

The Knights of The Holy See



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**The first Crusade took place between 1096–1099
and was ordered by Pope Urban II
The Four Commanders were: Godfrey of Bouillon,
Raimondo IV of Tolosa, Bohemond I of Antioch
and Tancred of Altavilla**



The Orders of Knighthoods of The Holy See

Since Medieval times, The Church has maintained and supported and recognized military and religious Orders and over the years have established new Honoured Orders, or Knighthoods.

The first title of The Equestrian Knight Pontiff; The Spur of Gold, is, to this day, still considered one of the most distinguished recognitions of honour. In 1471 The Pontiff Paul II awarded the first investiture “The Knights of Saint Peter” as an honoured title of The Holy See. The Knights of Saint Peter refers to the honoured investiture Knighthood of the Holy See., This Spur of Gold, is not to be confused with The Spur of Gold awarded by The Royal Cavalry

Until 1500, at The Papal Court, there was not a real defined Equestrian Order, with privilege and duties established by regulation, in fact the investiture didn't always have an official mantle and insignia.

In 1520 the Pontiff Leone X founded The Order of Saint Peter, the first Honorary Institute of The Order of Saint Peter. Made up of 401 knights of various parts of The Apostolic Chancellery.

The Title of Honour consisted of a medal. The Knights offered sums of money to The Holy See, and in exchange they received honours and income.

In 1540 The Pontiff Paul III established The Knighthood of Saint Peter, who at that time numbered 200, and had much analogy with The Order of Saint Peter.

In 1546 The Pontiff Paul III founded The Knighthood of Giglio, who numbered 50. It was Pontiff Paul IV in 1556 who increased the number to 300 knights.

These Orders, like the others (The Order Laureano, with 260 knights, and The Order Piano, 535 knights) were not exactly real military orders but honorary positions or appointments from the Apostolic Chamber. The Knights were paid in fixed sums in return for defending and sustaining The Church.

Only Napoleon, in 1810, managed to suppress The Knights to set up a budget, or statement of affairs for The Holy See. This is how the settling of all affairs began, and in 1815, when Pontiff Pius VII returned to Rome from exile, many tasks and positions had been abolished, and this was continued under Pontiff Leon XIII.

In 1500 The Order of Christ, a governing order not founded by the Holy See but which pontiffs conferred an honourable title to, like all other orders promised to defend and sustain The Church.

All the Equestrian Institutions had a Catholic nature and took sacred titles like The Order of Christ, The Order of The Holy See, The Order of Saint George and The Order of Saint Stephen etc., conserving relations and filial devotion and respectful difference towards The Apostolic Holy See. This is how it was until XVIII century when The Church regulated and gave honour to The Orders of Knighthood.

Some orders in The Middle Ages were founded as private initiatives, and were later approved by The Church. However, few remained for long, of these The Military Order of The Madonna, also known as The Immaculate Conception of B.V, The Military Order of The Knights of The Mother of God, all of which promised to defend The Christian Religion, and fight the war against The Turks.

In 1788, with The French Revolution came the suppression of all aristocracy along with The Order of The Knights whose ideology and nature were contrary to the mentality of the revolution for their religious aspects, and their noble, medieval origins. Their conspicuous goods were then exposed and confiscated.

Once the revolution had passed and Napoleon was in power, new insignia, equites and knights were formed including The Legion of Honour, a defined democratic and secular order in contrary to the ancient/older, and pre existing orders.

The Order of The Legion of Honour was the founder of many distinctions and honours of Knighthoods of the XIX and XX centuries

The Legion of Honour was the exponent or representative for a new concession of Equestrian title, intended as an honourable remuneration and decoration of merit awarded as civil or military merit without reference to religion, nobility or nationality of the insignia.

Successively, throughout the world, a flourishing of orders based on the French model, independent of a religious culture, were called Orders of Civil or Secular Merit.

In the old Equestrian Institutions, there was always just one class of Knights, and the titles of Commandership and Knights of the Great Cross that began to be honoured in the XV century, always represented honourable titles with real benefit also awarded.

Existing orders are however subdivided, dated by their honourable nature in various classes so that adequate decoration is worth that of the insignia.

The major ones are: The Knights of The Great Cross, better known by the French name Grand Cordone, Commandership badge, Commandership /Dame or Lady (U.K.) of Commandership and Knight/Lady.

In the XIX century almost all of the old Knighthoods, Institutions and Orders had disappeared, and those surviving had modified notably.

Each nation institutionalised new civil and democratic titles and awards and only by their names and insignias were they a reminder of past orders.

Even the Pontiff State modernized Knighthood honours, yet still maintaining, within limit, a strong tradition of tutelage of the knights.

In the present day Pontiff Cavalry there are six Orders: The Order of Christ, The Order of the Golden Spur, The Order Piano The Order of Saint Gregory

The Great, The Order of Pope Saint Sylvester and The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Of these remaining six, three are considered of merit, one of noble founding, and the remaining two of mixed typology.

The Orders of Merit are similar to those Secular, and those of Saint Gregory The Great founded in 1831, of Saint Sylvester, and of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

The Orders of Christ and of the Golden Spur, that in the past were bestowed on nobility, nowadays are considered of merit, and are to appoint Heads of State, Heads of Government and sovereigns.

The Pontiff Equestrian Orders have a secular nature and character in that they are not conferrable or ecclesiastical.

The Order Piano today is an Order of Merit, and the only that has had since 1940, a double nature - both aristocratic and Knightly, and has a direct link to the old Cavalry of The Church.

Circa 1840 The Holy See elaborated on The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem which is today bestowed from the Cardinal Grand Maestro being of "sub collation", and no longer like in the past a transfer of legacy directly from the Holy Father.

Last century, the popes established three Honours, wrongly defined as Orders but to be exact were more decorations of merit that today are no longer used, more precisely this refers to The Honour of Moretto, of Saint Cecilia, and of the Lawyers of Saint Peter.

The first was bestowed by Pope Pius VII the 23 September 1806, reserved for the President of The Academy of Fine Arts in San Luca, considered an Honourable academy more than a Knighthood until 1870.

On the 15 November 1847 The Order of Saint Cecilia was founded for the academics and professors of the Pontiff Musical Academy until 1870.

It was in 1878, after the taking of Rome, that the Order of The Lawyers of Saint Peter created a group of legal consultants responsible for the guardianship of legal matters of The Holy See under Pius IX.

It was basically a technical commission with the President Grand Maestro, and a Cardinal which was later suppressed by Pius X on 26 May 1909.

In 1905 radical reformation of The Pontiff Orders began that brought the numbers to six and were defined and were defined as an order or list of merit. The first being The Order of Christ, then The Order of the Golden Spur, followed by The Patron of the Madonna, and finally The Order of Piano, of Saint Gregory The Great, and of the Pope Saint Sylvester.

The Cardinal Grand Master and Patriarch Gerosolimitano continued to bestow for special pontifical delegations, a grade of Orders of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and of The Maestro General of The Teutonic Order in which is being referred.

Contemporary Pontiff Knighthood Orders

The contemporary Pontiff Knighthood Orders are subdivided between civil and military Orders.

Those Military are: The Supreme Order of Christ and that of The Golden Spur.

Those Civil are: The Order of Piano, Saint Gregory The Great and Pope Saint Sylvester, who don't have a military tradition, in fact the uniform has no military insignia, and resembles a diplomatic uniform.

The first two mentioned: The Supreme Order of Christ and that of The Golden Spur are awarded by The Pope himself, the others are awarded by the Apostolic Delegate.

The bestowing of Pontiff Honour is in the role of the Pope, as he is the supreme Head of The Vatican State in a territorial, spiritual and international nature.

Between 1870 and 1929 The Holy See had no control over territory but maintained the international spiritual nature has and the tradition of giving honour.

The Honours given by the Pope himself include: The Supreme of Christ, The Golden Spur, The Order of Piano, The Orders of Saint Gregory The Great and of Pope Saint Sylvester.

The Honours given by the Apostolic Delegate are: The Order of The Equestrian Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, and The Order of the Teutonic Knights of Saint Maria.

HIGHEST HONOURS BESTOWED DIRECTLY BY PONTIFF WITH APOSTOLIC LETTERS

1-The Supreme Order of Christ

Founded 14 March 1319 by Giovanni XXII

One class only

The King Dionigi I of Portugal in 1318 founded a new Order called The Supreme Order of Christ with military rules, and to which he gave the treasure of The Templars belonging to the territories of Portugal

In 1319, this Order merged with The Vatican State decreed by Pope Giovanni XII.

King Dionigi, a strong supporter of the Templars, welcomed all Templars persecuted throughout Europe.

The King of Portugal gave a military role to the Order of the Templar. The first duty of the members of this Order was to fight against the Muslims, imposing on the young knights a training period of three years of war, as well as enforced abstinence and poverty. This was how the Order was modified.

With the indications by Pope Alessandro VI, those Knights were given exoneration from voting, changing the basic characteristics of The Order from a Military Knighthood to an Honorary Knighthood. There ore changing from a Military to a more administrative role. It is from here there is a prevalence in Military Orders Here we see a prevalence in Military Orders accepting knights from Honorary Orders. This assimilation of Military and Honorary Orders, meant knights and professional members were no longer being exposed to the vows of poverty and chastity, however they had no governing power within the Order and were still assigned military and administrative positions.

In the XVI century the military activity of The Knights of Christ slowly diminished but still remained a military power of The Church.

The Orders maintained and improved the state of The Castles of the Templars, and created new fortresses such as The Palace of Grand Mastership in Tomar.

The Holy See guarded and over saw the life and discipline of the Knights. However, following 1522 Pope Adriano IV gave the administration to the Order of the Sovereigns which led slowly to a further unification between The Orders of Christ with the of The Crown.

In this way, The Military of Christ ceased being an autonomous Magistrate Order, and became an Honorary Order of The Crown.

The Popes considered giving power and authority to new knights, of every nation, noble and otherwise. In Portugal, the King and the Grand Masters (I Gran Maestri) continued to grant power and influence to nobility only.

There were two distinctly different branches of Knighthoods which in nature had different authorities: that Portuguese, where The Knights were exonerated from voting, yet were still under obligation to defend The Church, mainly from The Saracens. The other branch, where Knights were nominated or appointed by Rome, Knights enjoyed a simple Equestrian Title.

Pope Paolo VI altered the Roman branch of The Order of Christ, and then with Gregorio XV bestowed The Order to The Holy See.

It is one of the highest Award Honours.

In 1878 The Order of Christ was completely reformed, and then in 1905 Pope Pius X reorganized and enlarged The Order, making it, on 7 February 1905, one of The Supreme Equestrian Orders of The Holy See.

This measure also altered the nature and attributes of the old Military Order.

The Pontiff Order of Christ was reserved for only Heads of State and Royalty, and sovereignty.

The Order of Christ, in the XVI and XVIII centuries, was under the authority of both The Church, and, in Portugal, under The Crown.

It is why Today there is two different Orders that both have the same name: The Order of Christ, and origins, however their insignias differ. The Order under Papal authority have a religious physiognomy, while The Portuguese Order is under the influence of The Republic of Portugal and has a secular nature modelled on The Legion of Honour.



2- The Order of The Golden Spur

The Golden Militia

Precise time of founding not available;

Renovated by Saint Pius X, 7 February 1905

One class only

The Order of The Golden Spur, also called The Golden Militia, is considered one of the titles or signs of honour most common. Both Popes and Emperors bestowed this upon Knights.

The Holy See began awarding such titles in the XIV Century.

The Knights of The Pope received insignias (decoration) and medals: a neck band and cross, a belt of gold material, a sword with a golden hilt, and spurs of gold.

It was the same as the insignia given to Knights by The Emperor.

Since the Middle Ages, The Golden Spur has belonged to The Honorary Cavalry, in which first The Church, and later The Sovereigns used to give to Honorary Orders with a Golden Spur award ceremony. This is where the term The Cavalry of The Golden Spur, and The Golden Militia began.

While the Knights of other Orders had to undergo a period in a convent as a novice (novitiate), The Knights of The Golden Spur underwent a training period in horse mastery or military service, to become part of the “armed” Cavalry of military soldiers and knights. During the ceremony in they received arms and Golden Spurs.

Sometimes the Pope gave also a Key-ring with gold keys (like those of St. Peter's) to the most prestigious of Knights, who could include those elements in their coat of arms.

The Popes bestowed The Golden Spur to The Ambassadors of Venice, after their three year training period in Rome, as well as to nobility, or even citizens with no military history—those deserving honour for actions.

The Knights of the Golden Spur had no other obligations, but to be always available, in case of war, for the Pope who gave them the Insignia.

Also Kings, Princes, Ministers, Ambassadors, and Commanders received from Popes the Insignia of The Golden Spur and of The Golden Militia.

Together with The Golden Spur and The Golden Militia Insignia, Noble Status was granted.

In 1500 when a knight was honoured with The Golden Spur, he also received the title of Count of The Sacred Lateranense Palace or Count Palatino.

The County Palatine from X Century to the XIV Century were considered one of the highest noble and honorary titles amongst those of the Papal and

Imperial Courts, but later lost its relevance as too many of these titles were given.

At the end of The Middle Ages, and the beginning of modern times, The Knighthood lost its importance as well as the title of The Knights of The Golden Spur, which became a simple honorary insignia given too easily.

In 1367, such signs of decline were evident when The Pope authorised The Marquis of Ferrara to nominate some Knights of The Golden Spur, and also when The Popes and Emperors gave to some Colleges and Noble families the power to award the title of Count Palatino and The Golden Spur.

Another sign of decline is evident on the part of Pope Pius IV who bestowed the titles of The Golden Spur and Count Palatino to all Members of The College of Nobility Giureconsulti in Milan, as he had been a Member of this College prior to being ordained.

Other sign of decline is to have been given such honorary titles were the College of The Medici in Milan, Professors of the Faculty of Law (Faculty of Jurisprudence), and some prelates of the Roman Curia, Cardinals Legates and Papal Nuncios.

The Knights were however people who gave their guarantee of discretion and caution regarding matters.

Despite this, abuses were evident, above all in the collation or transfer of legacy which became a privilege handed down through inherited by the Sforza of Santa Fiora, during the Papacy Paolo III, then in 1539 succeeded to The Cesarini.

In reality these temporary and permanent delegations were not new in how the customary Knighthoods during The Middle Ages admitted new knights.

Even The Empire permitted the conferring of titles as a transmissible privilege.

All this led to the further decline of The Golden Spur, which once was exclusive, but at this time, distributed without selection an honour that could then be obtained with ease.

In 1560 Pope Pius IV founded The College of Cavalieri Pii or Piani, and reformed The Golden Militia, which ceased to exist as before.

The College of Pius IV bestowed to all members the title or honour of Armed Knight (the highest level of Knighthood) complete with the many benefits like giving palaces and titles of Count, yet at the same time The Golden Militia continued to be given by The Holy See to delegates

The Golden Armed Knights were part of an Order; they didn't have a uniform, yet wore the traditional and distinctive insignia of The Old Cavalry such as golden spurs, the military belt, and the sword with the golden hilt.

In the XVI Century, The Golden Armed Knights wore around their collar a white cross with eight points suspend from a gold chain and a red ribbon, very similar to those worn by The Knights of Malta, with a small golden spur pendant on the wrist (bracco inferiore).

The Golden Spur (The Armed Knights) could also be nominated by The Clergy.

The prestige of The Golden Spur was always maintained, both for the traditions of its insignia, as well as the fact that its Knights were considered noble.

From the XVI to XVIII Centuries, many aspired to be Golden Armed Knights of The Golden Spur, not only to be accepted as noble and to hold an honorary title, but as a condition necessary for accepting civil, clerical and military positions.

When Sovereigns wanted to give the title of The Golden Spur to an inheriting noble, they declared it in a Diploma of Concession or the title was considered null and void.

The colour the decorated The Golden Spur in The State of The Church didn't dictate the class of nobility but was worn as decoration and to distinguish and implicate the privileges of nobility.

In 1803 The Pontiff created a standard uniform for all Knights, creating the first step towards transforming The Golden Militia into a real and proper Order.

The ease of entry of troops, nominated without strict selection processes, and the decline of The Institutions of The Cavalry led to a certain discrediting of The Order of The Golden Spur.

Many were the abuses of such a title and honour that certain Catholic Sovereigns didn't recognise the titles in their lands if they were bestowed directly by The Holy See.

In 1815 Pope Pius VII, to return the authority of the old prestigious Institute of The Golden Spur, withheld the transfer of legacy of titles given by Colleges, Faculties and Universities.

Gregorio XVI also followed thorough with nthis course of action and invited The Ceasing Scoria to give up their privileges, revoking rights given by

Gregory Vic's predecessors and reserving only The Golden Spur honours bestowed by The Holy See.

The Golden Spur returned to its initial legal role of The Cavalry with direct transfer of legacy from The Pope , and rebuilt The Equestrian Order to that of the original which Saint Gregory The Great, founded 10 years earlier, and renamed it in honour of Saint Sylvester, which resulted in the new denomination of The Orders of Saint Sylvester, and The Order of The Golden Spur.

There were now two classes: Knights (Cavaliers) and Commanders, whereas previously there had only been knights.

The number of knights was limited to 300, and that of commanders to 150.

The medallion was a white cross on an eight pointed rays of gold, with an effigy of Saint Sylvester surrounded by bronze with the words in gold: S. SYLVESTER P.M., whilst on the other side, it was engraved: MDCCCXLI GREGORIUS XVI REST ITUIT.

The red ribbon was modified by adding two black strips.

In 1905, under the reform of Pope Pius X, all Pontifical Cavalries were divided in two Orders:

The Golden Spur, also referred to as The Golden Militia, having been restored to its former splendour, was placed on the second level (grade) of the hierarchy in The Equestrian Pontifical Orders, and was in fact now given exclusively by heads of state and government.

The Order of Saint Sylvester, which was placed in fifth position, was a common Honour of Merit.

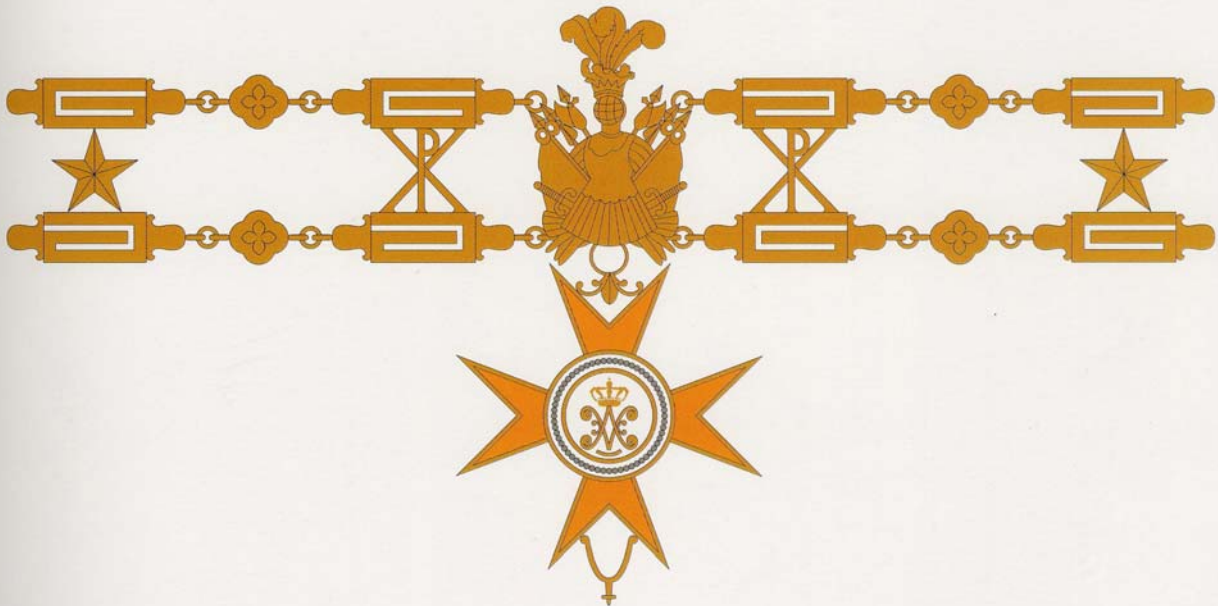
The Golden Spur has only one class of knights, and the number was to be no more than one hundred like that of The Order of Christ.

The Cross, always eight pointed with the spur, was now white instead of yellow, without the rays. The central medallion is white with a monogram of The Madonna, under whose protection The Order is;

The Cross is hung from a military trophy by a red ribbon with white stripes, (now substituted by a golden collar), similar to The Order of the Golden Spur.

The Knights wore on their chests a silver star with the yellow cross but there was no trophy.

Cavaliere



3-The Order of Piano

Founded 17 June 1847 by Pope IX

Reformed under Pope Pius XII 11 November 1939 and 25 December 1957.

The Order of Piano was founded by Pope Pius IX in 1847 and had few links with that homonymous founded by Pope Pius IV in 1560.

Pope Pius IV created a College of Knights which was also called Pii, Piani or Partecipati, and was built in part by The Secular Court of The Pope.

The Order of Piano was a body of gentlemen, who didn't bear arms, whose responsibility it was to deal with the economic and financial matters for the Apostolic Church. Their College had no military role.

They were charged with the honour of accompanying The Pope to public celebrations and events in return for great privileges, depending directly on The Holy See.

The Knights of The Order of Piano enjoyed the titles of Count Palatini, like the Knights of The Golden Spur, and of Noble people.

It was decreed that all Knights of The Clergy had to be Apostolic Notaries, and those not religious were part of The Golden Spur, so as if they took a leave of absence they would still remain Counts of Lateranense Palace, as well as Notary of The Holy See.

They Knights had to obey the commands of The Holy See, also in the case of The Crusades.

The insignia of The Knights of The Order of Piani consisted of a big medallion. On one side a shield from The House of Medici with a tiara above it, with the keys of Saint Peter and on the other side the image of Saint Ambrogio.

In 1847, Pope Pius IX appointed the College an Equestrian Order that was until 1939, the only noble Order of Knights of The Holy See.

Pope Pius IX reformed all the Pontifical Equestrian Orders adapting them to modern times, and dedicating special attention of The Order of Piano that had to be the ideal continuation of the one founded by Pope Pius IV.

The Order was reformed into two levels of Knights. The First Class of Knights was given nobility which could be passed on through generations; The Second Class to whom nobility was given strictly to them.

As decoration instead of the usual cross, an eight pointed star with a sky blue colour with a small white shield with the words PIUS IX, surrounded by the motto VIRTUS ET MERITO; the star is above the badge in gold and silver, depending one's merits.

The star was used in place of the crown as the honour was bestowed upon Ministers, Diplomats and persons of different faiths.

The insignias of The Orders were worn hanging, with a red ribbon with two sky blue stripes on each side, from the collar by The Knights of the First

Class. The insignia of The Knights of The Second class were smaller, and worn on the left side.

For special merit, Knights of The First Class could also be decorated with a Silver badge.

Later the Pope established that Secret and Honoured Servants could also be admitted to both classes of The Order.

In following, it was established that The Knights of The First Class could also wear a cross with a silk sash with the colour of The Order.

On 11 November 1856, The Great Cross class was declared in The Order of Piano.

The classes then became three: The Great Cross, The Commander, (Commander with badge or High Official as well as simple Commander), and Knight.

In 1939 The Holy See cancelled the titles of nobility in The Order and those newly nominated only received insignia without the noble privileges. Those honoured before this time kept their noble until death, and were not transmissible after death.

The Order of Piano, with its three classes, has a structure similar to The Order of Saint Sylvester; however its very distinct to those civil disciplines which have usually has five classes.

It is evident that The Honour was given often to nobles, the noble guards and to Seculars of The Pontifical Cross that had previously received titles. The Order of Piano, in this way, represents a unique figure, as well having great prestige.

The Pope Pius XII increased The Order of Piano by one class. By doing this the classes are:

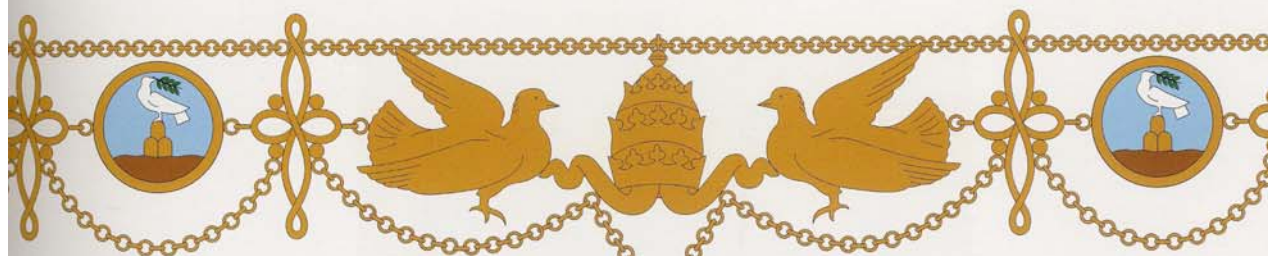
Classes:

1^a Knights and Ladies (Dames) of The Collar.

2^a Knights and Ladies of the Great Cross.

3^a Commanders and Ladies of The Badge.

4^a Knights and Ladies (Dames).



Cavaliere di Gran Croce





Commendatore con Placca



Dama di Commenda con Placca



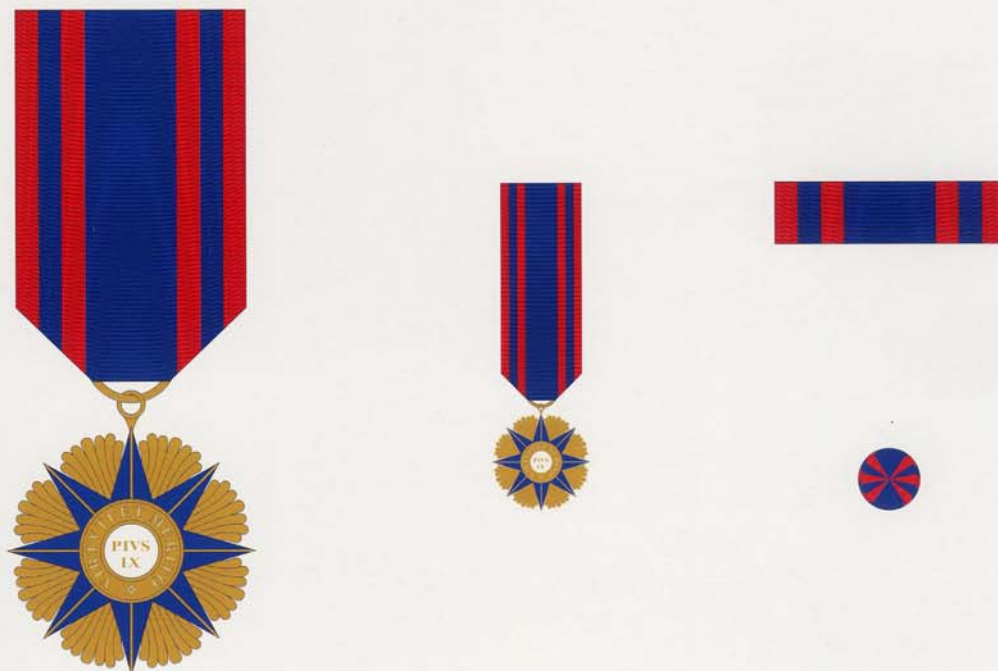
Commendatore



Dama di Commenda



Cavaliere



Dama



4- The Order of Saint Gregory The Great

Founded on 1 September 1831 by Pope Gregorio XVI

Reformed by Pope Saint Pius X, 7 February 1905

The previous three Orders: The Supreme Order of Christ, The Golden Spur, and The Order of Piano are for those deserving and important people, and represent the ancient tradition of the Church. The one of Saint y The Great however, is completely new.

The Holy See assigned The Order of Christ and The Golden Spur to deserving people therefore there was no need to create a new Order, yet maintaining the Christian characteristics with secular, and state aspects like the French The Légion d'Honneur.

This new Order was created to compensate, with an Honour, those citizens that belong to the States of The Church, without necessarily being nobility. However the Honour was divided into different classes according to merit.

Pope Gregorio XVI decided to create The Order of Knights (The Knighthood) founded on 1 September 1831, and called it after his predecessor who was Saint Gregory The Great.

This Order was divided into three classes:

The Great Cross (subdivided into two classes: Commander and Knight.

The decoration consists of an eight pointed golden cross, enamelled with red with a medallion in the centre with an image of Saint Gregorio; a red ribbon finishing with a yellow border to one side.

Successively, when those given Gregorian decoration were divided into civil and military classes, it was established that the cross be enamelled in green for civil holders of this honour, and for a military trophy similar to that of The Order of Malta.

The Knights of The Grand Cross, The First Class, wore an insignia suspended from a silk sash worn on the right shoulder to left hip, and on their chest wore the badge. Those of the second class wore both the cross and badge on the collar with a thinner ribbon, (like those used for important officials), while the Commanders and Knights wore the customary decoration of their grades

The two classes of The Great Cross created some inconvenient for the Order and, after some years, there were three, and a limit on nominees was decreed by The States of The Church. More precisely, numbers were limited to 30 of The Grand Cross, 70 Commanders, and 300 Knights. However, the number of foreign subjects had no limits.

The First Secretary, or Grand Chancellor of The Order, was given the responsibility of “pro tempore” by the Cardinal Secretary. The “pro tempore” was charged with the work related to the nominees and the number of those being honoured.

The grades (classes) then became four as the Commanders were divided in two: those with the Badge were Great Officers, and those without, simple Commanders.

On 7 February 1905, the latest version of The Regulations of The Chancellery of Pontifical Orders was drawn up. Still in use today, The Regulations contains the descriptions of uniforms, insignias, and decoration and their uses.

The Saint Gregorio Cross remained, for a long time, the only Order of Merit of The Holy See; in fact the three Superior Orders, The Order of Christ, The Golden Spur and the Order of Piano were reserved, as previously mentioned, for those first rank and honourable members. It remained as such until 1905 when The Order of the Golden Spur (also referred to as The Order of The Golden Militia) was divided by The Order of Saint Sylvester, which became an Equestrian Honour similar to that of Saint Gregory The Great, but of an inferior rank.

Classes (Civil and Military):

1^a Knights and Ladies of The Great Cross

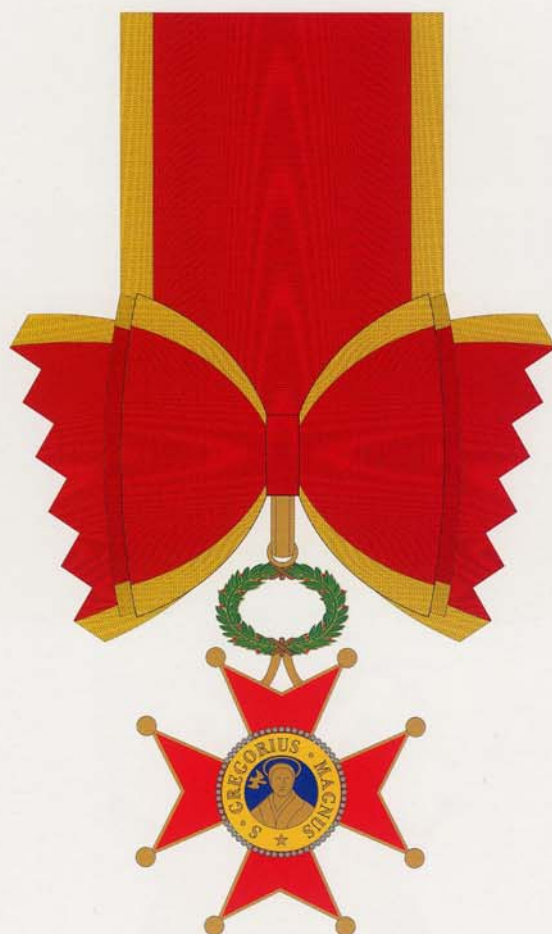
2^a Commanders and Ladies of The Commend of the Badge; Commanders and Ladies of The Commend

3^a Knights and Ladies (Dames)

Cavaliere di Gran Croce



Dama di Gran Croce



Commendatore con Placca



Dama di Commenda con Placca



Commendatore



Dama di Commenda



Cavaliere



Dama



5- The Order of Pope Saint Sylvester

Taken from The Golden Militia

Founded 31 October 1841 by Pope Gregorio XVI;

Reformed by Pope Saint Pius X, 7 February 1905

In 1841, with the reform of The Golden Spur under Pope Saint Sylvester as the Patron of Knights, the Order now has the double title of The Order of Saint Sylvester and The Golden Militia.

At the beginning of 1900, it was established that The Golden Spur return to its previous splendour and original denomination, yet another Order of Merit, similar to that of Saint Gregory The Great, was still required

The title of Saint Sylvester was given to the new Order.

This new Equestrian Order is the most recent one to date in the history of The Holy See, and was placed on the fifth level.

The Supreme Order of Christ, The Order of The Golden Spur, and The Order of Piano are rarely conferred honours, where as those of The Order of Saint Gregory The Great and The Order of Saint Sylvester are more common.

The following Orders are Orders of Merit:

The Order of Saint Sylvester is divided into four grades, like that of The Order of Piano and The Order of Saint Gregorio.

The decoration consists of a golden Maltese Cross with a medallion in the centre; rays of gold protrude between the arms of the cross. In the middle of the cross there is a medallion with the figure of Saint Sylvester, hanging from a black ribbon with three red stripes.

The Order of Saint Sylvester was founded in 1905.

Classes:

1^a Knights and Ladies (Dames) of The Great Cross

2^a Commanders and Ladies of The Commend of the Badge;

3^a Commanders and Ladies (Dames) of The Commend

4^a Knights and Ladies (Dames)

Cavaliere di Gran Croce



Dama di Gran Croce



Commendatore con Placca



Dama di Commenda con Placca



Commendatore



Dama di Commenda



Cavaliere



Dama



Cavaliere



Dama



6-The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

The O.E.S.S.H. (Ordo Equestris Sancti Sepulcri Hierosolymitani) is a religious, military Order of The Catholic Church, founded in 1099 in Jerusalem, in order to protect The Holy Sepulchre and Christians in The Holy Land.



The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (Ordo Equestris Sancti Sepulcri Hierosolymitani) was founded in 1099 soon after the liberation of Jerusalem and the formation of The Latin Kingdom.

Godfrey of Bouillon, "The Defender of The Holy Sepulchre", assigned to a Corp of Golden Armed Knights of The Crusades, the Honour of protecting and defending the The Holy Sepulchre. They were supposed to obey The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and followed the regulations Saint Augustine.

The constitution of The Order of The Holy Sepulchre has two fundamental rules:

- 1. Forcing its Members to adhere to Christian beliefs and duties, including fidelity and loyalty to The Pope as taught in Christianity;**
- 2. Reinforcing and helping the works and institutions of The Catholic Church in The Holy Land.**

The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is, according to modern day definition of the Code of Canon Law: "An International Lay Confraternity (Association) of Pilgrims", recognised, and protected by The Holy See and the Italian State (R.D. 10 July 1930 n. 974, art. 3, and by The Law dated 3 March 1951 n. 178 art. 7.3).

The name itself: The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, highlights the meaning of the Order, and its spirituality, which is The Holy Sepulchre as the place of the Glory and resurrection of Jesus Christ

The words written in The Vatican Council II seem to be written exclusively for the Members of this Order: "each layman has to be a witness of the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is the sign that God exists." (Lumen Gentium, Cap. IV, I Laici, 38).

In light of these words, The Knights and Ladies of The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre had to demonstrate a sense of special sense of pride belonging to this Order.

Miles Christi, Soldiers of Christ

Proclaiming "Miles Christi", meaning soldier of Christ, had a special attraction. The First Knights did not hesitate in giving their own lives for defending and guarding The Holy Sepulchre in silent testimony. They were also to protect the presence of The Church and the Christians in The Holy Land.

The Knights worked hard to build a strong faith and practice the duties as a good Christian like Christ taught who defeated sin and death itself.

Knights and Ladies today are required to always be "Soldiers of Christ", in their everyday spiritual lives, giving their word and testimony when affronting the many problems of the world.

They don't fight to conquer a city as such but for the soul of the world itself. The battleground is more vast and difficult than any of the good Crusaders could have imagined back then.

The courage and perseverance required in the fight today is greater than in the past.

The Commitment of today's Knights and Ladies

Nowadays, the commitment or sense of responsibility from the faithful and loyal followers puts in first place "the rediscovery of the baptism as fundamental to the Christian existence" (John Paul II, Third millennium Adveniente, IV-b, 41), and to be a witness to our continually developing faith.

From the faithful, a complete and detailed study of the Catechism of The Catholic Church, and a continual process for a more in depth knowledge of Jesus Christ and his Church is essential (ibidem, IV-b, 42).

This is the way of making the words in The Acts of the Apostles a reality " It shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, crossing Judea, and The Samaria, as far as the borders of the world_(At. 1, 8).

The words of Paul VI are still relevant today: "Modern man pays more attention to the witnesses than the Masters, and if man listens to the Masters, he does so because they too are also witnesses" (Paul VI, Evangelii nuntiandi, 41).

To be witnesses, the demonstration of acceptance and support of Christ towards the Faith must be as pure as the testimony of charity and of hope in aiding our brothers and sisters.

Seneca said: "longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla" (a Lucillo, 6, 5): "long is the road of precepts, brief and efficient that of examples".

The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is based on the following principles: Self discipline, Generosity and Bravery.

"... the ability to renounce in this world of abundance, generosity towards to weak and the needy, the courageous fight for justice and peace.

Those are the Characteristics of The Holy Sepulchre".

The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

1) The Origins

The origins of this Order began with the liberation of the land of The Holy Sepulchre from Muslim domination by Godfrey of Bouillon, Chief Commander of the Militia of the first Crusade. In doing so, Godfrey of Bouillon founded the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

In 1103, as reported by the writers of the Crusade, Balduino I, the first King of Jerusalem and as Head of The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, he had the power to nominate new Knights. This power was for himself and his successors.

Pilgrimages to the Holy Land were frequent but often dangerous from the time after the crucifixion of Jesus all through the Middle Ages. Many comprehensive commentaries have remained as evidence of this early Christian dedication. There were many places the pious visited during their travels, but the one most treasured was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was first built under Constantine the Great in the fourth century AD.

A local practice began long before the Crusades, bestowed knighthood upon qualified men whose presence, character and devotion were considered worthy of ennoblement by those given the responsibility of the care of the church. Later, the responsibility of bestowing Knighthood was assumed by the Kings of Jerusalem, later the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre, and nowadays it is in the hands of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

By the eleventh century, political and military events had led to a suppression of this activity by Muslim rulers, who persecuted local Christians and often destroyed the sites themselves.

The First Crusade was organized to take back The Holy Sepulchre from the Muslims, and therefore certain military orders were founded for its defence. The practice of bestowing knighthood at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre soon became part of this mediaeval military movement toward restoring a Christian presence in the Holy Land.

In 1099, Godfrey of Bouillon took the title of "Advocate of the Holy Sepulchre", and the other Latin princes, Bohemond I of Antioch and Galilee, devoted themselves whole-heartedly to the cause. In 1291, the eventual fall of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem to the Muslims did not discourage pilgrimages to the Tomb of Christ, or the tradition of receiving knighthood there, and when the custody of the Holy Land was bequeathed to the Franciscan Order, they continued this pious custom and gave the order its first Grand Master after the death of the last King of Jerusalem. This had previously been a decorum reserved for kings

The official arrival of the Franciscan Friars Minor in Syria dates from the Bull delivered by Pope Gregory IX to the clergy of Palestine in 1230, entrusting them to welcome the Friars Minor, and permitting them to preach to the faithful and hold meetings and cemeteries of their own.

In the ten years' truce of 1229 between Frederick II of Sicily and the sultan Al-Kamil, the Franciscans were allowed to enter Jerusalem, but were also the first victims of the violent invasion by the Khwarezmians in 1244. However, the Franciscan province of Syria remained, with Acre as its capital.

The monks quickly took back possession of their convent of Mount Sion in Jerusalem. The Turks tolerated the worshipping at the tomb of Christ, and received earnings from the taxes pilgrims were charged. In 1342, in his Bull *Gratiam agimus*, Pope Clement VI officially entrusted the care of the Holy Land to the Franciscans. (The restoration of a Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem by Pius IX in 1847 later replaced the Franciscans) Due to this, as early as 1336, the Franciscans were signing up applicants, in the lay confraternity of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, in ceremonies often referred to in the itineraries of pilgrims.

In the beginning, the confraternity was not a religious order, as it had no monastic rule, and no regular organization until 1847, as well as no community of goods. It is quite probable that "possessions of the Holy Sepulchre", refers to the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre who had convents in various lands, and not to the knights. During Franciscan control, however, the Order's nature as a confraternity was well established, based on centuries of church tradition and papal recognition.

Those pilgrims considered worthy of the honour were accepted into this confraternity with an elaborate ceremonial of ancient chivalry. In the early years, fundamental rules of the institution were not always followed. All classes of society were present in these pilgrimages. In the ceremonial of reception, the role of the clergy was limited to the *benedictio militis*; the dubbing with the sword was given only to a professional knight, since the carrying of the sword was contradictory to the sacerdotal character.

From 1480 to 1495, in Jerusalem there was a German knight, John of Prussia. He acted as custodian for the convent and regularly discharged this act reserved to knighthood. It was also of frequent occurrence that a foreign knight, present among the pilgrims, would assist at this ceremony. However, it was the superior who had to act instead of a knight, although such a course was considered irregular, It was since then also that the superior of the convent assumed the title of Grand Master, a title which has been acknowledged by various pontifical diplomas, and finally by a Bull of Benedict XIV dated 1746.

2) The Orders of today

a) The objectives of The Order.

The scope of The Order is to:

Reinforce its members to the Christian faith and way of life in harmony and loyalty to The Pope;

Sustain and aid the activities, efforts, and cultural initiatives in The Holy Land;

To protect and preserve what has been built by the Christians in The Holy Land and to expand with new initiatives, continuing the Christian faith;

To sustain and uphold the rights of The Christian Church in The Holy Land;

The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is the only secular institution of The Vatican State.

The offerings of the members of The Order are the main source of income of The Patriarch.

b) The structure of The Order:

The Order is based upon a hierarchy; at the top there is the Cardinal Grand Master, who is elected by The Pope, and governs The Order.

The Cardinal Grand Master is assisted by a body of professional consultants called The Grand Master ship, to whom the work of defining and organizing the annual plans, in agreement with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, is assigned. The main objectives are to define the agenda, and fund the Christian initiatives in The Holy Land, but also to organize the timing and logistics.

The Presidency of the Governor-General, made up of The Governor-General, the Vice Governor-Generals, and The Chancellor of The Order is the executive body of The Grand Mastership.

The operational body of The Order is divided in two different hierarchical departments:

The Ecclesiastical, that has the responsibility of the development of the spirituality under the guide of the Chancellor, and Master of Ceremonies;

The Secular, to which the management of The Order falls under the guidance of The Governor-General.

The Orders are subdivided into 52 deputyships, then in divisions, and often even in delegations.

All these positions have a purely operational role in The Order, and therefore do not have Honoured titles.

Subject to evaluation of their efficiency and the propriety of the work they are responsible for, the members have four-yearly terms which are eventually renewable.

Current Orders are subdivided into 52 Deputyships: 24 in Europe, 15 in North America, 5 in South America and 6 in Australia and Asia.

The groups that participate in the activities, and various charities of The Order number approximately 20 000.

c) Current activities.

As previously mentioned, The Order is present in almost all nations wherever there is a consistent Catholic community, and where there exists the premise for a venture that could be useful in reaching the aim of the institution.

Every year in the subdivided divisions and delegations of each Deputyship, a programme of meetings and events are established, orientated towards the spiritual growth of the Members of The Order.

Such meetings and events with the Catholic communities are occasions to illustrate the role and activities of The Order.

As for the donations collected, the destination and use of alms (oblation) for The Holy Land involves each Deputyship keeping the accounts according to

the administrative and fiscal regulations of each country they belong to, and balance sheets are then handed over to The Grand Mastership.

This is a very difficult period for The Holy Land, facing yet another Intifada, which has impeded economic and other activities throughout The Holy Land. Terrorism, war and conflict has caused the loss of work for many Christians and The Latin Patriarch, The Apostolic Community, as well as other Catholic Institutions in distributing social and humanitarian aid for those families most in need.

It's important to highlight the fact that such activities of Charity are not to be considered as usual activities of The Order.

Charity humbles those constricted to receive it and creates a dependency for survival.

The strategy of The Order has always been, and remains, that in giving Christians of The Holy Land high educational and professional levels allowing them to insert themselves better in the social and professional life in their country.

Today, Christians represent between 2-4% of the population within the different territories of The Holy Land, and are primarily craftsmen, merchants, and tour operators predominantly for pilgrims.

From the end of the last Century till today, The Order has built 40 schools in Israel, Palestine and Jordan and is currently funding these initiatives. These schools have more than 19 000 students in different levels of schooling from kindergarten to high school.

Christians (Catholics, Orthodox etc.) constitute more than 60% of students and 40% are Muslims.

The work of The Order in the Education sector gives students the opportunity to face, from a young age, important problems existing between the different cultures. The Order encourages respect for the religious and cultural diversities.

Promoting the values of respect and tolerance from a young age is the only way to instil values, tolerance and acceptance.

The cost of managing The Order, and of its 68 churches, as well as salaries of 900 teachers, including student accommodation, books etc. is high and ever increasing, and sustained wholly by the generosity of its Members.

d) What it means to be a Member of The Order.

Being part of The Order means assuming the responsibility of being a good Christian, in spiritual and everyday life.

Entering The Order, one swears service to The Catholic Church, promoting and preserving The Church, and the presence throughout the world and in The Holy Land.

If one has the necessary requirements, they may begin a training period that lasts no less than 12 months.

Having passed this period successfully, the candidates may apply for membership.

REGULATIONS OF THE ORDER

THE ORIGINE AND GURIDICAL NATURE OF THE ORDER

Art. 1 (The Institution).

The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is an ancient Order with privileges, under the protection of The Holy See.

Art. 2 (The Objectives).

The Scope of The Order:

1-Strengthening the Faith of its members, and instilling Christian values and way of life.

2-sustaining and aiding the work and the cultural, and social institutions and charities of The Catholic Church in The Holy Land, and around the world, especially that of The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in which The Order maintains its traditions;

3-maintain the respect of the traditions;

4-upholding the rights of The Catholic Church in The Holy Land.

Art. 3 (The Nature).

The nature of The Order, in achieving its religious and charitable aims, is removed from any political movement or event.

The Members of The Order are not permitted to take part of any organization or association with a nature and scope in contrast to the doctrine or teachings of The Catholic Church. Members are also forbidden from joining other Equestrian Orders or Institutions not recognized by The Catholic Church or awarded by the Sovereign States.

Art. 4 (The Headquarters).

The Order has its legal headquarters in The Vatican State, with its spiritual headquarters, or the centre for all spiritual activity, in the Sant'Onofrio Convent in Gianicolo.

The history of The Order is very much linked to Jerusalem, and other sacred places.

Art. 11 (The Investiture).

It is the duty of The Grand Master, and in his absence The Grand Priori, to allocate the Honour of The Investiture to Members

The Investiture reinforces the Knights and Ladies' (Dames) obligation, and duties and helps The Order achieve its scope.

Knights and Ladies receive investiture according to the "Ceremony of Investiture of The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem", approved by The Sacred Congregation on July 25, 1962.

ADMISSION AND PROMOTION: THE GRADING OF KNIGHTS.

Admission and Promotion:

-The nominees and promotions of Members are considered in relation to the quality, effort, and results of their work.

-The selection of the Members is based upon their experience and professionalism in the field of charity, and they can be no less than 25 years of age.

-The application must be presented with the following documents:

For the admission: the certificate of baptism, for those who are married, a certificate of religious wedding, a curriculum vitae (complete with your personal data, residency and education and professional history);

A certificate from the Diocese testifying his faith bearing witness to his actions in favour of The Holy Land;

The presentation by an existing Member of The Order, or a Bishop, confirms the applicant worthy of becoming a Member of The Order.

For Promotion:

- The approval by The Master of the Deputyship in order to obtain written acceptance of a promotion;

All the papers have to be submitted to the Committee and examined and approved by The Chancellor of The Order.

Knighthood Grades:

1. The Highest Class of Knights is Knights and Ladies of The Collar.

The award of The Collar is rarely and only given to eminent and worthy Ecclesiastic and Secular dignitaries.

The Cardinal Grand Master and The Patriarch of Jerusalem receive this Honour and award automatically as soon as they are elected.

2. Classes of Knights: Knights, Commanders, Commanders of The Badge, Grand Officials, Knights of The Great Cross.

3. Classes of Ladies: Ladies, Ladies of Commandership, Ladies of The Badge, Ladies of The Great Cross.

INSIGNIA OF THE ORDER:

The Banner of The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem



Coat of Arms of The Order



" Deus lo vult"

The Order, following ancient traditions, carries the Coat of Arms of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which is made of silver with a golden cross, enamelled in dark red.

The helmet is gold, with the crown of thorns of Jesus Christ at the top, on each side there are two silver flags with a purple cross.

Two angels dressed in red tunics are to each side.

The Motto: «Deus lo vult».

Seal of The Order:



The Seal of The Order, in the form of an almond, enclosed in a golden frame with the crown of thorns of Jesus Christ represents Christ in the moment of resurrection.

The Banner of The Order:



The insignia of The Order consists of a white silk banner set upon a red pole, surmounted on a military trophy.

The panel is 1,80cm x 2,10cm and tied to the flagpole.

From the bottom of the panel hangs a 0,40m fringe with the colours of the Deputyship of The Order.

On the other side of the banner there is the figure of Christ resurrected.

There is also the Motto«Deus lo vult» written in gothic characters.

The figure of Christ resurrected is between the ornamental decoration and the Crosses of Godfrey of Bouillon and the crowns of thorns.

From the flagpole black ribbons of The Order hang.

The original banner is at the headquarters of The Order in Rome.

Only the Cardinal Grand Master can decide the time and use of the banner.

Banner of The Deputyships:



The insignia of the Deputyships of The Order is the banner of white silk with a red pole, surmounted on a military trophy.

The panel is 0,80m x 2,40m, coming to a point at the bottom of the figure of Christ resurrected with the motto: «Deus lo vult », and is often found translated in the language of each respective nation.

Insignia of The different Divisions:



The insignia of the different divisions is made of white silk with a red pole, surmounted upon a military trophy with the red cross of Jerusalem.

DECORATION OF THE ORDER:

1-Decoration of The Knights of the Collar:

The collar is made of enamelled metal with the Cross of Jerusalem, the motto of The Order, "Deus lo vult" and the image of Christ resurrected.

2-Decoration of The Knights of The Grand Cross:

The Cross of Jerusalem, enamelled in red, has a military trophy engraved at the top, hanging from a 10cm black sash worn from right to left.

3-Decoration of The Commander of the Badge:

The Cross of Jerusalem, enamelled in red, has a military trophy engraved at the top, and is worn from the neck as a pendant from a black silk ribbon.

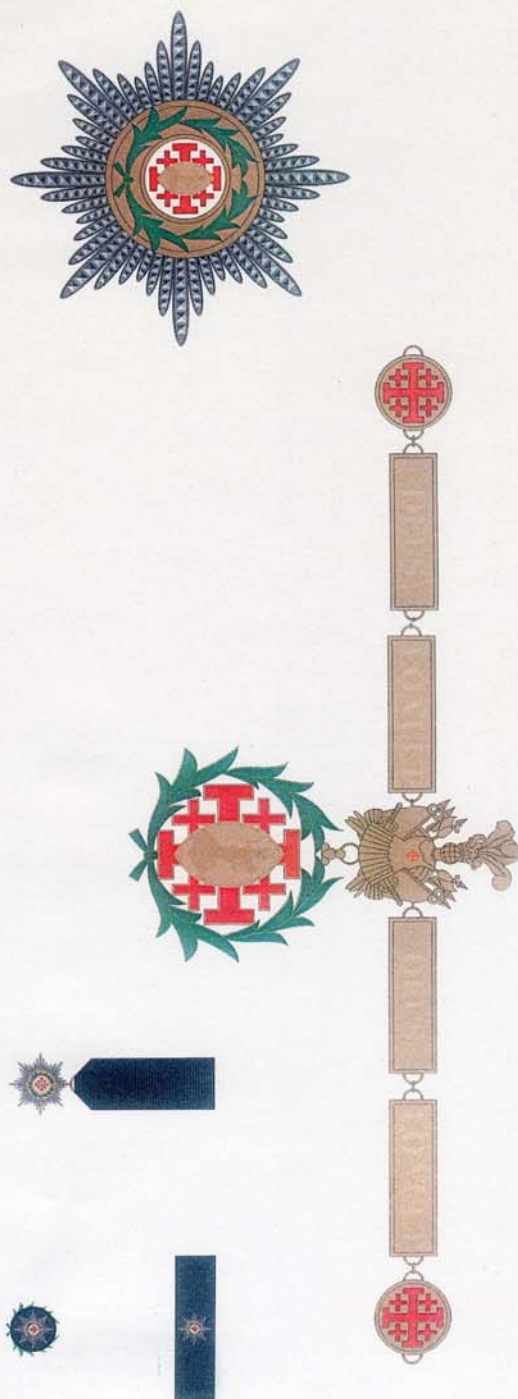
4-Decoration of The Commander:

The Cross of Jerusalem, enamelled in red, has a military trophy engraved at the top. The complete pendant hangs from a black silk ribbon around the collar.

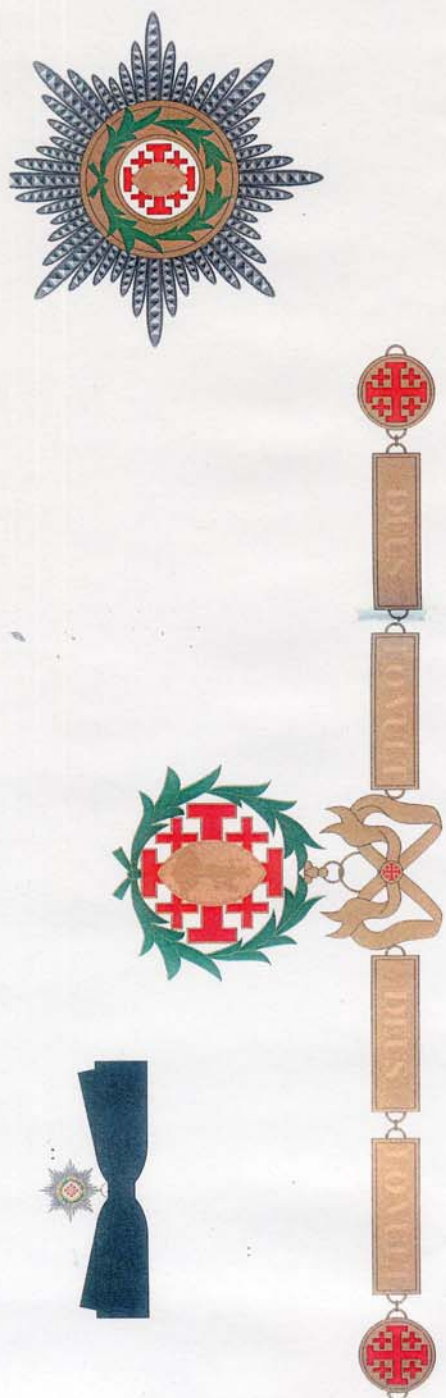
5-Decoration of The Knights:

The Cross of Jerusalem, enamelled in red, has a military trophy engraved at the top. The complete pendant hangs from a black silk ribbon around the collar, yet is smaller than that of The Commander.

Cavaliere di Collare



Dama di Collare



Cavaliere di Gran Croce



Dama di Gran Croce



Commendatore con Placca



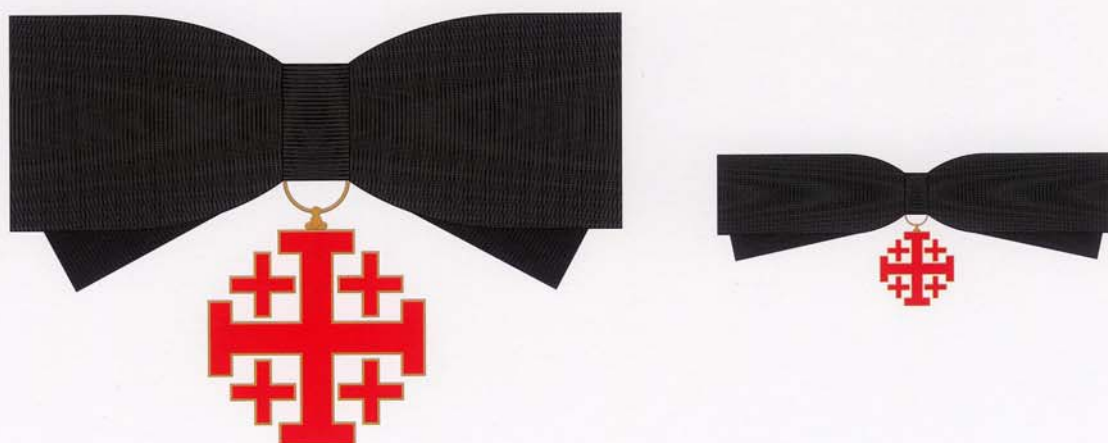
Dama di Commenda con Placca



Dama di Commenda



Dama



Commendatore



Cavaliere



Head dress:



Beret in black worn to the right, with the imprint of the badge of rank at the base.

Capes:

A long white cape for Knights, black for Ladies, with a 25cm Red Cross of Jerusalem on the left side.



The Lady wears a cape and veil, The Knight in civil attire with the white cape and beret.



Dignitary in cape, Prelate with shorter version of cape of The Order.

Decoration of Merit (art. 13 of Statute):

The Cardinal Grand Master has the power to confer three different Honours of Merit. Having been generous towards The Church and Holy Land, these people, even though they will not necessarily continue these actions of charity unlike the Knights and Ladies, receive the Honour as recognition for good actions.

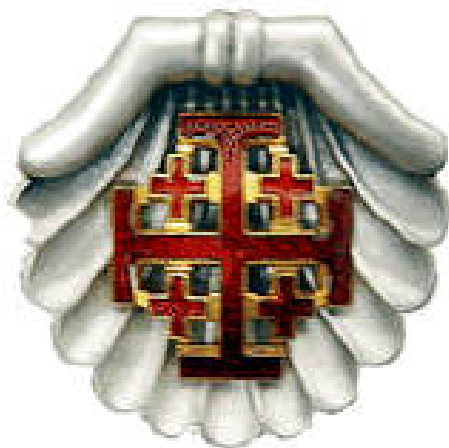
Merit, according to the different classes:

- a) The Cross of Merit of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem;**
- b) The Cross with Silver Badge of Merit of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem;**
- c) The Cross with Golden Badge of Merit of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.**

Special Distinction (art. 14 of Statute):

The Special Distinctions of The Order are:

- 1) The Palm of Jerusalem (in gold, Silver and bronze), awarded by The Cardinal Grand Master to whom is free from sin, and generous towards The Order;**
- 2) The Shell of the Pilgrim, awarded by The Cardinal Grand Master, or The Patriarch of Jerusalem to Knights and Ladies (Dames), who have done a religious pilgrimage to The Holy Land.**



REGULATION ABOUT THE USE OF THE DECORATION

The regulations pertaining to the use of the uniform are:

The decorations and awards have to be worn according as following:

Medals, Crosses, Stars, and Ribbons have to be worn from a sash from which the award is hanging from the centre to the left side.

The sash is next to each other but not overlapping.

The Insignia of Commander is worn around the neck.

The Badge of Dignity of The Grand Official and of The Knights of The Grand Cross is worn to the left side of the chest, from the centre towards the left, top to bottom.

The sash of the Knights of The Grand Cross is worn from the right shoulder to the left hip.

Tail-coats:

The tail-coat is worn with a single sash of The Knights of The Grand Cross, with a single Honour/award of The Commandership.

Knights may wear more than one badge; other decoration may be worn in miniature form on the left crease of the tail-coat. The sash of The Knights is worn under the waist coat (or vest) of the tail-coat, with the exception of events where the Head of State or The Cardinal Grand Master are present. In this case, the sash is worn over the waist coat.

The ribbon of Commandership is worn under the knot of the tie.

Black Tie/Tuxedo:

Only the decoration in miniature form is worn on the left lapel of the jacket: or a single decoration may be worn instead.

Official Attire:

A single small award may be worn.

All Knights are asked to follow rigorously these regulations, to respect The Order.

THE INIATION CERIMONY FOR THE KNIGHTS OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

When The Court of nominees and Members of The Order enter The Church, the priest, wearing the official liturgical attire to celebrate the mass, first kneels to the altar, and turns to welcome The Court. The Master of Ceremonies (a Knight) and two knights, carrying the sword and spurs, enter the church. Following them, the Knight nominees, with their cloak and beret hung over the left arm, enter the church two at a time, followed by the Lady (Dame) nominees, also two at a time.

The male nominees take their place to the left side of the church, facing the altar, The Lady (Dame) nominees behind them. The Knights, with the Ladies (Dames) of The Knighthood seated behind, on the right side of the church.

The Ecclesiastic nominees awaiting initiation have an area reserved. There is a special kneeling or genuflection reserved for The Deputy. Some Knights are assigned particular positions to be of assistance during the mass, to hand The Master of Ceremonies the sword and spurs, to present the insignias to The Ecclesiastical Master of Ceremonies and to tie the ribbons around the necks of the newly initiated Knights and Ladies (Dames).

The Deputy bestows the cloak.

Everyone returns to their place, The Celebrant may say a few words to greet the new Members, and then the Holy Mass begins.

The reading of The Gospel is made by either a Knight of Lady (Dame);

The Master of Ceremonies reads the diploma, mentioning the names of the nominees.

Reading their names, the candidates are accompanied by a designated Knight to the left side, forming one or more files depending on the number. They remain standing.

After the reading The Celebrant, questions them all.

The candidates respond individually.

When all new Knights have been initiated, The Master of Ceremonies places the sword on each Knight, who at this moment is kneeling. The Knights also receive from The Celebrant the cross and insignia of The Order, while the assistant Knights alternatively tie the cords of the cross around their necks.

The Celebrant says once only:

“Receive the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ as he will protect you.

In order to receive the blessing, repeat after me:

“Christ we adore you and we bless you as your suffering has redeemed us and the world”.

The Celebrant gives the cross and the insignia to the Ladies of The Order who then must put it on. Then The Celebrant says:

“Now that you are Ladies of The Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, you have to be like those generous followers of Jesus Christ”.

“Your thoughts and actions will forever be dedicated to The Holy Land and The Church in order to deserve the blessing of God”.