



SOVRANO MILITARE ORDINE OSPEDALIERO
DI SAN GIOVANNI DI GERUSALEMME DI RODI E DI MALTA

UFFICIO COMUNICAZIONI

Declaration of the Grand Magistry of the Sovereign Order of Malta following recent defamatory articles

4 July 2019

Sovereignty and independence

The Order of Malta has never been 'taken over' by the Vatican. The Order of Malta maintains its independence and sovereignty: its government decisions are taken by its legitimate organs and its legally elected leadership. What has improved considerably are the relations between the Holy See and the Order. These have allowed the Order to overcome the crisis of December 2016, as a result of the wrong decisions taken by the then Grand Master, encouraged by advisers who promoted personal interests that were contrary to the mission and spirit of the Order.

Judgment of the Hamburg Regional Court

The ruling of the Hamburg Regional Court did not establish that Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager was aware of the distribution of UNHCR's aid packages containing contraceptives, before this fact was discovered by Malteser International in November 2013. The declaration under oath of the Grand Chancellor to the Court has never been called into question. The Court's ruling confirmed the views expressed by the Grand Chancellor and ordered the online newspaper Kath.net to pay two-thirds of the costs of the trial. The same Regional Court, in another ruling, prohibited any statement indicating that Albrecht Boeselager had instigated the distribution projects (LG Hamburg - 324 O 49/17).

Grand Prior of England

It is not true that the Grand Prior of England, Fra' Ian Scott, was "fired". Fra' Ian Scott's mandate as Grand Prior of England ended in June 2017. The Sovereign Council then decided to extend his mandate until the 2019 Chapter General. Following Fra' Ian Scott's decision to move to Rome, and at his own suggestion in order to ensure the continued functioning of the Grand Priory of England, the Sovereign Council of 20 June 2019 appointed Fra' Maxwell Rumney as the Grand Priory's Procurator.

Portuguese Association

Following difficulties registered in the Portuguese Association and at the request of a large number of its members, in December 2017 the Sovereign Council appointed a Professed member of the Order as the Magistral Delegate to the Association. His task was to promote the reorganisation of the Association, ensure its unity and supervise a transition in its leadership. The new Council, appointed March 14, 2019, was ratified by a very large majority of the Assembly of the Portuguese Association, thus restoring its normal institutional life.

Delegation of Rome

The resignation of the Council of the Delegation of Rome has nothing to do with the Grand Magistry. This resignation was caused by internal dynamics within the Grand Priory of Rome.

Scandinavian Association

The Grand Magistry did not intervene in the recent, freely elected President and Council senior officers of the Scandinavian Association.

Celebrations in the ordinary form of the Roman Rite

The legitimacy of the Grand Master's decision that the official religious ceremonies of the Order be celebrated according to the ordinary form of the Roman Rite has been confirmed by numerous experts in Canon Law.

Even before this decision, almost all of the Order of Malta's religious ceremonies were celebrated in the ordinary form.

The Grand Master's decision aims to promote unity and cohesion among the Order's members.

The Order's Chaplains can continue to celebrate in the extraordinary form and members of the Order can attend the Tridentine Mass. This is their right and choice, provided that it does not involve the official celebrations of the Order.

Stricter observance of the vows made by the religious members of the Order

Between December 2007 and December 2016 the number of religious members of the Order increased from 57 to 59, that is, by just two new members net of the deceased.

Years of relaxation and a small number of new vocations have led to the current effort to introduce a new rule of life for the professed members which responds to the Holy Father's request to "reaffirm the profile of the professed according to the identity of the consecrated life in the Church". A central part of the ongoing reform concerns a more rigorous observance of the vows made by the religious members of the Order. In taking the vow of poverty, all those who enter the class of the Order's religious members renounce the independent use of temporal goods.

The misleading statement that the decision to strengthen coherence with the vows taken - obedience, poverty and chastity - hides the objective of forcing some of our religious to leave the Order is both misleading and untrue.

Swiss fund donation

The Grand Magistry of the Order carried out due diligence to verify the origin of the Swiss Fund 'Caritas Pro Vitae Gradu Charitable Trust' money. This has been publicly stated on a number of occasions. The information obtained was that the money had a legitimate origin. When several articles subsequently published questioned the legality of the funds, it was decided to submit the matter to further independent analysis. The second due diligence exercise, carried out by Promontory Financial Group, headquartered in Washington DC, examined more than 100 documents relating to the Fund's origin and conducted nine interviews. No evidence of illegality was found. A final evaluation was carried out by the Order of Malta's Board of Auditors. It determined that all questions in relation to the Fund had been answered positively and that the Order could accept the donation.

There is no suggestion of money laundering nor of lack of transparency, nor of any personal interest in this matter. Such suggestions would constitute the basis for possible legal action.

Albrecht Boeselager's reinstatement as Grand Chancellor in January 2017 had nothing to do with the Swiss Fund. The Vatican did not obtain an economic benefit from such reinstatement and has never received any part of this donation.

Leadership of the Grand Master

Since his election in April 2017, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto has been able to restore relations with the Holy See to the highest level. He has received numerous expressions of esteem wherever he has gone - in Italy and abroad - characterising his government through his deep spirituality, vocation of service and exemplary life.

His mandate as the head of the Order - in addition to his spiritual charism and his profound culture - is evidenced in his extensive knowledge of the Order of Malta, his 40 years of service, and his commitment in numerous senior institutional positions, which he has held in both local and central structures of the Order.

Appointment of the Cardinalis Patronus

In 2014 the Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Boeselger, did not repeatedly ask the Vatican that Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke not be named as Cardinalis Patronus. Nor did he subsequently ask for this nomination to be revoked.

Alleged German hegemony

In the recent General Chapter (held 1 and 2 May 2019), 67 members were entitled to vote: among the nationalities, 3 are German, 16 are Italian, 6 are English, 5 are French.

Of the 16 members elected to the Sovereign Council and the Government Council of the Order, only two belong to the German Association.