, *Mysterium fidei*, He placed Himself at the center, at the heart of the Church."<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Members of the Order are invited to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist in their parishes and, when possible, to arrange to be able to celebrate this moment together as well, in particular significant circumstances.
28. Even when a Member of the Order finds himself in a situation of canonical irregularity, "*participation in Holy Mass always makes sense and, even without receiving Communion, it has an 'absolutely reasonable sense' said Benedict XVI, because, even without approaching Communion, one participates in the event of Jesus' self-giving to the Father, as he renews, albeit bloodlessly, his passion, death and resurrection.*"<sup>18</sup>
29. The Eucharist is entrusted to the Church as the memorial of Jesus' death and resurrection, and it is to be the central focus in the spirituality of the Order. In addition, one can also take advantage of meetings to experience moments of Eucharistic adoration, for example, in preparation for the Prayer Vigil that precedes the Investiture and as growth in a direct relationship with Jesus in the Sacrament: "*We also like to think that in the adoration of the Eucharist, the gesture of Mary of Bethany, who, in humility and great affection, anointed the feet of the Lord, is prolonged, so to speak.*"<sup>19</sup>
30. Any other prayer experience, even shared (rosary, meditations, pilgrimages etc.), or prayer formation will clearly be part of what can and should be offered in the formation of Members of the Order.
31. Remember, in this context, the importance of the Grand Priors, Priors and ecclesiastical and religious Members of the Order so that they do not fail to offer their service in accompanying the Knights and Dames in this personal and communal growth.<sup>20</sup>

### ***c. The Mystery of Charity***

32. Let us be helped to enter this *mystery* by papal teaching. Benedict XVI wrote in the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*: "*Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and, above all, by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force for the true development of every person and of all humanity. Love - caritas - is an extraordinary force*

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<sup>16</sup> FILONI, F., *The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 65.

<sup>17</sup> FILONI, F., *The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> FILONI, F., *About the Sunday Eucharist*, Oessh.va, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> FILONI, F., *The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> As Pope Francis recalled during his address to the Members of Consulta 2018, spiritual assistance "*is part of their (Bishops, Priests and Deacons) duties of pastoral service.*" See in this regard also the text of the Ritual regarding the Investiture of Ecclesiastics. See also Letter Prot. No. 259/2024, dated Feb. 26, 2024 addressed to the Eminent and Excellencies Grand Priors and Priors Bishops and the Rev. Ecclesiastical Members of the Order (published in Newsletter 72, Oessh.va, p.IV-V).

*that drives people to engage courageously and generously in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, eternal Love and absolute Truth" (CV 1).*

33. Charity, which one is called to exercise in the Order, is that which shines in its primordial and purest light: it is love that originates in God and promotes the development of the person and the whole world. To live it at a lower level would be to lose sight of its divine origin and its highest goal.
34. Thus Knights and Dames are called to practice charity so as to guard against falling into the trap of "*selfish claim that we owe nothing to anyone except ourselves and that we have only rights. Charity is better understood when we ourselves experience the need: first of all, spiritual (when we lose the sense of God and seem to experience a lack of sense to life), but also moral (so evident in the humiliation due to our sins) or psychological (when depression makes us prisoners, unable to react, and [our] darkened mind makes our strength fail); and no less in situations of economic poverty (when we are reduced to misery).*"<sup>21</sup>
35. Charity, which Jesus first lived and showed through his teaching, the signs he performed, up to his passion, death and resurrection, are not a theory: moreover, "*Jesus never speaks in defense of charity. He shows it concretely in reference to people in need: the poor, the sick, the woman accused of adultery, the possessed; and also the expert in the law who asked him: 'Who is my neighbor?'* Jesus gives him no explanations but tells the parable of the good Samaritan."<sup>22</sup>
36. In the Encyclical Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis dwelt on charity and made it his own by devoting an entire chapter to the parable of the Good Samaritan. He writes that "*the parable clearly does not indulge in abstract moralizing, nor is its message merely social and ethical. It speaks to us of an essential and often forgotten aspect of our common humanity: we were created for a fulfillment that can only be found in love. We cannot be indifferent to suffering; we cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast. Instead, we should feel indignant, challenged to emerge from our comfortable isolation and to be changed by our contact with human suffering. That is the meaning of dignity*" (FT 68).
37. In the formation of Members, it is essential to include the dimension of charity in its true meaning and in the light of the Church's legacy and its Magisterium so that it is not experienced only as an external act for which to be thanked. Let the Knights and Dames allow themselves to be challenged by human suffering that calls to be neighbors, living the mystery of charity that Christ has revealed for us. Let it not be forgotten that the contribution, that is, the offering that each Member makes, is a real gesture of charity destined for the works that the Order supports in the Holy Land.

#### ***d. The Holy Land***

38. Biblically, the earth is the dwelling place of men. Created in its original beauty and harmony, through the sin of men (Gen. 3:17-19) it became a place of toil ("*by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*") and fate ("*dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*"). Yet it became the chosen place for God's being among men, from among whom He elected a people whom He

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<sup>21</sup> FILONI, F., *The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> FILONI, F., *The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 69 - 70.

appointed to receive His revelation. It is the holiness of God that thus makes the land again sanctified; in that geographic patch, known in Roman times as Palestine, the land received the Word of God and saw Him walk, preach, work, die and rise again. For such reasons, that land became a region that even today remains dear to the hearts of its visitors and pilgrims, as Psalm 87 sings: on the holy mountains of God are said wonderful and glorious things, there the city of the Most High is founded, and in it the Lord registers the peoples; there we are all born. The Holy Land, then, takes us in the footsteps of Jesus; St. Francis said that in the Holy Land he went to touch the presence of Christ and sent his friars there to guard his memory.

39. Jesus is in the Temple in Jerusalem, a place he loved to frequent: "*And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on'*" (Lk. 21:1-4). This narrative from Luke's Gospel, while on the one hand shows how the Temple was the heart of the City of David, on the other hand now helps us to understand well the meaning of the contribution that each Knight and Dame offers to the Holy Land. The starting question is this: Why does this widow, who was poor, bring her offering, everything she had, to the Temple?
40. Among the many spiritual teachings and suggestions we can grasp, it is worth dwelling on the poor widow's motivation to offer her two pennies for the Temple. She knew well what Moses had taught the People and is written in the Book of Exodus: "*Let no one come before me empty-handed*" (Ex. 34:20). This is an important precept for understanding the love of the People of Israel for the Temple in which God's presence was worshipped, the place that guarded the glory and holiness of the Lord, the *Shekhinah*. When David was king and settled in Jerusalem bringing the Ark of the Covenant there, he "*said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains'*" (2 Sam. 7:2). David then conceived the desire to build a great Temple to guard the presence of the Lord among his People; but it was not he who built it, but his son Solomon. Destroyed by the Roman Pompey, it was later rebuilt by King Herod the Great, and it was the one in which Jesus as an infant was presented by Mary and Joseph as every firstborn to God, and in which he went to pray.
41. It is this connection with the Temple, with God Himself, that underlies the offering of the "*poor widow*," who, despite her poverty, did not shy away from contributing, because that place was the living presence of the Lord for her and in it she loved to pray.
42. Jesus invited to take a step further and recognize a *new* presence of God; he prophesied that there would be no stone upon stone left of that building, and he predicted a *rebuilding* not made with stones: "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*' *The Jews then said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body.*" (Jn. 2:17-21).
43. As Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, we commit ourselves to support the *Body of Christ* now composed of *living stones*, in the Holy Land the small Christian Community that lives and works there; it is a *new Temple* built on the mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection and strengthened by the Holy Spirit; of which Christ is the Head, both

of the so-called *Mother Church in Jerusalem* and of the *particular Churches scattered throughout the world* to which each Knight and Dame belongs.

44. In the formation of the Members of the Order, it is important that the meaning of the *offering*, that annual contribution made by each Knight and Dame, is well understood in its fundamental aspect, that is, as an act of love for the Mother Church of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.<sup>23</sup> Like a father or mother who arrives tired at the end of the working day, but has within him/her the gratitude of having contributed to the support of his or her family, so the Knights and Dames decide to make available their time, spiritual and economic energies for the love of that Church, that is, those brothers and sisters who live in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, according to Paul's teaching (cf. Rom. 15:26-27; 1 Cor. 16:3).
45. In formation, care should always be taken to never lose sight of the sense of the core of the *contribution* by limiting it exclusively, for example, to its economic value, but that it is always able to understand it from the perspective that enhances its deeper meaning; in fact, to contribute means much more than making an economic donation. The Members of the Order are aware that to support the Church in the Holy Land is to participate in its life through educational, pastoral and humanitarian needs. May we always be accompanied by the word of Jesus, "*Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me*" (Mt. 25:40). We think that to support the poor, the migrants, the children, the 'little ones' in the Holy Land is to care for those poor whom Jesus bequeathed to us, reminding Judas that they would always be with us (cf. Jn. 12:8).
46. From this principle, the love of the Members of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem for the Holy Land clearly translates into a desire to relate better to it by knowing the Holy Scripture, visiting the places, appreciating the history, the local communities and all other realities present in the Land of Jesus.
47. The *pilgrimage*, which will be discussed below, is a privileged opportunity to come into direct contact with the Holy Land and the *living stones* that inhabit it. Our desire, in fact, is "*not simply to be a sacred archaeological place but a living one, thanks to the presence of Christian communities, the resident and pilgrim ones, who truly give it life; in this, we are honored not only to participate, but also to contribute to the mission of Christ which the Church and the Holy Father have entrusted to us. It is here where the source of this 'noble Institution' is found, in the attire of the Dames and Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.*"<sup>24</sup>
- It is good to see how the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations do not fail to offer opportunities for their Members to experience this special moment that is an important part of life in the Order.

#### ***e. Our Nature and Symbols***

48. The Order is a Pontifical Institution, not a governmental or non-governmental organization. It is made up of people united by the same desire to serve God and the Holy Land who love to

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<sup>23</sup> In relation to commitments and for matters related to the organization of contributions, please refer to the General or Particular Regulations, if any.

<sup>24</sup> FILONI, F., [\*What does it mean for the Order to be "a Central Body of the Church"?\*](#) (oessh.va), January 2021.

come together, get to know each other and pay attention to each other, being rooted in their own diocesan and parish communities.

49. In formation, it is important that the dimension of fraternity within the Order be presented and offered regularly. It is also important for the Knight and Dame to be familiar with the structure of the Order at the local level (the contact persons and offices of their Delegation, Section, and Lieutenancy/Magistral Delegation) as well as with the structure at the central level (Grand Magisterium) and to be informed about news concerning the life of the Order.
50. It should not be forgotten that membership in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is also characterized by an outward visibility that prides itself on certain characteristic symbols intimately linked to the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. The Order's own symbols have a fundamental significance, starting with the *Jerusalem Cross*, which is the Order's distinctive emblem and which cannot and should not be seen as an ornamental element. "*The bestowal of the Cross,*" as we read in the Ritual, "*on which the nailed Christ made Himself vulnerable in the face of the powers of this world, is among the most significant moments of the Investiture ceremony. The Knight and the Dame look to Christ who offered Himself as a sacrifice for all, even to death on the Cross, to give them life in abundance. The Jerusalem Cross is therefore the sign of the new member's dedication to supporting the Holy Land.*"<sup>25</sup>
51. This Cross is clearly evident on the cloak in which one is clothed on the day of the Investiture, a sign of an identity that embraces every Member.<sup>26</sup> Referring again to the Ritual, remember that "*Cape, neck Cross, beret, mantilla, gloves: they comprise the dress proper to the Knight and the Dame in the dignity they receive,*"<sup>27</sup> they must therefore be worn consciously and appropriately. This vestment is not a uniform; rather, it reflects the meaning of belonging to the Order.

#### ***f. A Journey in Faith***

52. Participation in the life of the Order contributes to the journey toward holiness to which every Christian is called. "*The Lord ... wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence,*" writes Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate (GE 1).
53. The first guide on our path, to whom we have a special devotion, is Mary whom we venerate under the title of the *Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine*, patroness of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The Shrine of Deir Rafat, in Israel, houses the first image of her: radiating light and surrounded by angels on the clouds, Mary seems to reach out her hand as Mother toward our world, while below we recognize symbolically the outlines of the cities of

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<sup>25</sup> Ritual for Celebrations OESSH, 2021, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> During the Audience granted on the sidelines of Consulta 2023, the Holy Father insisted on the profound significance of the Cross that stands out on the cloaks of the Knights and Dames. "*With its horizontal arm, it reminds you of your commitment to ensure that your dedication to the crucified and risen Christ embraces your entire life, and in charity makes you close to every brother and sister; while its vertical arm, firmly planted on the ground and pointing to heaven, reminds you of the inalienable complementarity, in your journey, between a life of prayer and service to your brothers and sisters, attentive, qualified, and well rooted in the realities in which you operate, aimed at the total good of the person (cf. Eph 3:17-19; Saint Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, III, lect. 5).*" FRANCIS, Address of the Holy Father to Participants in the Consulta., cited above, Vatican.va, November 9, 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Ritual, cited above, p. 2.

Jerusalem and Jericho, to which she looks with affection. In addition to this image, the offices of the Grand Magisterium house an icon that has become particularly dear to Knights and Dames: seated on a throne, Our Lady of Palestine holds on her knees, as a caring Mother, the image of "*Jerusalem, symbol of the Holy Land but also symbol of the Church, the new Holy City of Revelation (Rev. 21:2).*"<sup>28</sup>

54. Let each Knight and Dame, then, renew their entrustment to Mary, the one who has the Holy Land particularly at heart and who accompanies and blesses our steps of charity and our hope to live rooted in the life of her Son Jesus.
55. There are, in addition, other figures who can accompany the Knights and Dames on their journey, starting with the saints, blessed and servants of God who had relations with the Holy Land. Think of pilgrims, from the historical Egeria (5<sup>th</sup> century) to Francis of Assisi and Bridget of Sweden, or the knight-soldier Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>29</sup> They are joined by distinguished Members of the Order such as St. Pius X, Grand Master of the Order; Blessed Bartolo Longo, Knight of the Grand Cross, father of orphans, apostle of the Rosary and founder of the Marian Shrine in the city of Pompeii; and the Servant of God Enrique Ernesto Shaw, Argentine lay Knight, husband, father of nine children and successful industrial executive.
56. During formation, these and other figures can be pointed out as examples and known.

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<sup>28</sup> FILONI, F., *Mary Queen of Palestine invites us to peace*, in *Maria Con Te*, March 2023, p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> He, hearing the Lord's call, would have liked to settle in the Holy Land.

## PART TWO

### V. THE SUBJECTS OF TRAINING

57. Membership in the Order can occur in various ways. A significant aspect is the *attraction* that occurs because of the witness of a Member, his or her exemplary life and the goals he or she pursues. Inviting people who seem to us to be possible candidates is desirable, as is helping them to understand the possible desire for membership once an assessment of their spiritual and moral capacities has been made.
58. In his address at the conclusion of Consulta 2023, Pope Francis also recalled the importance of the various levels of formation: "*A formation necessary for candidates aspiring to enter the Order; an ongoing formation for those who already participate in its life and mission; and furthermore, the formation of those who are called to hold roles of responsibility, with two elements: the spiritual, in the awareness of the high moral commitment assumed before the Altar; and that related to the organization of activities and resource management, to meet the needs of the Holy Land continually and adequately. Initial and ongoing, practical and spiritual formation: there are four guidelines that we can see represented in the sign of the Cross, which stands out clearly on your mantles and inspires your spirituality.*"<sup>30</sup>

#### *a. Candidates: Initial Formation*

59. Approaching the Order is an important initial moment. In the Constitution and Regulations the selection process is well detailed, and rests primarily on the ultimate responsibility of the Lieutenant, although he/she is assisted in this delicate function by other Members. "*The prerogative of selecting candidates for admission to the Order belongs in the first place to the Lieutenants; this task is exercised in close cooperation with the Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy and the Council of Lieutenancy, after hearing the opinion of the relevant ecclesiastical authorities.*"<sup>31</sup> Selection is a process of discernment.
60. The role of a Member of the Order introducing the aspiring Knight or Dame is fundamental. Prior knowledge of a Knight or Dame certainly helps the aspirant to see what membership in the Order consists of and to receive in a more spontaneous way information regarding this Pontifical Institution. It should also be emphasized that it may be the case that the desire to belong to the Order occurs in some other way (e.g., through communication activities or promotion of the Order in broader contexts) and that therefore this process should be accompanied wisely and carefully to enable the potential aspirant to acquire the necessary information about the Order.
61. When interest in joining the Order is expressed, a number of steps are necessary:
- More information about the Order itself;
  - A meeting in person (or online if necessary) with a leader of the Order;

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<sup>30</sup> FRANCIS, *Address of the Holy Father to the participants of the Consulta...*, cited above, Vatican.va, November 9, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Constitution, cited above, Art. 34.1. Among ecclesiastical authorities, consider the candidate's Bishops and Priests of reference.

- An initial assessment of the basic requirements<sup>32</sup> for entry into the Order;
- The clear outlining of the proposed path forward.

62. The identification of a Member of the Order who will accompany the candidate who aspires to membership, and who assumes the responsibility to be a liaison with the Delegation, Section and Lieutenancy/Magistral Delegation, enables the future Member to be followed and supported in the formation process.

63. The Constitution also recalls that the candidate's formation process is of paramount importance for the life and future in the Order: "*The candidates for admission to the Order must complete a period of formation, usually with a duration of not less than a year.*"<sup>33</sup> Those in charge will consider whether formation should be a uniform process, or differ with age, or take into account special needs.

64. This special time allows both the candidate and the local leadership of the Order to get to know each other and to verify the desire to enter this Institution. In some Lieutenancies or Magistral Delegations and/or Sections and Delegations sometimes the option of a longer time of preparation for the Investiture is preferred. A distinction is sometimes made between a year as an "invited" or "interested" person and one as a candidate. A case may also be made for extending the formation period beyond the usual one-year time, because of a lower frequency of the Investiture ceremonies.

65. In the formation of candidates there are some important phases such as:

- Spiritual formation:** the Order "aspires to be an instrument for the development and deepening of personal sanctification."<sup>34</sup> We have already provided several insights into this element in the first part of this document.
- Institutional formation:** this regards knowledge of the main documents that regulate the life of the Order (Constitution, General or Local Regulations); knowledge of the commitments one takes when joining the Order; and respect for the Institution itself.
- Historic formation:** for an Order with a history as long as ours,<sup>35</sup> it is important for candidates to be aware of the various events that first led to its establishment, then its evolution over the centuries to its current form. With the proliferation of information about the Order, sometimes incorrect or not verified, it is essential that candidates have a correct and uniform vision, so as to avoid spreading false or not historically sound information. Following the 2023 Consulta and subsequently the Grand Magisterium's Meeting in April 2024, an International Historical Committee was established to compile a brief history of the Order, as well as to stimulate and encourage studies and possible conferences.

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<sup>32</sup> "The candidates for admission to the Order must be Catholics of exemplary faith and corresponding moral conduct who actively take part in the life of their local Churches and generously support their spirituality. In addition, they must be animated by the wish to live the spirituality of the Order intensely and to contribute to the carrying out of its mission." Constitution, cited above, Art. 34.2.

<sup>33</sup> Constitution, cited above, Art. 34.4.

<sup>34</sup> Constitution, cited above, Introduction.

<sup>35</sup> See Constitution, cited above, Introduction.

- d. **Legal-administrative formation:** candidates are to be informed of the Order's governance structure, both central and local, and the functions of the various offices as set out in the Constitution. Special attention is to be given to raising awareness of the international aspect or *catholicity* of the Order. Also, in this element of formation details concerning the obligation to *make contributions* should be explained. Information on the practical aspects and the documents required for the Investiture are shared as application for admittance into the Order approaches.
- e. **Cultural formation and connection to the Holy Land:** the candidate learns more about the reality of the Holy Land, the communities there, the relationship with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and also the various commitments that the Order makes. For those Lieutenancies that select specific projects to support the Land of Jesus, it is clearly important to offer information about them. It is also important to know that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre does not engage in political activities in relation to the Holy Land.

66. Special attention should be paid to the appointment of formators (lay and ecclesiastics). The Constitution recalls that “*the period of formation must be directed by a member endowed with proven experience and adequate seniority in the Order.*”<sup>36</sup> It may sometimes be desirable to entrust different Members of the Lieutenancy with aspects of formation, given their specific skills. This might favor greater specificity in formation and a broader knowledge on the part of the candidate.

67. The importance of the *formation materials* distributed at this stage should not be underestimated. Various local structures share introductory material on the Order in the first instance and then follow up later by giving the candidate some central documents such as, for example, the Constitution, the Ritual and the book on the Spirituality of the Grand Master. Some Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations have equipped themselves to produce booklets at the local level. Clearly this necessity becomes even more important for those units in which the spoken language is not one of the five official languages of the Grand Magisterium’s website, and the commitment of the Knights and Dames is truly to be praised with regard to the support offered by so many to documents or texts into their own languages. It is worth mentioning to candidates the existence of the Grand Magisterium’s website, [www.oessh.va](http://www.oessh.va), as well as – if there is one – that of the local Lieutenancy; the central periodical publications (the quarterly Newsletters and the annual Jerusalem Cross); and the news and updates available online and on social media (Facebook: @granmagistero.oessh; X: @GM\_oessh).

68. Great importance is attached to the *candidate's participation* in the life of the Lieutenancy or Magistral Delegation. The meetings allow one to begin to "feel at home" and also get to know a larger number of Knights and Dames. Let us not forget, in fact, how central the dimension of fraternal life also is, which we will discuss further later on. The candidate may in some cases also be invited to participate with his or her family to allow a clearer awareness for the entire family regarding what being a Knight or Dame implies.

69. Some meetings are clearly formative, others cultural and others convivial; the first one can sometimes be in-person and sometimes online. The offering of a spiritual retreat is always a

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<sup>36</sup> Constitution, cited above, Art. 34.4.

privileged moment of formation, both for Investitures and on particularly significant liturgical or cultural occasions.

70. At each stage of formation, great care should be paid to personal relationships and the opportunity must be ensured for the candidate to meet regularly with a Delegation, Section or Lieutenancy leader.

### ***b. Members: Ongoing Formation***

71. Once in the Order, Knights and Dames are to be accompanied towards greater knowledge and awareness of their commitment. This can be done in different ways depending on various factors, not least the size of the Lieutenancy/Magistral Delegation.
72. The regular life of the Knight or Dame of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is often filled with opportunities to meet with other Members and, very often, these occasions turn into events of further formation. Some Lieutenancies choose to select an annual theme and organize monthly in-depth formation sessions related to life in the Church, in the Order, or in the Holy Land. In relation to the life of the Church, attention should be paid to the seasons of Advent and Lent. Local and national pilgrimages are also to be encouraged, as moments of consolidation of belonging to the Order as well as of individual spiritual growth.
73. Adequate *formation in the ceremonial and liturgical service* (especially for those who are deputed to this task) should never be neglected. It is supported by the text of the Ritual for Celebrations and allows this aspect of belonging to the Order to be lived with greater awareness; it is good to identify possible Knights and Dames willing to offer the service of lay Masters of Ceremonies. Care for the Ceremonial and liturgies must not be underestimated and the Knights and Dames must be accompanied to discover the profound richness and beauty of those moments.<sup>37</sup> It is desirable that each Member has his or her own Ritual booklet to accompany him or her during the ceremonies to help him or her live them to the full.

### ***c. Leaders serving the Order***

74. As detailed in the Order's Constitution in Articles 25-33, the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations are structured internally in a precise and uniform manner. Appropriate Members must be identified and appointed to positions of responsibility and service (Lieutenant, President, Delegate, Chancellor, Treasurer, Secretary; Council Members and various collaborators; Master of Ceremonies). Since we will not go into detail on the formation to be given to each of these positions,<sup>38</sup> some general principles are shared below.

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<sup>37</sup> “The liturgy is always the highest expression of prayer addressed to the Lord undertaken as a community. It is not an expression of a formalism that can satisfy the exterior, but on the contrary, it tends towards the fundamental nature, which is praise of God. Therefore, both the rites and the environment must be consonant with the purpose of the solemn moment.” Ritual, cited above, Preface, p.VI.

<sup>38</sup> Various indications are provided in the Constitution and the Regulations. The protection of each Member's personal data is especially recommended.

75. It is fundamental to remember what Pope Francis said to us at the 2018 Consulta meeting: "*It is a task, especially for you leaders, to offer the example of an intense spiritual life and true following of the Lord: in this way you can render a valid service of authority to those under your leadership.*"<sup>39</sup> It must not therefore be forgotten that offices in the Order must be understood as a further stimulus to commitment to faith and concrete action within the Order itself and of true *service*. This implies even more a duty of formation at all levels.
76. Those who are called upon to exercise an office in the Order, in addition to living its life itself, they must be fully familiar with the Constitution, the General Regulations and the Internal Regulations of one's own Lieutenancy or Magistral Delegation (if any) and demand *compliance* with them, as well as with the norms and regulations of the country to which they belong.
77. A central element in the formation of these offices is that of the *handover*: upon taking office, it is the responsibility of the previous Member of the Order who held that office to provide the successor with the necessary guidance to ensure a balanced transition and continuity. For his part, the Governor General will provide those necessary elements relating to the relationship between the Grand Magisterium and the new Lieutenant. This can take place in various ways and at various times. The new Lieutenant will ensure that he/she has appropriate and constant contact with the Grand Prior and Priors in appropriate ways.
78. For those who find themselves working in the more strictly *legal-administrative* sphere, it is necessary to be familiar with administrative law, with the rules of transparency and correct accounting, with anti-money laundering regulations, and to make use of the necessary contacts with experts and consultants in the legal-administrative field, where appropriate. They must be familiar with the administrative requirements of the Order's Central Government (Grand Magisterium), and ensure compliance with its financial, administrative and accounting norms and regulations.

#### ***d. Ecclesiastics, Religious Men and Women***

79. The ecclesiastics, men and women religious who join the Order are required to have **(a)** knowledge of the spirituality of the Order; **(b)** knowledge of the Order as an Institution, its history and the reality of the Holy Land; as well as **(c)** readiness to serve the Order according to the indications received from the Pontiffs, such as on the occasion of the 2018 Consulta. The Holy Father recalled, in fact, that "*admission into your Order of Bishops, Priests and Deacons is not entirely an honor. It is part of their duties of pastoral service to assist those among you who have a role of responsibility by providing opportunities for community and liturgical prayer at every level, continuous spiritual opportunities, and catechesis for ongoing formation and for the growth of all members of the Order.*"<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> FRANCIS, [Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Members of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem \(Vatican.va\)](#), 16 November 2018.

<sup>40</sup> FRANCIS, [Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Members of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem \(Vatican.va\)](#), 16 November 2018.

80. For ecclesiastics, “*spirituality is intimately connected to their vocation as men of God, friends of the Bridegroom, united to Him with participation in the triple office of Christ: teacher, priest, and king.*”<sup>41</sup> This is the great gift they bring to what is a lay Order in which the exercise of authority resides mainly in the figures of the Lieutenants with whom the clergy, men and women religious work alongside in the pastoral, spiritual and human support and accompaniment of the Knights and Dames, offering their time for prayer and formation.
81. With regard to the clergy called to positions of responsibility, such as Grand Priors of Lieutenancy or Magistral Delegation and Priors of Delegations and Sections, it is important that they be fully aware of their duty as detailed in the Constitution (Art. 27 and Art. 33.4), and that they progressively get to know the other ecclesiastical Members, religious men and women who belong to the Lieutenancy, Section and Delegation so that they can better coordinate the action of spiritual accompaniment for the benefit of all the Members of the Order. It is highly recommended that the new Prior or Grand Prior be informed by his predecessor of matters relating to the Lieutenancy and have contact with the Lieutenant or Magistral Delegate and/or Section or Delegation leaders. It is recommended that each Lieutenancy or Magistral Delegation, as well as each Section or local Delegation, have a list of all ecclesiastical and religious Members.

## VI. SOME KEY ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF THE ORDER

### *a. Vigil and Investiture Ceremony*

82. The Knight and Dame of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre live the Christian life first of all within their own diocese. The expression of this dimension of Christian faith therefore clearly follows all the modalities of parish and diocesan life. In addition to this, there are certain elements linked to belonging to the Order, such as the Vigil and Investiture ceremonies, in which *all* Knights and Dames are always warmly invited to participate. This will allow them to relive the day of their Investiture with the same joy and awareness.
83. During the formation of the candidates, emphasis should be placed on the importance not only of the practical aspects of the ceremonies,<sup>42</sup> but also on their proper implementation and with a full understanding of the deeper aspects of the moments being experienced; the meaning of the symbols is presented concisely at the beginning of the Ritual for the celebrations.<sup>43</sup> As a useful aid for unifying Ceremonial and rites, a short film is available on the website of the Grand Magisterium, which is good to become acquainted with.

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<sup>41</sup> FILONI F., *The The house was filled...*, cited above, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> In this regard, see the Ritual for Celebrations the full study of which is to be recommended so as to ensure that the candidates for entry into the Order, as well as the Knights and Dames who have been part of it for some time, can always experience this ceremony in an involved and heartfelt way, fully grasping the spirit and the importance of all the parts that comprise it.

<sup>43</sup> Ritual, cited above, pp.1-3.

### ***b. Pilgrimages***

84. “*Except for justified reasons, the Members of the Order must go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at least once in their lives*”<sup>44</sup>: so we read in Article 36 of the Constitution of the Order which deals with the *obligations* of the Members of the Order. It is recommended that new Members make their pilgrimage as soon as possible after the Investiture. Moreover, it is very good if that pilgrimage also takes place with other Members, adding to the sharing of ideals also that of the concrete experience of being together in the footsteps of Jesus in the holy places. One starts as a simple acquaintance and returns as a brother or sister. One of the greatest privileges for a Member of the Order is to witness the Empty Tomb and to have a truly transformative prayer experience. All pilgrimages offer this dimension of formation and transformation.
85. It is recommended that pilgrimage to the Holy Land be amongst the initiatives related to ongoing formation. These are in fact moments of spiritual growth and encounter with the Land of Jesus and with the projects that are supported thanks to the contributions of the Order.
86. Preparation for pilgrimage is essential: both from a faith, and cultural point of view but also from membership of the Order’s point of view. Some Lieutenancies live this experience by opening it up to friends who may then be interested in finding out more about the Order, and possibly become part of it.
87. It is important to take care not only with the preparation for the pilgrimage but also with pastoral care once pilgrims are back, so as not to lose what has been sown. Pilgrimage is an opportunity for Members to return to their Lieutenancies with a passion in their hearts, ideally to be shared with others.
88. Depending on the size of the Lieutenancy, the pilgrimage can be experienced at the level of a Delegation, Section or Lieutenancy, in the way that is most convenient. Some Lieutenancies have also taken advantage of this experience to live it with other international Members in the Order. With regard to spiritual accompaniment, the guidance of an ecclesiastic Member of the Order who is well prepared to guide pilgrims to the Holy Land is recommended. In fact, this is one of the services that the clergy belonging to the Order can offer to their Delegation, Section and Lieutenancy.
89. In addition to the Holy Land, we must not forget the enrichment that a pilgrimage to other, more local, destinations brings through fostering spiritual formation and bonds of friendship between Members.

### ***c. Fraternal Dimension***

90. The Order cherishes the fraternal dimension of its Members. We therefore wish to recall how this is the basis of the ecclesial commitment of each Member in the context of the spiritual and charitable dimension. Therefore, actions that undermine the life of the Order through unseemly acts (offensive criticism, anonymous letters, personal animosity) should be avoided. Benedict XVI taught that *truth* questions the heart, weaving the praise of the upright *conscience* that

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<sup>44</sup> Constitution, cited above, Art. 36.2.

knows how to understand and forgive the errant one.

91. The invitation is to live the fraternal dimension at all levels: not only through the conviviality in meetings to get to know each other better, but also through the willingness to come to the aid of Knights and Dames who are going through more difficult times. Members who are appointed to positions of responsibility in the Order should always remember that the service they offer is carried out in the free dimension of charity. Service, in fact, only makes sense if it is lived with a fraternal approach for the benefit of others. It will therefore be important to insist on this aspect during the formation period to help the Knights and Dames enter into this spirit.
92. Some Knights and Dames after some time in the Order no longer attend. Are they still Members of the Order? How should they be considered? Remembering that membership of the Order is forever,<sup>45</sup> it is up to the Lieutenancies and individual Members never to cut ties with those who have left - unless the Member himself/herself renounces membership of the Order - and to continue to keep the person updated. For serious situations, however, the Constitution regulates in Art. 36.6 and 39.

## VII. YOUNG PEOPLE: ASPECTS OF FORMATION

93. At the conclusion of this Document on Formation, we welcome the initiatives regarding the involvement of young people in some aspects of the life of the Order. The Catholic Church celebrated a Synod of Bishops on youth in 2018, and Pope Francis wrote an Apostolic Exhortation, Christus vivit. The Order is also involved in this regard.
94. Developing a program for interested *young people* (before the age of possible entry into the Order) is possible, as is reasoning about these experiences in order to share good practices and also challenges. The central offices of the Order is following this aspect closely in order to help those who might ask for help and to coordinate experiences.

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95. This document is the guiding light for formation in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, but it does not exhaust every aspect of it. It will be the task of each Lieutenancy and Magistral Delegation to bring to it the richness of their own experience.

*Given in Rome, at the Headquarters of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, on May 19, 2024, Solemnity of Pentecost.*

*Translation of the original Italian text. For exact quotations, see the Italian original.*

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<sup>45</sup> In his message of 9 November 2023, Pope Francis reminded us that "formation is for life". So is belonging to the Order, as we have already reflected in No. 18.

## MAIN REFERENCE TEXTS

FILONI, F., *The House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume. A Spirituality of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre*, 2020.

*Ritual for Celebrations OESSH*, 2021.

*Constitution of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*, 2020.

## OTHER REFERENCE TEXTS

**Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Members of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem**

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/november/documents/papa-francesco\\_20181116\\_consulta-ordine-santosepolcro.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/november/documents/papa-francesco_20181116_consulta-ordine-santosepolcro.html)

November 16, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you at the conclusion of the Consulta of the Members of the Grand Magisterium and of the Lieutenants of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. I greet and thank Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, and the Pro-Grand Prior, Bishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa; I greet the Members of the Grand Magisterium, along with the Lieutenants of the nations and of the places where the Order is present. And with you I greet the whole family of Knights and Dames from all over the world. My gratitude goes to all of you for the many spiritual and charitable activities you carry out for the benefit of the peoples of the Holy Land.

You have gathered for the work of the Consulta, the general assembly that is held every five years at the See of Peter. Here in the Vatican, you are, in a certain way, at home, as you constitute an ancient Pontifical institution under the protection of the Holy See. Since the last Consulta of 2013 the Order has grown in its membership, in its geographical expansion with the creation of new peripheral divisions, in the material assistance that it has offered the Church in the Holy Land, and in the number of pilgrimages made by your members. I thank you for your support of beneficial pastoral and cultural programmes and I encourage you to continue your commitment, alongside the Latin Patriarchate, in addressing the refugee crisis which in the last five years has prompted the Church to provide a significant humanitarian response throughout the region.

It is a good sign that your initiatives in the field of training and health care are open to all, regardless of the communities they belong to and the religion they profess. In this way you help pave the way to make Christian values known, to the promotion of interreligious dialogue, mutual respect and mutual understanding. In other words, with your commendable commitment, you too offer your contribution to build the path that will lead, as we all hope, to the achievement of peace throughout the region.

I know that this week you have turned your attention to the role of local managers, or lieutenants, present in more than 30 nations and zones of the world in which your Order is active. Certainly, the continuous growth of the Order depends on your unceasing and ever renewed effort. In this regard, it is important not to forget that the principal aim of your Order lies in the spiritual growth of its members. Therefore, any success of your initiatives cannot be separate from appropriate religious formation programmes addressed to every Knight and every Dame, so that they may consolidate

their own indispensable relationship with the Lord Jesus, especially in prayer, in meditation on the Sacred Scriptures and in furthering their knowledge of the doctrine of the Church. It is a task, especially for you leaders, to offer the example of an intense spiritual life and true following of the Lord: in this way you can render a valid service of authority to those under your leadership.

Then, with regard to your mission in the world, do not forget that you are not a philanthropic entity committed to promoting the material and social improvement of recipients. You are called to place the evangelical love of neighbour as the central and final aim of your works, to bear witness everywhere to the goodness and care with which God loves everyone. Admission into your Order of Bishops, Priests and Deacons is not entirely an honour. It is part of their duties of pastoral service to assist those among you who have a role of responsibility by providing opportunities for community and liturgical prayer at every level, continuous spiritual opportunities, and catecheses for ongoing formation and for the growth of all members of the Order.

Before the entire world — which too often averts its gaze — lies the tragic situation of Christians who are persecuted and killed in ever increasing numbers. In addition to their martyrdom of blood, there is also their ‘white martyrdom’, such as that which occurs in democratic countries when freedom of religion is limited. And this is the everyday white martyrdom of the Church in those places. I urge you to always associate prayer with the work of material aid to people who are so harshly tried, to constantly invoke Our Lady, whom you venerate with the title of “Our Lady of Palestine”. She is the caring Mother and the Help of Christians, for whom she obtains from the Lord strength and comfort in sorrow.

May the icon of Our Lady of Persecuted Christians, which I will soon bless and which you will all receive to take to each of your Lieutenancies, accompany your journey. Together let us invoke Mary’s concern for the Church in the Holy Land and, more generally, in the Middle East, along with her special intercession for those whose life and freedom are in danger. I accompany your valuable and tireless work with my Blessing, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.

**Pope Francis**

**Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Members of the Consulta of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem**

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/november/documents/20231109-ordineequestre-santosepolcro.html>

November 9, 2023

Cardinals,  
Dear brothers in the Episcopate,  
Members of the Grand Magisterium and Lieutenants,  
Brothers and sisters!

I welcome you all, Knights, Dames and Ecclesiastics representing the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. I address a particular greeting to Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Grand Master of the Order, extending my sentiments of gratitude and respect to all the members of the Order throughout the world.

You are gathered in Rome for the Consulta, which involves the meeting of the Lieutenants, the Magistral Delegates, and this year also the Bishops Grand Priors, to discuss the theme of formation. A formation necessary for candidates aspiring to enter the Order; an ongoing formation for those who already participate in its life and mission; and furthermore, the formation of those who are called to hold roles of responsibility, with two elements: the spiritual, in the awareness of the high moral commitment assumed before the Altar; and that related to the organization of activities and resource management, to meet the needs of the Holy Land continually and adequately.

Initial and ongoing, practical and spiritual formation: they are four guidelines that we can see represented in the sign of the Cross, which stands out clearly on your mantles and inspires your spirituality. With its horizontal arm, it reminds you of your commitment to ensure that your dedication to the crucified and risen Christ embraces your entire life, and in charity makes you close to every brother and sister; while its vertical arm, firmly planted on the ground and pointing to heaven, reminds you of the inalienable complementarity, in your journey, between a life of prayer and service to your brothers and sisters, attentive, qualified, and well rooted in the realities in which you operate, aimed at the total good of the person (cf. Eph 3:17-19; Saint Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, III, lect. 5).

In this regard, the Statutes I have approved constitute the high road on which to travel as a lay Order, with a purpose that was already well foreseen by Blessed Pius IX and then confirmed by his successors: to associate men and women who are committed to a fuller participation in the life of the Church, starting from that "Mother" Church in Jerusalem, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul (cf. 1 Cor 16:3), and opening up to the whole world. With this universal outlook, you are called to be an Order that, strong in its own identity, participates in the mystery of charity in the most beautiful way, open and available, ready to take on those services that the Lord requires through the needs of our brothers and sisters: from the education of children in schools to concrete solidarity with the most fragile categories, such as the elderly, the sick, and refugees. Let us remember here, always, I would say the "refrain" that the Lord makes all the prophets say in the Old Testament: the widow, the orphan and the stranger. This care we must have.

The empty Sepulchre, whose special custodian you have by vocation committed yourselves to be for centuries, is in this sense above all a sign of the boundless love of the Crucified One, who keeps nothing for himself and who therefore cannot be held back by the snares of death; it is a sign of the victory of the Risen One in whom we too find life (cf. Rom 6:8-9) and of the power of the Mystery of his Body and Blood that unites us all as his members (cf. 1 Cor 10:17).

To form and to be formed, at the beginning of the journey of Investiture and throughout life. Formation is lifelong. Formation is a universal and inclusive charity. Studying the history of your Order from this point of view and, in a context of listening and prayer, applying yourselves to acquiring the skills to respond to the needs of your neighbour: this is a great service you can offer to the Church and the world today. In every age, even in ours, marked by the technocratic paradigm, there is a great need for people who practice charity with intelligence and imagination. I therefore urge you to continue your work in this style, and to transmit it faithfully in the various phases of formation.

Before concluding, I would like to join you in thinking of the Holy Land. We are sadly witnessing a tragedy unfolding in the very places where the Lord lived, where he taught us through his humanity to love, to forgive and to do good to all. And instead, we see them torn apart by terrible suffering that affects above all so many innocents, so many innocent dead. That is why I am spiritually united

with you, who certainly live this meeting of the Consulta sharing the great sorrow of the Mother Church of Jerusalem and imploring the gift of peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Virgin Mary, invoked by you with the title of Queen of Palestine, assist you always in your mission. I bless you all from my heart, I bless all the members of the Order and their families. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

**Pope Francis**

### **The Ecclesiological Significance of Support for the Holy Land**

<https://www.oessh.va/content/ordinequestresantosepolcro/en/gran-magistero/il-gran-maestro/lista-news-gran-maestro/il-significato-ecclesiologico-del-sostegno-alla-terra-santa.html>

Autumn 2022

*“The Order, with its structure and activities, participates directly in the Roman Pontiff’s solicitude for places and Catholic institutions in the Holy Land [...] In particular, the link with Jerusalem, which is specific to the Order, requires responsibility for its Holy Places (cf. Gal 4:26).” (Constitution, Introduction).*

Reflecting on these expressions, a Knight and Dame of the Holy Sepulchre understand that, in addition to the necessary practice of the evangelical virtues (spirituality of the Members), they undertake a task entrusted to them by the Holy Father in the name of the Church. It is a true ecclesial task, not a task left to the goodwill of a few; it is much more. It is an assignment that belongs to the Church because of the responsibility it has towards the Places of Jesus and in particular towards the Church in Jerusalem, so that those Places do not become sites of religious archaeology, and that Church does not remain devoid of vitality.

To offer one's support to the Temple of Jerusalem, as it appears in the passage from the Gospel of Mark on the offering of the poor widow (Mk 12:43-44), was a duty very much felt among the Jews of the Lord's time; the affluent and the poor, who upon entering the Temple used to make their offering for the worship and maintenance of the majestic building. Jesus, observing those who made their donation, points out that some emphasised their offering by throwing in many coins, while the poor widow, almost furtively, let slip "two small coins worth a few cents", that is, all that she had. The difference, Jesus notes, lies not so much in the quantity of the giving, but in the difference between those who give "what is superfluous" and those who give "all she had, her whole livelihood"; the humbleness of the gesture is elevated to a supreme ethical value. Even Jesus, on his part and that of the Disciples, contributed to the sustenance of the Temple (cf. Mt 17:24-25).

Contributing to and supporting the Church in Jerusalem therefore belongs to Christians the highest sentiments of responsibility of towards the Holy Land. For a Knight and Dame, the undertaking of this specific commitment is part of a life choice. In fact, they do not join the Order out of an empty desire for social elevation, nor to enhance their public profile, but out of a sense of high and noble responsibility as 'sons and daughters' towards what is considered the 'Mother' Church and towards those places where Jesus spent his life, preached, performed miracles, and offered life on the Cross as a ransom for us. St Jerome recalls that blessed is he who carries the holy places and events of salvation within himself: "Happy is he who bears in his breast the cross, the resurrection, the place

of Christ's Nativity and the place of the Ascension. Happy is he who has Bethlehem in his heart, the heart in which Christ is born daily" (Hom. in Ps. 95).

Some may ask: Is it really an ecclesial duty to contribute to and support the Holy Places? How can we support the Church in those Places, when all around us, in our dioceses and parishes, there is already so much poverty, perhaps even more, and we do not have sufficient financial resources? These questions have been asked by lay people and clergy.

Yes! Supporting the Holy Places and the communities living there is a true ecclesial responsibility. It does not belong to the solitary generosity of a few benefactors, but to the duty of all the children who cherish the memory of and affection for that 'paternal/maternal home' where the first apostolic community was born and raised, where the places of the Lord's life and death are preserved, and where it is possible to return to the roots of our faith. Caring for the Church of Jerusalem is therefore much more than preserving its historical and archaeological memory; the Apostles had already urged the charity of the early Christian communities of Antioch, Greece, Galatia and Macedonia to remember the 'saints' in Jerusalem and to hold collections, which they later described as generous, indeed 'beyond their means' (2Cor, 8, 3-4). We therefore perceive, in this common endeavour, that we have one of 'our characteristic traits', which allows each member of the Order to exercise their spirituality through "a marked generosity" drawn from their "own material resources" (cf. *The House Was Filled with the Fragrance of the Perfume*, EWTN Publishing 2020, pp. 73,74). St Paul himself also teaches us how to perform this gesture of dutiful generosity: "so that in this way it might be ready as a bountiful gift and not as an exaction. [...]. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor 9, 5b. 7).

The Apostle Paul saw helping the Mother Church of Jerusalem in times of calamity, persecution and famine as a true ecclesiological gesture that went beyond human solidarity. The Holy Land belongs to everyone (Jews, Christians and Muslims) because it is the place where the monotheistic religions have their roots in the one, clement and merciful God. It is the place that speaks to us of God's presence among us, almost a 'touching' of Christ again, according to the felicitous expression of Francis of Assisi.

This task, in itself, belongs to the entire history of relations between the Holy Land and Christians scattered throughout the world; the continuous pilgrimages, the initiatives to ensure a presence in the most significant places, the preservation of environments, the construction of basilicas and churches to preserve the sacred memory, even unfortunately the struggles to defend, conquer and hoard the Holy Land are the testimony of this perceived ecclesial responsibility since time immemorial. It should never be forgotten that those Places are alive because of the presence of communities of believers and that we all, even more so as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, direct our primary attention to them.

Precisely because of the importance that the Holy Land has in the life of the Church, the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre do not show an occasional interest in it, but do so in a stable and generous way, convinced of their noble and splendid responsibility.

It is not infrequent that even some ecclesiastics either do not understand this ecclesial 'duty', or are disinterested in it; there is even a certain prejudice against the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, seen as an anachronistic institution; there are even those who consider this ecclesial duty extraneous to the local Churches, either because of limited economic resources, or because of the presence of many poor people, reducing it to a private and extemporary gesture. There is a fundamental error in this way of thinking: there is a tendency to marginalise or downgrade that ecclesial duty that the Popes

have always considered to be of high sensitivity and common responsibility in the Church. Some Supreme Pontiffs even kept the office of Grand Master of the Order for themselves, before delegating it to a Cardinal.

I am heartened by the gestures of some Bishops who, and many do, include among their duties, the pastoral care of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, whose Members do not only belong to an Entity recognised by the Apostolic See, but are first and foremost their faithful, understanding that they can be a concrete expression of a work that belongs to the local Churches. Through the presence of the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, in fact, it is the same diocesan ecclesial reality that in some way participates in the duty to permanently (and not only occasionally) support the Mother Church of Jerusalem and those Places where, not infrequently, Bishops lead pilgrimages, preserve indelible memories and send lay people and priests for in-depth biblical-theological studies and intense inter-religious experiences.

Supporting the Mother Church of Jerusalem is an act of high nobility of spirit and genuine charity. When Judas Iscariot commented negatively on the gesture of Mary of Bethany who, in his view, wasted money by anointing the Master's feet, Jesus replied concisely: 'Leave her alone! Her gesture takes nothing away from the poor for "you always have the poor with you" (John 12:8), but concerns the mystery of faith, of his Person and of his resurrection.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

### **On the Sunday Eucharist**

[https://www.oessh.va/content/ordineequestresantosepolcro/en/angolo-del-gran-maestro/circa-1\\_eucaristia-domenicale.html](https://www.oessh.va/content/ordineequestresantosepolcro/en/angolo-del-gran-maestro/circa-1_eucaristia-domenicale.html)

March 2023

In the chapter on the "Eucharist" in my text on spirituality, The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume, I wrote that in prayer we are united to the faith of Jesus, indeed it is Jesus himself who "prays for us ..., prays in us ..., is prayed to by us as our God". I would add, moreover, that the Eucharist, entrusted by Jesus to the Church, is the most precious gift she received before his passion, and never should a Dame or Knight neglect to participate in the liturgy of the Mass, at least on Sundays, since 'there is no act of worship more perfect and elevated than this and it is always an act of blessing and thanksgiving'.

Someone, however, might also point out that in the life of a Member of the Order, situations of moral irregularity may occur, leading him to exempt himself from participating in Holy Mass.

I would like to respond on this point, clarifying that, in a situation of sin, each of us must have recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches (no. 1415). If, on the other hand, one is dealing with canonical irregularities, or finds oneself in a business, work or other situation, the first decision is not to exempt oneself, even by not approaching Eucharistic Communion directly. In fact, I would like to recall that in the Celebration of the Holy Mass, the entire faith of the Church is manifested, from hearing the Word of God to the Offering of Jesus to the Father, who makes himself present in the mystery of his Body and Blood. Therefore, participation in Holy Mass always makes sense and, even without receiving Communion, it has an "absolutely reasonable sense" said Benedict XVI, because, even without

approaching Communion, one participates in the event of Jesus' self-giving to the Father, as he renews, albeit bloodlessly, his passion, death and resurrection.

In a secularised culture, where the fundamental values of faith are easily lost, no Knight or Dame, by virtue of their membership of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, should ignore the close link between their membership and the mystery of the Eucharist. It is no coincidence that, after the celebrant's consecration, the faithful respond: "We proclaim your death Lord, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again." (Liturgy).

A Knight and a Dame hold all this in the utmost regard, rendering it part of their spiritual nobility, and never, therefore, should they fail to participate in the Sunday Eucharist.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

### **What does it mean for the Order to be “a Central Body of the Church”?**

<https://www.oessh.va/content/ordineequestresantosepolcro/en/angolo-del-gran-maestro/che-significa-per-lordine-essere-ente-centrale-della-chiesa-.html>

January 2021

With the approval of the new Constitution of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, which makes explicit the principle that our Institution is a "Central Body of the Church", this aspect needs some explanation. In a separate article, S. E. Mgr. Tommaso Caputo, Assessor of the Order, who contributed to the drafting of the Constitution, explains clearly what this means.

Here, I would simply like to summarise the aspects that relate to what constitutes a Central Body of the Church.

The first fundamental element which creates a Body lies in the consent of the Authority which establishes the Institution itself, which, for this reason, assumes a legal “status”.

The second element is found in the objectives set by the Constituent Authority itself and assumed by it. This means that the Body is recognised as promoting the public interest, and that is why it is recognised as having a “public” status.

The third element lies in the fact that the Body is competent to carry out acts and transactions to achieve the objectives set for it.

This is why the Institution must have an identified seat or office, a Statute and Rules which determine its life.

If we translate all this in terms adapted to our Institution, we can say that our Order is a central Body of the Church insofar as it is established by the Supreme Authority of the Church, the Pope, who recognises its public status, with the intention of responding permanently and adapted to the needs of the Church in the Holy Land and in collaboration with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, for the support of pastoral, liturgical, educational, and social life in the Land of Jesus; therefore, to achieve these objectives, the Order is able to perform the material acts necessary for the achievement of said objectives. Its head office is in Rome, and it is endowed with the legal instruments which govern its life.

The Apostolic See has intrinsically linked to our particular Institution, as a specific condition, the Christian formation of its members, because the Order takes its name and its inspiration from this Sepulchre which testified to the presence of the dead Jesus and saw his resurrection.

It is therefore not just any entity, but an Institution that is rooted in the mystery of the Redemption which is intended for the salvation of peoples of all times and all places. The Church therefore wants this Land not simply to be a sacred archaeological place but a living one, thanks to the presence of Christian communities, the resident and pilgrim ones, who truly give it life; in this, we are honoured not only to participate, but also to contribute to the mission of Christ which the Church and the Holy Father have entrusted to us. It is here where the source of this “noble Institution” is found, in the attire of the Dames and Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

**Admission to the Order of bishops, priests and deacons presupposes the exercise of pastoral service**

February 26, 2024

**On February 26, 2024, the Grand Master sent this important letter to the representatives of the episcopate and all the ecclesiastics-members of the Order:**

Eminent/Excellent Grand Priors and Prior Bishops

Most Reverend Ecclesiastics,

Following the work of the Consulta held last November on the theme of 'Formation' to be implemented at various levels for all the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, it seemed significant to resume the discussion on the presence and mission also of the ecclesiastics-members of the Order itself.

On several occasions, the Holy Father Francis recalled that the admission of Bishops, Priests and Deacons into the Order is not only an honor, but also a pastoral service towards the Members of the Order and towards the responsibility for the Land of Jesus, which has always been at the heart of the entire Church. That is, a service that includes, in addition to accompanying people and their families, the care of their spiritual life through appropriate catechesis and moments of prayer (cf. Address to the Lieutenants on 16 November 2018).

All ecclesiastics are fully Members of the Order; they are therefore bound to respectful cooperation and observance of the norms and commitments, including contributions (cfr. Mt 17:24-25), according to the general rules and local practices. There is no point in joining the Order and then vanishing shortly afterwards. Therefore, they must be generously available to accompany the Knights and Dames on pilgrimage to the Holy Land or elsewhere, they must take an interest - where they exist - in the young who are approaching the Order, supporting any training and volunteer initiatives, and they must not fail to provide a correct vision, in the ecclesiastical sphere, of the Order where prejudices or misunderstandings exist. The exemplary nature of their participation in the life of the Order will encourage many to hold the mission of our Knights and Dames in high regard. Let them remember the sensitivity of the Apostle Paul, who instructed his own Christian

communities to take the ‘saints’ of Jerusalem to heart and from whom he asked for a contribution in times of famine, war and pestilence that had put the Mother Church of Jerusalem under great strain.

Particular attention must be paid to ecclesiastics candidates, who, in addition to a special love for the Land of Jesus and the Mother Church of Jerusalem, are called upon to know the spirituality of the Order, the Constitution and the Regulation, and to collaborate with the lay leaders (Lieutenants, Magistral Delegates, Presidents, etc.), knowing that the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a lay Order of ancient tradition, restored by Blessed Pope Pius IX, who indissolubly linked it to the support of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1847); and as is well known, Pope Francis recently (2020) updated its Constitution.

It is then the specific task of the Lieutenant, as Moderator of the procedure for the admission of ecclesiastics-members to the Order, to be in harmony with the Most Eminent/Excellent Grand Prior and the local Priors, ensuring that their numbers and presence meet the requirements of the Lieutenancy. The ecclesiastics-members, in fact, perform a true pastoral mission so that the Knights and Dames grow in faith and service to their local Churches together with their love for the Holy Land.

Finally, we would like to recall that the Lord Jesus, when accepting the gesture of Mary of Bethany who anointed his feet with perfumed nard oil on the eve of his passion, wanted to make it clear that the nascent Church would have to attend to the human and spiritual needs of the ‘poor’, that is, of a humanity far from God, but, at the same time, that it was up to us to anoint the feet of a Church walking in the world, often with difficulty in preaching and wounded by the harshness of the sins of her children, yet beautiful and necessary for the mission of being a sacrament of the encounter with God.

We hope that these words will find welcome and be listened to, as we are all committed to making the Order of the Holy Sepulchre respond to the beautiful mission entrusted to it in the service of the Mother Church of Jerusalem and, at the same time, of our local Churches in which we are daily generated and regenerated to Grace.

With deepest esteem and consideration.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

*Grand Master*

**Leonardo Visconti di Modrone**

*Governor General*