Strengthening the spiritual guidance of the members of the Order

Echoes of a reflection of the Grand Master by Cardinal Mahony

In the Newsletter of July 2016, the Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, had invited the priests who belong to the Order to reflect on their role, certain that "the **great majority of our clergy will accept the pastoral challenge of serving members** at every level and in every field in which our Lieutenancies need pastoral care."

On the day when the Church celebrates the Assumption of Mary into heaven, August 15, **Cardinal Roger Mahony,** archbishop emeritus of Los Angeles and, at that time, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy of Western USA, sent a letter to the **priests' members of his Lieutenancy** echoing the words of the Grand Master and inserting them into the local context.

First, Cardinal Mahony said that the role of church members is "unique and essential." The Grand Prior – who recently became emeritus – then emphasized how the Knights and Dames of the Order are called to strengthen the practice of Christian life and how on this journey, **priests consequently have the duty to support them** through a series of concrete actions which the Cardinal went on to list: spiritual direction, administration of the sacrament of Reconciliation during liturgies, presence at the praying of the rosary and the celebration of the feasts of the Order (see article on the Order's Feasts), sending short e-mails or printed meditations, sharing of relevant texts concerning the Holy Land, for example, taken from the speeches of Pope Francis.

Another area that directly concerns the ecclesiastical members of the Lieutenancy is the **possibility of identifying good candidates**, above all, stresses the Archbishop Emeritus of Los Angeles, "the young members representing the diversity of the ethnic groups in our diocese". In fact, despite the significant numbers of Hispanic groups or those from the Asia-Pacific region, these communities are insufficiently represented in the Western USA Lieutenancy.

Finally Cardinal Mahony underscored the i**mportance of the annual contribution to be paid like the other members of the Order**, as well as the decision to support a specific project, for example, those relating to the seminarians in the Holy Land. Priests who belong to the Order are a great resource and represent an important potential for the integral development of each Lieutenancy.

Cardinal Mahony was recently replaced in his role as Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy USA Western by the Archbishop of Los Angeles, Msgr. José Gomez. The Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, celebrated the inauguration of the new Grand Prior last October 1.

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