



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE LIEUTENANTS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*1. I am delighted to address an affectionate greeting to you today on the occasion of the *Consultation* of the meritorious Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. A special and grateful thought goes to Cardinal Carlo Furno, Grand Master of the Order, who follows your activities with great dedication. Through you, dear members of the Grand Magisterium and Lieutenants, I express my appreciation to all the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre who work for the Christians in the Holy Land. I praise you all and I encourage you in the support which you never fail to offer to the institutions of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.2. "Grow to serve: serve to grow": this motto is dear to you. It serves as a goal to achieve for every individual member of your Sodality. The needs you must meet to further justice and peace in the region of the Middle East, marked by a persistent and serious social and economic crisis, are numerous, indeed, immense. The desired prospects of peace-making and rebuilding demand the responsible cooperation of all: governments and religious institutions, humanitarian organizations and every person of good will. Your humanitarian and spiritual action fits into this context. It concerns a particularly vital sector: youth. Aid to the Christians of the Holy Land takes the concrete form of providing children and young people with an appropriate school education. In this regard I hope that it will be increasingly possible to assure a stable Christian education in the schools, in a climate of respect and collaboration between the various members of society. Equally important is the Order's financial support to "help the charitable, cultural and social institutions of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, particularly those *of and in* the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem" (*Statutes*, Art. 2).3. Dear brothers and sisters, part of your mission consists in meeting the needs of the Church in the Holy Land; but it is even more necessary to offer a consistent witness of faith. May your first concern, therefore, be to strive for holiness, which is the universal vocation of all Christians. Be builders of love and peace, inspired in your life and actions by the Gospel and especially by the mystery of the passion and Resurrection of Christ. May you take as your model Mary, Mother of Believers and ever-ready to adhere joyfully to God's will. Call upon her every day with the beautiful, traditional prayer of the Rosary that helps us to contemplate Christ with the gaze of his holy Mother. This will be a source of growth for you, as it was for your illustrious confrere, Bl. Bartolo Longo. With these sentiments I cordially impart to each one of you a special Apostolic Blessing that I willingly extend to the members of the entire Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, and to their respective families. *From the Vatican, 16 October 2003***JOHN PAUL II**
