

SPEECH OF THE GM TO THE POSTULANTS

1st October 2022

Dear Postulants,

This place, which today - in your honour -, is a place of Gala and of Pomp, was once a Hospital, a place of pain and suffering, not only for the Knights but also for the Maltese people, rich and poor, all of them with the same treatment. The Knights of Saint John, Knights of Malta, converted this Hospital in the most modern and advanced hospital of its time, a hospital so advanced that even the plates to serve the food to all patients were made of pure silver to avoid contagion.

We can imagine the pain and the suffering that these stones have witnessed, but the pain belongs to those who felt it, not to those who look or try to imagine it. Indeed no one can really understand a pain if he has not experienced it in his own skin and this is why we tend to forget that the pain and violence of those days is equal to the pain and violence caused nowadays by the War and by Fundamentalisms all over the World. We forget because we don't feel it.

We follow the War and devastation in Ukraine because it is close to most of us, but we forget Syria, Congo Kinshasa, CAR, Tigray in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan, Nigeria, North Mozambique and the terrible effects of the Taliban Government in Afghanistan or the misery in Haiti.

Indeed, what the Eyes do not see the Heart does not feel, but we, as Knights of St John, we have always been different, we still are different and we will continue being different in the future: our Embassies are not in the large and luxurious cities of the world, no, ours are where we are needed and we always continue providing top quality medical assistance to those who need us, as our ancestors did, centuries ago, in this Sacra Infermeria. So, all of you, dear Postulants and all of those who think like us are welcome to join our fight and our truly Humanitarian Work.

The Pomp and Circumstance here today is not how we work everyday: it's only to make of this day an unforgettable moment of your lives, dear Postulants, because to become a Knight of St John, Knights of Malta has always been an unforgettable moment in the life of our ancestors, the glorious Knights who built so many beautiful monuments in Malta, and I say ancestors because we are the direct and lawful descendants of those knights.

As you know on the 3rd of September last His Holiness Pope Francis, wisely took the decision of dissolving the leadership of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM), appointing a provisional government, and imposing them a new Constitutional Charter, based on a sentence of the Cardinal's Court of January 1953 that stipulated that the prerogatives of the SMOM do not constitute the set of powers and prerogatives proper to Sovereign entities in the full sense of the word and that SMOM is a religious Order, as it depends in its various forms, on the Holy See.

In the sequence of that sentence of the highest court of the Catholic Church at the time, one of the Knights of our Federation of Autonomous Priories (KMFAP) requested the Italian Courts to pronounce a verdict about the legitimacy of the Autonomous Priories and of the rights of His Eminent Highness Prince Nicola Ligny-Luxembroug di Lascaris-Ventimiglia, who was at that time the Grand Master of the Autonomous Priories - Priorati

Autonomi Reuniti as it was called at the time in Italian – and also to determine if the Autonomous Priories were the legal and direct successor of the old Order of Saint John of Jerusalem and if H.E.H. Prince Ligny-Luxembroug had the right to invest new Knights of St. John also said Knights of Malta.

The Italian court clearly ruled in its sentence that... ***Evidently the Cardinal's Court had the intention of dealing only with the matter of the new papal institution (SMOM) and not of the old Order represented by its several Priories, ...***” and further on it states that the Cardinal's court was: “ ***...always mistaking between the papal religious branch and the old and authentic Order ...*** “ - which means **US**.

Following this sentence many other sentences of different European Courts ruled in favour of KMFAP's Sovereignty and many countries recognised that Sovereignty by establishing full diplomatic relations with us.

We are today in the best hospital of its time built by our direct and lawful predecessors and in a few moments, you will also become Knights and Dames of St John and you will have upon your shoulders the responsibility to continue honouring the name of the Order and the memory of our ancestors so brave that they were called the Knights of Malta, so, in view of our ancestors you may ask what do we expect from you?

We don't expect that after this Ceremony you go home, forget about us, hang your mantel in the wardrobe and your Diploma on a wall to show to friends and visitors how important you are. Important no, because the cemeteries are full of Important people who have been forgotten...

The only way to be remembered forever is to give during your live a positive contribution to the progress of Mankind, and this is why we expect you to take part in our Humanitarian work and honour your mantel and your decoration as we do, but we know that we - the humans - are angles with only one wing and to fly we need to embrace someone else, and this is team work and this is what our brotherhood exists for: to help each other as a team so we are able to help those in need, and then we can all fly higher in life, because only when we help the ill, the victims and the needy we can really fly and we can bring those we help to fly with us.

It is wrong to think that all Men are in the same boat, because where we are, is in the same Sea but on different boats: some are on yachts, some are on fishing boats, many are on rowing boats and the majority is swimming to survive in the stormy sea of our World, so our mission as Knights of St John, as Knights of Malta, - we who are on the yachts -, is to use our yachts to save those who are drowning in the Sea.

Dear Postulants, we count on you to join our work, so please tell us what you would like to do and what you are able to do to collaborate with us, but never forget that Einstein once said that if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree you will think that the fish is stupid, so we only ask from you to do what you really can do and what you are able to do, but we ask you to do it together with us all.

We count on you.

Be welcome!