



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

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

## GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate inspires the life of Knights and Dames



*“Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonized.*

*The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God’s holy and faithful people, [...]*

*I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God’s people:*

*in those parents who raise their children with immense love,*

*in those men and women who work hard to support their families,*

*in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile.”*

(Gaudete et Exsultate 6-7)

Perhaps we have always known on a conceptual level that we are all called to holiness and that it is not a destiny reserved for ecclesiastics and religious who have chosen to consecrate their lives especially to God. Perhaps we knew we too were called by virtue of our baptism to be holy. Nevertheless, perhaps we have not always believed in this possibility.

In 2018, Pope Francis wanted to recall with simplicity this common vocation, in an Apostolic Exhortation that he wanted to be, not a treatise on holiness or the means of sanctification, but a way

to “repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. For the Lord has chosen each one of us ‘to be holy and blameless before him in love’ (Eph 1:4)” (GE 2).

Thus we have asked our members to tell us in a few words how this text by the Holy Father encouraged them to reflect on their own journey of faith within the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. How does our call as Knights and Dames help us find our way to God and to others in our daily life? Returning to the intuition of the Second Vatican Council, “Each in his or her own way,” Pope Francis immediately wanted to dispel all temptations to standardization: “The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness” (GE 11).

“We are called to be saints in what we are. For me it means that I must strive to be, first of all, as a husband and father, but also a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre,” shares Petar-Kresimir. “Reading the Exhortation, I felt encouraged to accept the Beatitudes as a sure guide on the path towards holiness. I realized that they should be my identity card that I received on the day of my baptism and that does not expire because I was created for eternity.”

Within the Order, many couples live their call to holiness, starting from the dimension of their conjugal life. Maria and Adolfo recount: “This extreme love of Christ assumed in conjugal love is what must shape our existence. But this love would not be fruitful if we mean this word only in relation to the children who are born from our union, without enlarging our heart to serve others.” This dimension of extended love is what the Order proposes to live by opening itself ever more to the needs of our brothers and sisters of the Holy Land.

“The lay faithful need more than ever to feel part of the Catholic Church and to know that holiness is accessible to all,” comments Claude Grbesa, Magistral Delegate for Croatia who announced that the reading of Gaudete et Exsultate will, from now onwards, be part of the formation of future members. “The specific dual mission of the Knight or Dame of the Holy Sepulchre who is constantly called to deepen and strengthen their faith and support the Christian presence in the Holy Land – he continues – creates a favourable situation for walking on the road to holiness.” This path is lived in community and for this reason the life of the Lieutenancy and Magistral Delegation lends itself to offering each member an appropriate context of accompaniment and sharing.

In this regard, Roberto shares his experience from a complicated moment of his life in which “the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre gave me a Section President who was a true spiritual father for me, a knowledgeable adviser as well as being a shining example. As was the case later with another confrere. The Lord never leaves us alone; He always sends us people to keep watch with us, to keep us from becoming discouraged by the trials we encounter and to always look towards the horizon. I can honestly say that I have found these sentinels thanks to being a member of the Order, rediscovering with greater vigour and enthusiasm the meaning of the promise I made at the altar.”

In August 2018, the Lieutenancy for Australia New South Wales decided to dedicate its annual retreat to reflection on the Apostolic Exhortation, Gaudete et Exsultate, of particular relevance for a secular order such as ours. Sister Isabell Naumann, an ordinary professor at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, preached the retreat. Sister Naumann invited the participants to reflect in particular on paragraph 14 of the Exhortation, trying to complete the text with their own answer to the question: Are you a Knight or a Lady of the Order? Be holy...

*To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer.*

*That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you work for a living? Be holy by labouring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain. (GE 14)*

Perhaps each one of us today can place his or her own story before the Lord in prayer and ponder how, in practice; one's life is called to bear fruits of holiness.

During 2019, we will share some of the testimonies received in recent months in full in our publications to continue to support our reflection on the theme of holiness.

**Elena Dini**

*(Spring 2019)*

