



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The Order's global action in times of crisis



Among the questions received, Cardinal Fernando Filoni has chosen one from a Dame of the Order. Considering the terrible crisis that is affecting the whole world, can our Order concretely commit itself to local causes as well as support the Church in the Holy Land? (Filippa Maria, Italy)

We live in an age in which we often spontaneously think and live "in watertight compartments": on the one hand there is our family life, on the other our professional life, on the one hand our life of faith and on the other social and affective relationships ... Although this temptation may at times convince us, Sacred Scripture reminds us that we are not like that. We are creatures of God called to the beauty and fullness of a life that involves "your whole spirit, soul and body " (1Ts 5:23).

Just as ours is an integral life, our being members of the Mystical Body of Christ also makes us partakers of the one Church, both on a universal and a local level; this reality must always be kept in mind precisely because of our belonging to the Order.

As Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, we wish to respond to the "specific mission assigned by the Holy Father to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem [which] is that of animating zeal in the ecclesial community towards the Land of Jesus and sustaining the Catholic Church and the Christian presence there" (Constitution, art.1). This means participation in the universal mission of the Church. At the same time, our Christian life, which is nourished daily in the local Churches, never neglects our participation in their life.

As I wrote and emphasized in the book on the spirituality of our Order, "belonging to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre does not take place outside the Church, but within it" (*E tutta la casa si riempì*

del profumo dell'unguento, p.62. Translation from the Italian published version). It is in this context that the Knight and the Dame of the Order cannot fail to continue to be sensitive to the needs of the weakest and neediest of our neighbours, especially in this time in which the crisis and the difficulty of assuring access to primary goods become an ever closer reality in our cities.

It is again our Constitution that reminds us of this local commitment that we undertake together with the specific attention for the Holy Land: the "involvement of the members of the Order [...] involves the obligation to be actively committed and take part, with enthusiasm and generosity, in activities in the field of charity, evangelisation 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." (Constitution, art. 4).

I was deeply impressed during the continental meetings – held recently online to meet the leaders of the Order in the various regions - by the commitment that so many have testified to their fellow citizens. In this time of crisis and for this I thank you.

Our ecclesial belonging encompasses 360 °, allowing the experience of charity that binds us to the Holy Land to nourish and also increase our attention to those closest to us: in this way our being members of the Order will bring more and more fruits to our communities. "*Sentire cum Ecclesia* - which means having a sense of ecclesial communion, thinking, speaking and acting in such a way as to make the Church itself 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" (*E tutta la casa si riempi del profumo dell'unguento*, p.63. Translation from the Italian published version).

I therefore invite you to let yourselves be touched and questioned by the current crisis and not to hesitate to witness the concern of the Order, to which we belong, towards all those who suffer. Without taking anything away from the help we desire and are called to offer to our brothers and sisters of the Holy Land: let us remain as a fraternal presence also at the service of the bishops of the local communities in which we live.

The Christian vocation is one. The faith, hope and charity that animate us are the same.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

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