

SPEECH OF THE GM TO THE POSTULANTS

NOVEMBER 2019

Dear Postulants,

In the old times Knighthood was so important that it was considered like a second birth and soon you will become knights exactly like the Knights of the old times, Knights of our Sovereign Order but also citizens of our State, this is why, for such an important moment in your lives we have chosen as venue for this Ceremony the Sacra Infermeria, which probably is the most significant historical place of the old Sovereign Order of St. John, of which our Federation of Priories is the direct, legal and Sovereign descendant.

This place is very meaningful to us, Knights of St. John, because we are also known as Knights of the Hospital, or as Knights of Malta, and its meaning resides in the fact that this was not only the most advanced hospital in the World at that time, but it was a hospital where Knights of St. John, the Maltese soldiers and common people were given treatment for their illnesses or for their wounds and injuries received in the many battles that they had to fight in defence of the free trade in the Mediterranean but also in defence of the integrity of Europe itself.

Malta is the place where so few did so much for so many, and today I would like to remember the wise words of Rev. Martin Luther King, as an homage to our American Knights present here:

Once Rev King said that *“almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better”*. and from this day on you are part of this very restricted and glorious minority this is why I am sure that you will never forget this day, nor my words, so I will talk to you about one of the most important virtues of knighthood of all times: I will speak to you about Commitment!

Our Sovereign Order exists for nearly one thousand years, not only because it is based on principles and on virtues, and not on opportunistic interests; but it survived for almost Ten Centuries due to the commitment of its Knights. Knights who fought in the past and who fight in our days. Times passed but our fight did not, so, now as in the past we fight for providing a better health care to those who need, we fight to destroy the walls that divide peoples and nations and instead of walls we build bridges that may unite peoples, cultures and religions, we fight for human respect and dignity of all the men and women, we fight for a better Education and we invite you, dear Postulants to join our fight.

Be sure that we will not change the World, whoever, with Commitment, we, all together, will make the difference and for one thousand years that the Knights of St. John have been making the difference in this World. This is why we are so famous.

Our Sovereign Order is now, as it was in the past an Order of Nobles and, as we believe in the Christian and Humanistic principle that all men are born equal to the eyes of God and only their actions and their deeds make them different: some by their acts and by their commitment in doing Good become nobles, others by their bad acts become villains. So, the true nobility resides, now, as in the past, in our actions and in our Commitment, therefore I can say that we continue being an Order of Noblemen.

In fact, without the true commitment and the work and support of our Knights and Dames our Sovereign Order and Our State would be nothing, that is why we are not interested in persons who want to become Knights or Dames for the Honours, for the titles and for the medals and who, after their being knighted, keep their Mantel in the wardrobe forever and keep the decoration and the diploma hanging on a wall to show to their friends and visitors how important they are.

Our Decorations are granted to you not only in honour of your past, but mainly as a burden for your future, a burden that reminds you the obligation of serving all of those in need with tolerance, with humbleness, with honesty, with dedication above all with true commitment and that is what we expect from you!

You can only be proud of being one of us, if first we can be proud of each and everyone of you and together we must deserve each other.

You, dear Postulants, are the seeds of the Future of the Order of St. John and that reminds me of William Shakespeare who in 1606 wrote in scene 3 of the first act of Macbeth that:

"If you can look into the seeds of time and say which grain will grow and which will not, speak then unto me."

Today, dear Postulants, I am sure that you are the seeds which will grow and which will bloom.

In a few minutes, you will be the newest links of a long and glorious chain of knights, committed to fight for their principles and committed to assist those who are ill or in need, a chain that is about 1.000 years old and every corner of this island speak to you about its glory.

This is your challenge dear Postulants, this is why we continue to exist through times and this is what we expect from you: Commitment!

Be welcome to your new family!

2nd November 2019