

News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien visits the Holy Land

THE SOLEMN ENTRY OF THE GRAND MASTER TO THE BASILICA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

During his first visit as Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre to the Holy Land, for which he commits himself, Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien has been the bearer of a message of solidarity and peace. His visit was a great ecclesiastical event, both for the official reception for him in Jerusalem and for his solemn entry to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. Moreover it has been an opportunity to get in touch with the religious institutional, charitable and educational realities in Israel, in the Palestinian territories and in Jordan which benefit from the Order's constant support. Accordingly, he was accompanied by the Grand Prior, the Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal, and by the Governor General Agostino Borromeo.

His visit began on Monday afternoon, November 26, in the Holy City, at Jaffa Gate. The Patriarch with the auxiliary bishops Maroun Lahham, Giacinto Boulos Marcuzzo and William Shomali, the Patriarch emeritus Michel Sabbah, the Nuncio and Apostolic Delegate archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto, priests of the Latin Patriarchate, of the Franciscan Custody and of other Catholic congregations, and representatives of all the Christian communities and civil institutions were all there to welcome the distinguished guest. Walking in procession they accompanied the cardinal to the nearby seat of the Patriarchate where the Patriarch gave a reception in his honor.

On the next day, in the morning, the Grand Master visited the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox Patriarchs, leaders of the two major Christian Churches which historically share, with the Latin Church, owner-



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OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER
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OF JERUSALEM
00120 VATICAN CITY



ship and responsibilities of the Basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Nativity in Bethlehem. Moreover, in the afternoon, he entered the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in accordance with an ancient and solemn ritual characterized by a procession through the streets of the Old City guided by him with patriarch Twal at his side followed by the governor general.

The procession, escorted by the "kawwas", started from the Patriarchate and was joined by bishops Marcuzzo and Kamal Hanna Bathish, priests, friars, religious men and women, devotees and representatives of civil authorities. At the entrance to the Basilica, the Apostolic Nuncio, representatives of other Christian communities and the Custodian of the Holy Land father Pierbattista Pizzaballa ofm were already waiting. The latter, near the Stone of Unction at the foot of Mount Calvary, delivered a warm welcome speech for him. He said, among other things, that "this great Basilica is a house for all Christians and this city a house for all believers". He also recalled the activities and merits carried out by the Order on behalf of the Church of the Holy Land and invoked God to "strengthen love for her, for justice and peace in the hearts". Finally, having reached the Anastasis chapel, he prayed at the empty tomb of the Risen Christ.

On Wednesday 28, he reached as a pilgrim the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem; he then visited two institutions which benefit from the Order's constant generosity, the patriarchal Seminary and the Catholic University, where he also inaugurated the Education Department. The next day he continued his pilgrimage in Galilee, and in



The blessing of the Cardinal Grand Master in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

Nazareth he celebrated Mass in the Basilica of the Annunciation. He then reached the neighboring city of Rameh and there he inaugurated a building destined to the upper classes (its construction has been financed by the Order) enlarging the complex of the Latin Patriarchate's highly regarded School.

On Friday, November 30, the Grand Master went to Jordan. He was received by the patriarchal vicar archbishop Maroun Lahham, then visited in the neighborhoods of Amman the Center for the disabled "Our Lady of Peace" and the parish works in the town of Zarka. In the evening he met and had dinner with the Vicariate's priests. The following day, he went to the town of Madaba to visit the new AUM (American University of Madaba) promoted by Patriarch Twal, and the Patriarchate's schools, which are also always financed by the Order. In the Orthodox church he visited the famous mosaic of the Map and finally went, as a pilgrim, to Mount Nebo. After returning to Amman he celebrated Mass in the parish Church of Hashimi. On Sunday, December 2, Cardinal O'Brien and Patriarch Twal met with Jordan's king Abdoullah II who received them cordially. After having left the Parish members of Sweifieh, the Grand Master reached Israel to go back to Rome from Tel Aviv's airport.



THE PILGRIM SHELL CONFERRED ON THE GRAND MASTER

The Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal could not fail to confer on Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien the Pilgrim Shell, the very same distinction reserved for Knights and Ladies of the Order who go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem which, he emphasized, reinforces the "unfailing bonds" between the Order - of which he is the Grand Prior - and the Latin Patriarchate. Addressing the Grand Master in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, he said: "we are particularly grateful for the enthusiastic and generous interest that you and the Grand Magisterium, as well as the numerous Knights and Ladies of the Order throughout the world, have for the Holy Land. We accept your support and solidarity with gratitude. Be assured that we place our hope, our aspirations and our trust in you. We assure you of our prayers in the fulfilment of our common mission".

CARDINAL EDWIN F. O'BRIEN TAKES POSSESSION OF THE DIACONATE OF SAINT SEBASTIAN AT THE PALATINE

On October 25 the Grand Master cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien took possession of the diaconate of Saint Sebastian on the Palatine during a religious ceremony which, also from a canonical point of view, marked his membership to the Clergy of Rome. The title of Saint Sebastian on the Palatine (it also belonged to his predecessor, the late cardinal John Patrick Foley) was assigned to him by pope Benedict XVI on February 18, 2012. On that occasion, in Saint Peter's Basilica, the pope "created" him cardinal. The papal Bull which formalized this appointment was read by the apostolic protonotary mons. Nicholas Henry Marie Denis Thevenin, diplomat on duty at the Secretariat of State, as an introduction of the ceremony of taking possession and of the Holy Mass concelebrated also by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal, Grand Prior of the Order, the Assessor archbishop Giuseppe De Andrea and the archbishop of Quebec Gérald Cyprien Lacroix.

After having recalled the figure of Saint Sebastian, a soldier of the imperial Rome who was tortured for his faith, the Cardinal remembered in his homily that the members of the Order, which is under his guidance, are the guards of honor protecting the Holy Sepul-

chre of Christ, not by force of arms but by means of their constant witness of faith. He urged prayers for them as well as for the suffering Christians of Palestine and all the Christians who face persecution with courage but also - mindful of being once chaplain and then Military Ordinary (Archbishop in the United States for the Military Services) - for those men and women in uniform committed to preserving peace.

Lieutenant General Giuseppe Della Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, Governor General Agostino Borromeo, several members of the Grand Magisterium and Lieutenant for Central Italy Saverio Petrillo also attended along with many knights of the section of Rome ensuring order. Ecclesiastical and civil personalities also attended, among these cardinal Bernard Francis Law, Archpriest Emeritus of the Papal Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and bishop Franco Croci, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy for Central Italy.

During the solemn entry in the church, which is located among the archaeological ruins of the Imperial Rome, the Cardinal kissed the crucifix presented by rector Father Alvaro Cacciotti OFM, who then addressed to him an official greeting.



CATHOLIC CHURCH CONSECRATED IN AQABA JORDAN'S PORT AND TOURIST CAPITAL

Its construction was one of the Order's major financial commitments

Jordan has been enriched with the first Catholic Church in the city of Aqaba, which faces a large port and a well-developed hotel industry on the gulf of the same name in the Red Sea. It was one of the priorities in the pastoral plan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem because of the continuous population growth – residents, seafarers and tourists – and from the outset enjoyed the support of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre with financing of more than 1.5 million Jordanian dinars (equivalent to Euro currency), among the largest that the Grand Magisterium has earmarked for a single project.

Dedicated to *Maria Stella Maris*, it was solemnly dedicated by the Latin Patriarch and Grand Prior of the Order, Fouad Twal; his concelebrants were his Auxiliary for Jordan, Archbishop Maroun Lahham and Bishop emeritus Salim Sayegh, the Auxiliary for Israel, Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo,



the Catholic Greek Melkite Bishop of Petra and Filadelfia Yasser Ayyash, and many priests, including the parish priest, Fr. Issam Zoomot and the first secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Jordan. Present also was Governor Fawwaz Ishedat of Aqaba with other civil authorities and, of course, all the faithful of the parish.

The monumental Church, with its adjacent multipurpose building containing a salon for parish activities and the residence of the parish priest, is located in the heart of one of the city's newest neighbourhoods. Based on plans drawn up by Osama Twal, of "Contour Engineering – Architects, Planners, Engineers" in Amman, the first stone was laid in May 2011. The construction job was entrusted to "Al Wajih Contracting Co.", whose winning bid was one of those submitted by 12 qualified Jordanian companies, and was completed in about 18 months.

THREE NEW CARDINALS APPOINTED KNIGHTS OF GRAND CROSS

The Grand Master appointed Knights of Grand Cross by *motu proprio* three distinguished members of the Order who were created cardinals by pope Benedict XVI in the concistory of November 24th.

Cardinal James Michael Harvey, new Archpriest of the Basilica of Saint Paul outside the Walls, was admitted to the Order with the rank of Knight Commander on November 13th, 1997 and promoted to Commander with Star on February 9th, 1998. Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, archbishop of Bogotá, was admitted with the rank of Commander with Star on May 25th, 2011. Finally cardinal Luis Antonio G. Tagle, archbishop of Manila and Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy of the Philippines, was admitted to the Order with the rank of Commander with Star on September 22nd, 2010 when he was bishop of Imus.



YEAR OF FAITH PILGRIMAGE ENROLLMENTS CLOSED RESERVATIONS CONTINUE

On 10 December, the deadline set by the Grand Magisterium, enrollment was closed for the organized participation in the International Pilgrimage of the Order to Rome in celebration of the Year of Faith that will take place, as has been announced, from 13 to 15 September 2013. This was required by the association UNITALSI, which is in charge of the logistical organization of the event because the hotels contacted would not be satisfied with a simple confirmation of the reservations but asked for a down payment at the beginning of 2013 and subsequent payments at dates set by them.

However, even after the deadline (also because of the Christmas holidays) the Grand Magisterium is doing its best to honor the requests of the members of

the Order, although it cannot guarantee the availability of hotel rooms at the same prices that were announced.

In their communications the Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations were asked to list any specific dietary needs of individual participants in the pilgrimage.

Preparations for the pilgrimage – at which at present it seems about 3,000 Knights and Ladies, that is more than 10% of the members of the Order will participate

– are under the direction of a Commission with Chancellor Ivan Rebernik presiding. It is working in close collaboration with, among others, the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, which has included the event in the calendar of the celebrations of the Year of Faith in which the Holy Father will participate.



ANNO DOMINI FEDE 2012 2013

NEWS ABOUT THE ORDER'S EXPANSION ANNOUNCED AT THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

The process of the Order's geographic expansion is continuing. During the most recent meeting of the Grand Magisterium, Governor General Agostino Borromeo announced that in September the first investiture in the Magistral Delegation of Guam was held, with the entrance of 19 new members. In Brazil, which he visited in mid-November (as is reported more thoroughly in another article) the territories of São Salvador de Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were reorganized. March of 2013 will see the first investitures in the Lieutenancy of Venezuela and the Magistral Delegation of Latvia. Lastly, at the time of the recent Synod of Bishops, in a conversation with Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Major Archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, Grand Master Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien laid the foundation for the erection of a Magistral Delegation in that country, destined to include faithful of the Greek Catholic rite as well as the Latin rite.



PROMISING GROWTH OF THE ORDER IN BRAZIL

The Order is witnessing an important development in Brazil: this is the result of the visit made from 15-20 November in that large nation by the Governor General Agostino Borromeo, accompanied by the member of the Grand Magisterium, Knight Grand Cross Don João de Castro de Mendia, Count of Rezende. The latter had already traveled to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo last June with the mandate of renewing the structure of the Lieutenancy in these two states: and in fact he received the agreement of the Archbishop of Rio, Dom Orani João Tempesta, to accept appointment as Grand Prior and was present at the installation of the new Lieutenant, Knight Gustavo Miguez de Mello as well as at the investiture of three knights and four ladies. At São Paulo he obtained the acceptance of the invitations of the Grand Master by the Archbishop, Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, to serve as Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy and of Commander Manuel Tavares de Almeida Filho to assume

its leadership.

The visit of Prof. Agostino Borromeo and of the Count of Rezende began in São Salvador de Bahia where they witnessed the enthusiasm for the Order's projects in that Magistral Delegation (which has the privilege of having its Headquarters in the Benedictine monastery) and attended the ceremony of investiture for some twenty knights and ladies, presided by the Grand Prior, the Archabbot and President of the Benedictine Congregation of Brazil, Dom Emanuel do Amaral, together with the Magistral Delegate, Commander Roberto Lorenzato, Count of San Martino.

The Order's growth, particularly with the spread of its presence in that great nation, was the focus of the meeting in São Paulo with the Grand Prior, Cardinal Odilo Scherer, and with another of its illustrious members, Knight Grand Cross Luis de Orleans e Braganza, Head of the Imperial Household of Brazil, and with the Lieutenants of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

FOR THE CATHOLICS OF THE HOLY LAND THE CELEBRATION OF EASTER ACCORDING TO THE JULIAN CALENDAR

A directive issued on 15 October by the AOCTS (Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land) has established that from 2014 onwards in the Eastern and Latin rite dioceses the Julian calendar will be used to determine the date of Easter, with the exception of the Basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and the Nativity in Bethlehem, in which the *status quo* will be maintained, i.e., the set of norms that have determined the time for liturgical celebrations in the Christian Churches for centuries.

In practice this long-awaited decision is of great ecumenical importance because Catholics and Orthodox will celebrate Easter at the same time, as the recent Special Synod of Bishops for the Middle East requested and for which Pope Benedict XVI has expressed a desire on several occasions.

The directive also gave the bishops of the Catholic Church freedom to anticipate the change. Thus the Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal, in consideration of the fact that in 2014 Easter will fall on the same day for the Gregorian and Julian calendars, has invited the parish priests of his diocese – in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan and Cyprus – to celebrate Easter in 2013 on 5 May, as the Orthodox are doing, and not on 31 March as in the rest of the Catholic world (and in the Basilicas of Jerusalem and Bethlehem).



PATRIARCH TWAL: THE CENTRALITY OF JERUSALEM AND GROWING FUNDAMENTALISM POINTED OUT

The Holy Land was, as usual, at the centre of the meeting of the Grand Magisterium that took place on 23 and 24 October. The Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien, announced his plans for a visit at the end of November and his solemn entrance into the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. They then proceeded to an examination of the statutory demands, in particular for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem; following this, Patriarch Fouad Twal, Grand Prior of the Order, reported on the activities and the new projects undertaken, especially in the field of education – including university education – but especially the 42 primary and secondary schools attended by more than 18 thousand students, 61% of whom are Christians (approximately 2.5 thousand in Israel, 5.7 thousand in Palestine and ten thousand in Jordan). The generous annual contributions of the members of the Order are

also used for the support of the clergy, the seminary, parish buildings and charitable and social work, as well as other Catholic institutions.

In his report to the Grand Magisterium, Patriarch Twal developed what he had alluded to in his homily during the Mass that began the work sessions, regarding the religious, political and conflict situation in the Middle East. In particular in regard to the Holy Land he reflected on two points: its centrality confirmed by references to it in the great world-wide ecclesial events in which he participated (from Milan the Congress on Families looked towards the Holy Family of Nazareth; from Dublin the Eucharistic Congress turned towards the Cenacle of Jerusalem); and the disturbing growth of Islamic fundamentalism in the region (Christians fear that Syria will see a repeat of Iraq's tragic situation).

REVEALED AFTER THREE YEARS OF STUDY THE SECRETS OF THE OLIVE TREES OF GETHSEMANE

The olive trees of Gethsemane were the focus of a scientific study sponsored by our confrere Prof. Giovanni Gianfrate, agronomist and specialist in the history of the olive tree and Secretary of the Order's Delegation of Florence. The three-year study was conducted by the most renowned international experts in biology and plant physiology, all from Italian universities, and, in addition to Prof. Gianfrate, coordinated by Prof. Antonio Cimato of the National Council of Research. The surprising results were presented in a well-attended press conference in Rome on 19 October in the Headquarters of Vatican Radio: the trunks of three of the eight olive trees (from which they were able to take samples) dates back to the XII-XIII century, that is, from 1092 to 1198, the time in which the Crusaders, having taken back Jerusalem, reconstructed the Basilica of Gethsemane in the context of the restoration of all the Christian holy places. However, the analysis of the DNA of all eight trees revealed identical genetic profiles, that is, they are all descendants of the same more ancient tree; furthermore, they are all in good health despite the pollution caused by the intense charter bus traffic in the area. The findings were achieved through a methodology based on measurement and the biological characteristics of the plants and with carbon 14 dating conducted in two separate laboratories, those of Vienna and Lecce.

Prof. Gianfrate is also the architect of other important initiatives for the Holy Land, including the gift of an olive press to the Latin Patriarchate parish of Taybeh for the production of olive oil and its sale in Europe.



THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE: AVOID CONFUSION ABOUT THE EQUESTRIAN ORDERS DEDICATED TO THE SAINTS

Once again the Holy See has clarified the existence and care of the Equestrian Orders with a note published by the Secretariat of State on 16 October, motivated, as it states, by "frequent requests for information concerning the recognition by the Holy See of Equestrian Orders dedicated to the saints or to holy places". The note states that it "considers it opportune to reiterate what has already been published", that is, that "other than its own Equestrian Orders (the Supreme Order of Christ, the Order of the Golden Spur, the Pian Order, the Order of Saint Gregory the Great, and the Order of Pope Saint Sylvester), the Holy See recognizes and supports only the Sovereign Military Order of Malta – also known as the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta – and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. The Holy See foresees no additions or innovations in this regard".

For this reason, the note continues "all other orders, whether of recent origin or mediaeval foundation, are not recognised by the Holy See. Furthermore, the Holy See does not guarantee their historical or juridical legitimacy, their ends or organizational structures".

The purpose of the note's publication is to "avoid any possible doubts, even owing to illicit issuing of documents or the inappropriate use of sacred places, and to prevent the continuation of abuses which may result in harm to people of good faith; the Holy See confirms that it attributes absolutely no value whatsoever to certificates of membership or insignia issued by these groups, and it considers inappropriate the use of churches or chapels for their so-called 'ceremonies of investiture'".

NEW PRELATE AT THE SANCTUARY OF POMPEII OUR CONFREERE ARCHBISHOP TOMMASO CAPUTO

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Tommaso Caputo, Commander with Star of the Order, Prelate of Pompeii and Papal Delegate for the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary. The monumental temple was erected in her honor by our confrere Blessed Bartolo Longo (whose remains are exposed there in an urn, dressed in the white cape of Knight of Grand Cross; this honor was bestowed on him on 30 May 1925 in accordance with the desire of Pope Pius XI); for this reason the shrine is particularly dear to all the members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Joining in their veneration are the millions of faithful who come on pil-

grimage each year to the Marian shrine and pray for his canonization.

Archbishop Caputo succeeds Archbishop Carlo Liberati, he too a member of the Order since 2004, who resigned on reaching the age limit. Born in Naples on 17 October 1950, Archbishop Caputo was ordained a priest in 1974, named titular Bishop of Otricoli on 3 September 2007 (receiving episcopal ordination on 29 September) with the dignity of Archbishop as Apostolic Nuncio in Malta and Libya. In the Holy See's diplomatic service since 1980, he was also Head of Protocol of the Secretariat of State.

