



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

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## The gift of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land

A testimony from the Lieutenancy for Portugal



The village of Taybeh

**From the Lieutenant of Portugal – a land particularly blessed with the presence of the Marian shrine of Fatima – we receive a beautiful testimony on the depth of their community experience on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which took place at the beginning of this year, and during which was celebrated the Investiture of 12 Knights and Dames.**

“Pilgrimages are always a very exciting time for all of our members who participate wholeheartedly in the work and aid which, considering the little resources and availability of a small country and a small Lieutenancy, we send to the most needy people in the land of Christ.

For several years, the Lieutenancy for Portugal has been making **a pilgrimage to the Holy Land every two years**, which adheres an average of 70 participants.

Apart from the visits to holy places, from Nazareth to Jerusalem, a significant moment is that of the **Investiture** of new Knights and Dames **in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre** in Jerusalem, a practice which our Lieutenancy was able to resume, after centuries in which no member of the Order had been able to receive the Investiture in this place.

Normally the program of the pilgrimage includes visits to the work to which we have contributed, so as to see “on site” the existing shortcomings, or those remedied. This has the beneficial effect of helping the local Christians to feel that we are with them, that they are not alone in their difficulties and that, on the other side of the world, there are people who care about them and are trying to make their lives less painful.

And what can be said of the profound experience of our pilgrims? What a thrill it is to feel every grain of sand on the walls that have been restored thanks to our Lieutenancy's funding! The way you feel before the simplicity and littleness of a drop of paint that, covering the walls, **brought color and joy to the lives – so tried – of boys, girls, young and old, Muslims, but all Palestinians**, with a history of suffering and hardness that we know so well and have witnessed. This was the case in Aboud and Taybeh, as well as in Deir Rafat with the Sisters of Bethlehem, in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Palestine. We saw joy in the faces of these people, who were truly grateful for having received this simple assistance from us.

With a clear goal, the Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy for Portugal, over whom I have the honor to preside, reaffirm their commitment, enthusiasm and joy in saying “yes” to the challenges of the future, secured in the vocation to service and holiness that the Order proposes, and firm in the mission that God has entrusted to us.”

**Nuno de Bragança Van Uden**

*Lieutenant for Portugal*

*(March 30, 2016)*