



# The Holy See

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POPE FRANCIS

## DECREE FOR THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM, OF RHODES AND OF MALTA (S.M.O.M.)

The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta has always enjoyed special protection from the Apostolic See.

The Roman Pontiffs on numerous occasions – starting with Pope Paschal II, who approved the Order with the Bull *Pie postulatio voluntatis*, assuring it of protection and granting it rights and privileges - have intervened to affirm its identity, to maintain its operations, to help overcome crises, and to guarantee the existence and development of the Hospitaller Order, including its sovereign prerogatives in the international sphere.

According to the Judgement of 24 January 1953, issued by the Court of Cardinals instituted on 10 December 1951 with the chirograph of my predecessor Pope Pius XII, of venerable memory, the “prerogatives inherent to the Order [...] as a subject of international law [...], which are proper to sovereignty, [...] do not constitute in the Order that complex of powers and prerogatives, which is proper to sovereign entities in the full sense of the word”. Indeed, the Order is “a religious Order, approved by the Holy See [...]. It pursues not only the sanctification of its members, but also religious, charitable and welfare purposes”. Moreover, “The two qualities of sovereign Order and religious Order [...] are intimately connected. The quality of the Institution as a sovereign Order is functional, that is, directed to ensuring the achievement of the Order's ends and its development in the world” (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 45 [1953], 765-767).

Therefore, being a religious Order, it depends, in its various articulations, on the Holy See.

With paternal solicitude and concern, I have followed the progress of the Order over these years, appreciating the works carried out in various parts of the world, also thanks to the generous contribution of Members and Volunteers, and also noting the need to initiate a profound spiritual,

moral and institutional renewal of the entire Order, especially and not only of the Members of the First Class, but also of those of the Second Class.

To this end, I entrusted my Special Delegate, Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi, C.S., with this important work of reform, as well as the revision of the Constitutional Charter and the Melitense Code, and the preparation of the Extraordinary General Chapter. Many steps have been taken, but likewise many impediments and difficulties have been encountered along the way.

After having listened to and engaged in dialogue with various representatives of the Order, the time has come to complete the renewal process initiated, in fidelity to the original charism. To safeguard the unity and greater good of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta:

### I PROMULGATE

The new Constitutional Charter and the relative Melitense Code, approved by myself, ordering their immediate entry into force, and

### I DECREE

1. The revocation of the High Offices;
2. the dissolution of the present Sovereign Council;
3. the constitution of a provisional Sovereign Council, consisting of the following members

- H.E. Fra' Emmanuel Rousseau - *Grand Commander*
- H.E. Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo - *Grand Chancellor*
- H.E. Fra' Alessandro de Franciscis - *Grand Hospitaller*
- H.E. Fabrizio Colonna - *Receiver of the Common Treasure;*

and by:

- H.E. Fra' Roberto Viazzo
- H.E. Fra' Richard Wolff
- H.E. Fra' John Eidinow

- H.E. Fra' João Augusto Esquivel Freire de Andrade

- H.E. Fra' Mathieu Dupont

- H.E. Antonio Zanardi Landi

- H.E. Michael Grace

- H.E. Francis Joseph McCarthy

- H.E. Mariano Hugo Windisch-Graetz;

4. the convocation of the Extraordinary General Chapter for 25 January 2023, the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, which will be held in accordance with the new Regulations approved by myself. The Extraordinary General Chapter will be prepared by my Special Delegate and the Lieutenant Grand Master, assisted by the Provisional Sovereign Council;

I confirm all the faculties attributed in the past to my Special Delegate until the conclusion of the Extraordinary General Chapter, which will be presided over jointly by him and by the Lieutenant of the Grand Master.

This, notwithstanding any rule or provision of law to the contrary, as well as any privilege or custom, even worthy of note, that may be contrary to this decision of mine.

Finally, I decree that this Decree shall enter into force on today's date and be notified to the entire Order.

*From the Vatican, 3 September 2022*

FRANCIS

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