



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

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

## 5\_Welcoming the Unpredictable: Joseph's Tale

Dear Friends, we are nearing the end of our journey. The Christmas season continues for a few weeks. In her wisdom, the Church gives us these days to continue to enter into that mystery and make it penetrate our lives. In this last appointment, we give the word to Joseph, another direct witness of all these events.

### **Joseph**

I will not repeat what Mary has already said. I will tell you more. I knew well, as Jews, that according to our religious tradition, we had the duty, since Jesus was our firstborn, to offer him to the Almighty; so, after eight days, we gave him the name of Jesus, then we took him to the Temple to thank God and offer the sacrifice prescribed by the Law of Moses: two little doves and two turtledoves. It was the first time that the baby Jesus, forty days after his birth, entered this majestic place of God's holiness; here we had the surprise of meeting a pious man, a very old man, who wanted to take the Child in his arms; incredible! We were surprised to meet a pious, elderly man, who wanted to take the Child in his arms; unbelievable! he trembled, trembled with joy and inwardly sensed that it was "He who had come as a light to enlighten the nations and bring salvation to those who awaited God's mercy"; while he was praising the Eternal One, an elderly woman also arrived; her name was Anna and she had served in the Temple for many years; she too began to praise God for this Child, glimpsing in Him the redemption of humanity.

It was a surprising and profound experience; we remained silent and thoughtful, but with Mary, we asked ourselves many questions about the future of our Son.

In those days, meanwhile, the political situation changed. Word began to circulate that King Herod had learned of the birth of a child whom some wise men believed to be of royal descent and were looking for him. For him, a jealous and harsh man, and for his own ambitions, it was a blow, and not knowing who he was, nor where he was, he had ordered a massacre of children under the age of two in the village of Bethlehem and surrounding areas. A horror!

It was because of this that I decided to leave immediately to go outside of Judea, out of Herod's kingdom. And Egypt was the closest country. So, with Mary and the Child, we gathered our few indispensable belongings and set off for Egypt.

The story that God makes with us, let me tell you, is always unpredictable. It is not flat, and it is intertwined with our human events. There is no father, there is no mother who does not know it.

I won't tell any more. I will only say that after the death of Herod, some months after our escape, we returned to our land, but we went to live in Nazareth. There where everything had begun.

**This is the Liturgical Christmas we celebrate!**

**(Final comment)**

**Let us then go and spiritually greet the little Family that has been speaking to us these days.**

There, almost ideally, we will meet Joseph who opens the door, greets us, and invites us to enter, because the visitor, the one who knocks, according to Jewish tradition, is sacred. Despite the brief hospitality, Joseph gives us a piece of his bread, answers our curiosity, introduces us to Mary, who looks at us with a kind smile and invites us to be quiet, because baby Jesus is still asleep. She will ask us where we come from and why we came to visit them. Finally, she will take us to the new-born Jesus, who will open his eyes and, with a joyful look, instil in us a sense of deep peace.

God is now with us. That is, he is Emmanuel, which means precisely: "God with us".

At the gift of our visit, Joseph will ask us not to forget the poor, the lonely children, the great miseries of the world. It will also be useful to make a concrete gesture of charity, which, like the gifts of the shepherds and the magi, will bring a small and great comfort to those who will need it this Christmas.

**Fernando Cardinal Filoni**

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