



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

"The symbol of a very high service"



It is with great pleasure that I begin this service among you, dear Members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, through the *Grand Master's Corner*. The frequency of this column will correspond to the interest it may arouse. Moreover, as I wrote launching the initiative, my aim is to enter into dialogue with you to better help the Order to respond to the purposes that it proposes and which have been entrusted to us by the Holy Father.

I have always understood this service in the Order as a calling within a calling ... an instrument of growth in sanctification to serve the Church starting from Jerusalem. I ask you ... to never become used to losing sight of the purpose of belonging to the Order ... I have heard that you have used a new form in the investiture rite, choosing to use crozier rather than the sword: Could you illuminate us on the reasons that led you to this significant change? (Knight Michele Bellino)

On February 15, I had the joy of presiding over my first Investiture in Rome for the Lieutenancy of Central Italy. I had carefully prepared the rite together with some collaborators. While respecting the traditional symbolism, we know that the investiture with the sword represents a symbolism that I would consider inadequate for today's reality of our Order and for the post-conciliar ecclesiology in which the Order of the Holy Sepulchre finds a place and special benevolent protection of the Apostolic See.

The sword, in popular imagination, carries within itself the idea of armed struggle and conquest; often in Sacred Scripture, the sword represents punishment for the idea of war and the terrible consequences it produces. In a time like ours, where violence is not lacking, doesn't this symbol seem somewhat anachronistic?

On the contrary, in the Church the crosier is the symbol of a very high service to look after and support the Christian community; for this reason the pastoral staff, reserved for bishops, is delivered on the occasion of their ordination, with the following prayer: *“Take this staff as a sign of your pastoral office: keep watch over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you to shepherd the Church of God”* (from the Liturgy). From these significant words, it can be assumed that in the Investiture the Knight and the Dame, touched by the crozier on the shoulder, receive the gift of participating, with their talents, in the care of the aims of the Order in the Holy Land and in the life of the Church.

There were also other minor changes for greater efficiency of the Investiture rite in equanimity between that of the Knights and Dames; the Rite of Baptism was also taken into account, when asking what they ask of the Church of God; there is a clear link, because belonging to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre fulfills the commitment that comes to us from Baptism.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

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