



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Living Synodality in our Local Churches



"I ask you, also on behalf of my other confreres, how should we live this time as Christians in the mission of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. [...] I ask you, in your service as Grand Master of the Order, to help us consider possible proposals and good practices to foster, as Knights and Dames, within this process of change and synodal spiritual growth, in this first stage within the diocesan paths.

Let me share a question that I am carrying in my prayers with you: Will the Order be able to make its contribution in this stage of the Spirit?" (Antonella De Fano Cuscito)

Last Saturday, October 9, I participated in the "Moment of Reflection for the Beginning of the Synodal Way" along with clergy, religious and laity, with Pope Francis present. A central passage of the Pope's reflection was this, "*We must not make another Church, we must make a different Church.*" This phrase was borrowed from a great theologian of the Council, Yves Congar. What does "*a different Church*" mean? The Pope did not say it, believing that the Holy Spirit will help in capturing the meaning and opening the way, as assured by the Risen Jesus. In this context we ask ourselves: Can the Order of the Holy Sepulchre be extraneous or indifferent to such a perspective? On Sunday, October 10, in the solemn pontifical opening of the Synodal Path, the Pope asked us to "*listen to the questions, the anxieties and the hopes of every Church, of every people and nation.*"

In fact, as members of the Church, we are already included in the Synodal Path; consequently, it is a source of joy for me to be able to respond to this question for which I thank our sister. Mine will, of course, be a brief answer. In our lives as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre there are three important elements that we must never lose sight of: spirituality, which animates our being; love and

support for the Holy Land, which qualifies us as Knights and Dames; and commitment to the local Church of which we are a part. These three elements must accompany us in our participation.

I would like to dwell on this last aspect: each Delegation, Section, Lieutenancy is inserted in the life of its own Diocese, bringing with it the richness of the daily activities of each member, its human relationships and its spiritual commitment united with charity (as a visible manifestation of spirituality). Spirituality and charity are inseparable. Once, while speaking to religious sisters, I used an image that I believe is well suited to express this indissoluble union: we are a small boat with two oars; if we used only the oar of spirituality, the boat would turn on itself and would be unable to navigate the sea; but when we also use the oar of charity, then it becomes possible to sail the waters.

Returning to the Synodal Way: We are part of our dioceses and therefore we are part of their lives; as faithful in the Risen Christ we bring the richness and hope of our encounter with Him; as Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre we nurture attention to the Holy Land, so that it may be a place of encounter among peoples, a place of peaceful coexistence and a place of faith (finalized charity). Our mission is no other; to diversity and complementarity we bring the richness of our thinking and acting towards a Church that always responds to the desire of Christ, who took on human nature, made himself a servant and passed doing good.

With this in mind, my invitation is to be an integral part of your dioceses at all times, living the particular service you offer as Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre as a specific calling in the midst of your local Church. Insert yourselves with dedication and joy in the synodal paths that will be activated and bring your contribution. The richness of the double bond with the "Mother Church of Jerusalem" and "with all of our Mother Churches" will become richness for many others and will allow the synodal journey to proceed in the grace and richness of the Gospel as a seed of good for all.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

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