

SPEECH OF THE GRAND MASTER TO THE POSTULANTS

Chateau Belá, 17th June 2023

Dear Postulants,

As you all know our Sovereign Order was created in Jerusalem 975 years ago in the year 1048 and only 65 years after, in the year 1113 the Pope issued a Bull recognizing the Order and granting to it many privileges so, soon after, Our Order was recognized as a Sovereign State by several other European States.

Since then, Our Order has been in many battles and in many wars always defending Freedom and protecting the poor, the weak, the vulnerable and those who were ill, and even when 225 years ago Our Sovereign Order and State lost its territory in Malta, we continued our Hospitaller mission.

Presently, again, the World lives times of War, so we are even more needed and more important for the vulnerable now than before.

In fact War is an issue that has plagued the human history since the beginning of Mankind, so we should be used to it, but we are not and we will never be.

Motivated by the ambition of some leaders but normally disguised as a political, ideological or religious conflict, the results of War are violence, destruction, death, grief and poverty and its impact is not limited to the combatants alone, since Civilians too, are caught in, and their lives are forever changed. Women, children, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable victims, and they will bear the brunt of the suffering for the rest of their lives.

Peace, on the other hand, is a state of Harmony and Tranquillity, however Peace is not the absence of War, Peace is the absence of Violence and Misery, Starvation, Disease, Poverty, Illiteracy and Child Abuse are forms of Violence, so, even not living in a war zone we can not say that we are in Peace in our countries.

Peace requires the effort and cooperation of individuals, communities, and nations, and it is exactly here that our Sovereign Order and State, as legitimate and direct successors of the old and glorious Order of the Knights of St John, also known as Knights of the Hospital or Knights of Malta, plays an important role in the World.

As individuals we can contribute to the promotion of Peace by embracing Tolerance, Respect, and Understanding in our interactions with others and we can also support initiatives that promote Peace and encourage peaceful conflict resolution, but alone, each one of us can do very little, only together and united by the same ideals we can do something of significant importance.

This is what our Sovereign Order and State has been doing for almost one thousand years and now as in the past, each one of you is important to us, each one of you really counts.

Of course we are not going to change the World, but we are, and want to continue being, a beacon and an example of Tolerance, and Respect for People and for Nature. Our World would crumble without good examples.

We build Bridges, not Walls, We fight not against anyone but we fight for Peace, Development, Progress and Understanding and like this we are at the service to Mankind, and the service to Mankind is the most noble pursuit that we, as Knights and Dames of St John, have constantly upheld and promoted, because It is deeply rooted in the fundamental principles of humanity, which are to help others and to make a positive impact in the World.

Service to Mankind enriches us in ways beyond measure, as we are able to make a tangible difference in the lives of those we assist and serve.

Service to Mankind is a collective responsibility and we are dedicated to providing assistance to all those who seek it, regardless of their background, beliefs, or circumstances.

Dear Postulants, you are here today to be Knighted, because you share our objectives and our ideals, so we expect from you that you join us in our humanitarian work.

As Knights and Dames of St John, Knights and Dames of Malta, together, we can make a difference in the World and we can help to create a better tomorrow for the generations to come.

Be welcome to your new family.