



# An Introduction to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem



The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (EOHSJ) is a nine-hundred-year-old organization with a mission of critical need today: to help preserve Christianity in the Holy Land. It is a lay order under the protection of the Holy See with members worldwide who actively support the Latin Patriarch (the Archbishop of Jerusalem) with prayers, donations and a presence through pilgrimages. Practicing Catholics who actively support their diocese and parish may be nominated to be members of the Order.

## What is the Holy Sepulchre?

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre dates to the First Crusade in 1099 when Jerusalem was reopened to allow pilgrims to enter. The current mission of the Order began under Pope Pius IX in 1847 when the Latin Patriarch was re-established in Jerusalem. The Universal Church has now entrusted specifically our Order with the very special mission to work for the Church's survival and for its development in the Land of Christ.

The objectives of the Order established by succeeding popes are:

- To strengthen in its members the practice of Christian life, observing the principles of charity which make the Order a fundamental means of assistance to the Holy Land;
- To sustain and aid the charitable, cultural and social works and institutions of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land; and,
- To support the preservation and propagation of the Faith in those lands, and promote interest in this work, not only among those who are united in charity by the symbol of the Order, but also among all other Christians.

Today our efforts in the Holy Land:

- provide 81% of the budget of the Latin Patriarchate
- support 40 schools with 19,000 students
- build new churches, convents as well as parish renovations
- give aid to refugees, orphanages, the elderly and the sick

The Holy Sepulchre is a worldwide Order of over 24,000 members that is led by His Eminence Edwin Cardinal O'Brien, Grand Master. The Order is divided geographically into lieutenancies. The Southwestern Lieutenancy is composed of the four-state area of Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The Grand Prior of the Southwestern Lieutenancy is His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo. The Lieutenancy is organized by diocese, with a member or couple appointed by the Bishop as Section Representative(s) for each diocese.

## What are the functions of the Order?

There is one annual meeting of members of the Southwestern Lieutenancy which is held over a weekend in the middle of October. The location of the meeting rotates among cities within the Lieutenancy. This meeting is the Investiture and Annual Meeting in which new members are knighted by the Grand Prior, eligible members receive promotions and a discussion of the state of the Order is held. During the weekend, there is daily mass including two spiritually moving masses - a Mass of Promotion and Remembrance on Saturday afternoon and the Investiture Mass on Sunday afternoon. There is also Adoration from Saturday night to Sunday morning. The weekend includes a black tie dinner on Saturday night and a white tie and tails dinner on Sunday night. There is also an opportunity to attend local social events on Friday night and Saturday morning.

In addition to the annual meeting, each diocese holds at least one meeting locally to award the certificates of investiture and promotion. Members are also asked to attend Mass of the feast days of the Order: St. Helena (August 18), St. Pius X (August 21), The Triumph of the Cross (September 14) and Our Lady of Palestine (last Sunday of October). Members are also asked to attend the funeral of members when requested by the family.

## What is asked of a member of the Order?

To become a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, one must:

- Be a practicing Catholic;
- Have been married in the Catholic Church, if married;
- Pledge an oath of allegiance to the Pope which is administered at the Investiture.
- Purchase a cape, and beret or mantilla. Make an annual donation to the Holy Sepulchre. (The current requested amount is \$1,000 per person.)
- Make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during your lifetime. (The Southwestern Lieutenancy offers several pilgrimages each year.)