



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

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

## PRESS RELEASE

### The Order of the Holy Sepulchre supports the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in responding to the Covid-19 crisis



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From May 2020, the 30 thousand Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, present in the various continents, have held even dearer to heart their brothers and sisters of the Holy Land who have been severely struck by the health and economic crisis brought about by Covid-19.

Despite such difficult conditions at the global level, their generosity has not diminished and in recent months the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre was able to send, in addition to the regular aid already planned each month, about 3 million euros to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in order to respond to the humanitarian needs of its faithful [1].

“There is in fact no region in the world that has not been affected, to some extent, by Covid-19. [...] The Holy Land, where the very economic lifeblood of thousands of families lies in religious pilgrimages and tourism, has been seriously affected;” Grand Master Cardinal Fernando Filoni described the situation as such, during May, in a note that accompanied the creation of a special “Covid-19 Humanitarian Support Fund” by the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Cardinal Filoni recalled that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre - which has as its own institution goal, support to the Mother Church of Jerusalem, to the schools governed by it and to charitable and social initiatives – has taken to heart the new necessities instituting this fund for the collection of extraordinary subsidies. Following this communication, around 2 million euros arrived specifically for the Covid-19 Fund, in addition to 1 million euros for more general humanitarian costs, to which the figure for the expected budget at the beginning of the year was significantly lower.

The Governor General of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone commented: “During the days of lockdown, we reached out to the heads of the Lieutenancies who, despite needing to respond to the needs caused by the health emergency in their own countries, wanted to make their closeness felt to their brothers and sisters in the Holy Land who had been so sorely affected. We are grateful that the special aid sent to the Covid-19 Fund did not substitute the regular commitment of our members in contributing to the daily life of the diocese of Jerusalem, but rather was added to it.”

The contributions sent to the Holy Land allowed to respond immediately to a series of urgent necessities. The CEO of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Sami El-Yousef, summarised the actions undertaken: “With the humanitarian aid received, we have been able to help over 2,400 families at more than 30 parishes with basic needs including food coupons, hygiene and baby supplies, medicines, and electric meter refills. This was done through the parish priests and parish councils who collaborated with local authorities to ensure fair distribution.” Furthermore, he continued, “1,238 families in Jordan and 1,180 families in Palestine were supported with their unpaid tuition fees”. The situation in the Holy Land, as in various other countries, continues to be critical and in the following weeks and months, the funds sent will continue to be deployed in order not to abandon those who continue to find themselves in a state of need.

“Thanks to the support of the Grand Master with the Grand Magisterium, our appeal to the Knights and Dames has had a reply that very much exceeded our expectations and has given us that necessary sigh of relief, so that we can manage this emergency with greater calm. We have all been left astounded and touched by the immediate response and its scope,” stated Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Patriarchate, as he recounted how the Christians of the Holy Land have felt supported in this moment of difficulty by the Knights and Dames from around the whole world.

[1] In the last ten years, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre has sent more than 120 million in contributions for the needs of the Holy Land, of which 14 million alone was sent during 2019.

*(September 17, 2020)*