



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

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

## The North American Lieutenants meeting in Pasadena



For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic the Grand Master and Governor General were able to meet in person with North American Lieutenants. In fact, the collegial gathering in Pasadena (Los Angeles) from June 2 to 4 was the first opportunity for Cardinal Fernando Filoni to travel to North America as Grand Master of the Order and take part with the Vice Governor Tom Pogge, in what has now become a consolidated tradition to allow the area Lieutenants to meet, get to know each other better, exchange best practices and discuss issues that are close to the hearts of the various local realities.

June 2 was dedicated to bilateral meetings between the Grand Master, the Governor General and the Lieutenants, particularly with newly appointed and incoming ones. In fact, Lieutenants Colin Saldanha (Canada Toronto), Lois Folger (USA South-western), William Sweet (Canada Atlantic), Joe Marino (USA South-eastern), Donald Harmata (USA North-western), Marilyn Martin (Canada Vancouver) and Tom Olejniczak (USA Northcentral) took part in these meetings for the first time. The day ended with a prayer vigil in St. Andrew's Church and a presentation by the Governor General of the important finds from the Roman Imperial and Medieval periods from the ongoing work in Palazzo della Rovere.

The second day of the meeting focused in the morning on the theme of spirituality, the formation of candidates, and the role of prayer, with various questions addressed by participants to Grand Master Cardinal Filoni. Following this, the Governor General, Ambassador Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, gave an extensive report on the state of the Order on the administrative and organisational level, emphasising its substantial vitality and the resumption of activities after the pause due to Covid. In the afternoon, the CEO of the Latin Patriarchate, Sami El-Yousef, gave a detailed description of the projects initiated with the Order's contributions. Each speech was followed by an extensive debate among those present.

The last day of the meeting of the North American Lieutenants was dedicated to an exchange of experiences on measures to promote the growth of the Order and ended with a Holy Mass, celebrated by the Cardinal Grand Master, in Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral.

William Sweet, Lieutenant-designate for Canada Atlantic, recounts how this experience, prior to his actual appointment as Lieutenant, was significant. "Attending my first meeting of North American Lieutenants in Pasadena, California, along with our outgoing Lieutenant, H.E. Trudy Comeau, gave me a better understanding of the Order's charism and commitments: personal renunciation, generosity, courage, concern, cooperation and activity in the local Church." William Sweet continued, "what attracted me to the Order, leading me to Investiture as a Knight in the summer of 2014, was its spirituality and its solidarity with the Holy Land. In Pasadena, I was struck by how these commitments and the recognition of the centrality of the Order's spirituality were at the heart of our sessions."

His comments were echoed by Tom Olejniczak, Lieutenant-designate for the USA Northcentral who has been a member of the Order with his wife since 1989 and for the past eight years has served as Treasurer of the Lieutenancy: "The meeting of the North American Lieutenants was a wonderful experience and the private meeting with the Grand Master and the Governor was particularly gratifying. Their genuine interest in our Lieutenancy and their support of our concerns showed understanding and a desire to help us achieve our goals."

William Sweet concluded by dwelling on the importance of the relationships that these meetings help to strengthen: "In the meetings with the Grand Master and the Governor General, during the celebrations and moments of prayer, as well as in the working sessions and sharing over meals, I got to know some of the Order's other faithful, generous and committed leaders - people whom I hope to count among my friends soon - with whom I look forward to working together during my term of office."

At the end of the meeting, the Cardinal Grand Master and the Governor General paid a visit to the Carmelite Sisters at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Los Angeles, accompanied by USA Western Lieutenancy Margaret Romano.

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