

# SPEECH OF THE GRAND MASTER TO THE POSTULANTS

## Valletta, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear Postulants,

In a few minutes you will become Knights and Dames of St. John and you may ask yourselves how can you be a good Knight or Dame of St. John, how can you honour our Sovereign Order and the Knights, who preceded you and were so brave that the then Grand Master Jean de La Valette gave them the honour of calling themselves "*Knights of Malta*"?

One of the Grand Master's missions is to show the newcomers how to become good Knights and Dames of St John - Knights and Dames of Malta - and this is not an easy task for a Grand Master, but I will try:

Look at these flags hanging from their poles: Flags are important because they represent Countries and States, they represent millenary Cultures, Historical backgrounds, Traditions and Languages.

Flags represent Territories and Populations when they fly high and proud on their masts and many people have died for them as they symbolize their nations.

As Knights and Dames of St John you can be proud and fly high above everyone else because you are the representatives of a glorious and historic Sovereign Order and a State, but look at these flags a second time: they are nothing but dead pieces of cloth hanging sadly from wooden poles, because they need Wind to make them fly. They need Wind to show their colours and symbols. They need Wind to show themselves proudly to the World.

What we expect from our Knights and Dames is to be like the Wind that gives life to the flags, the Wind that takes away the clouds that cover the Sun, or the wind that brings in the clouds and its rain, essentials for the Life on Earth.

We expect you to be as discreet as the wind that nobody can see and everybody can feel. To be like the wind that transforms and gives Life to the Flags, but whatever you decide to be, be with Moderation because everything that is too much becomes negative, like the Sun that warms us but can also burn, or the Water that is the fountain of Life but if it's too much it can flood and kill...

Be like a moderate wind and take with you the seeds of new trees and the rain to water them, be like a moderate wind and bring life to the Culture, the History, the languages and to the traditions that the flags represent.

Be like the wind and everybody will feel your presence, your action and your power, even if they don't see you, because this is what we are, this is who we are as Knights and Dames of Malta: we spread the seeds of Peace and of good Health, we bring the water to those who need it and the Sun to those who live in the shade, and, as the wind we do this for everybody equally and without discrimination.

Dear Postulants, don't expect to change the World for you never will, but be sure that you will make the difference, and if our Sovereign Order and State exists for almost 1.000 years, it is because for a millennium we have been making the Difference.

Don't expect to succeed immediately and remember the words of Sir Winston Churchill: "*Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts*"

The States are not rich because they have Crude oil, or Gold or Diamonds, the States are rich if they have good and educated people, because the People are the Wealth of a nation, therefore today, by receiving you as our new Knights and Dames, our Sovereign Order and our State will be richer than before,

Be Welcome.