

“CRONACHE COSTANTINIANE”

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER OF SAINT GEORGE

Jubilee Insert for the Bulletin of December 2000 - Numbers 13-14



THE PRESS CONFERENCE

To inform journalists about the Jubilee of the Constantinian Order of Saint George, this past October 2 a press conference and presentation was held in the modern Press Room of the Roman Agency for the Jubilee. The program for the jubilee day, the spiritual motivations, and the initiatives and activities of the Order were presented to journalists attending as well as those connected via the direct telecommunications link to the Vatican Press Office. The Duke and Duchess of Calabria were welcomed by the Director of the Roman Agency, Dr. Erich Kusch, who welcomed them in the name of the City of Rome and addressed a welcome to all those present. After a brief discourse by H.R.H. the Prince Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Calabria, (see below) Monsignor Guido Manzetti explained the motivations that led the Order to celebrate the Jubilee together with its Knights and Dames.

Monsignor Manzetti was followed by Professor Leonardo Saviano, personal assistant of the Duke of Calabria, who spoke about the deep historical roots of the Order. Attorney Marco Cecilia outlined the juridical characteristics of the Order, while the Prince Sforza Ruspoli offered the personal testimony of a Knight. The press conference was concluded by Attorney Piero Cutelli who presented the various initiatives organized by the Order's Delegation of Lombardy. After the speakers responded to numerous questions from the journalists, the Prince Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Calabria and Grand Prefect of the Constantinian Order, together with the Princess Camilla, visited the offices of the Agency in the company of its Director, Dr. Kusch, greeting the journalists present.

The Message of H.R.H. Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Calabria

As Grand Prefect of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George as well as in the name of my father, Ferdinando, Duke of Castro and Grand Master of the Order, I want to welcome all those present.

Necessarily, a thought goes out to the dear figure of our Grand Prior, His Eminence, Cardinal Vincenzo Fagiolo, recently deceased, whose high moral stature was and will be for us a guide and a stimulus as well as an example.

My best wishes for your work come from knowledge of your professionalism, which enables you to wisely interpret the activity of the Order. I am therefore happy to entrust to you the task of making known the celebration of the Constantinian Jubilee and its significance for religious commitment and charitable and relief activity.

Those who will follow me will be able to furnish you with all the necessary information concerning the upcoming initiatives of the Constantinian Order as well as the significance, which we intend to give to the jubilee day this October 7.

All of our initiatives, which are deeply rooted in listening to each of our Delegations, will find in this jubilee observance new strength.

In thanking all the Dames and Knights of the Order for their continued commitment, I renew my appreciation for your work, knowing that you will gather together the true aspects of the activities of one of the most ancient knightly Orders.

Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Calabria

U

THE DAY

Vatican City – It began in the early hours of the morning when the bells of the Basilica of Saint Peter sounded at eight. A flow which became slowly more constant until a large group made up of hundreds of Knights and Dames gathered at the obelisk. October 7, a significant day for the Church universal which, for the second time in history, would welcome into the Vatican Basilica the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Fatima. In fact, the Constantinian Order had decided to celebrate its Jubilee on October 7 by “escorting” with its Knights and Dames the statue of the Madonna.

After meeting at the Obelisk of in Saint Peter’s Square, thousands of knights moved in procession towards the entrance of the Basilica, passing through the Holy Door and proceeding to participate in the Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration presided by His Eminence, Cardinal Alfons Maria Stickler. At the head of the procession were T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of Castro and their son, Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Castro and Grand Prefect of the Order, accompanied by the Princess Camilla as well as his sister, the Princess Beatrice. Among the Knights, in addition to the high officers of the Royal Deputation, were the various national and international Delegates as well as guests of honor and personalities from the world of culture. From the square, the procession arrived at the entrance of the basilica. After passing through the Holy Door, there was a brief moment of prayer before the statue of Our Lady, the members of the Royal Family being among the first to render homage to the miraculous image.

Then everyone took their places before the Altar of the Chair to participate in the Eucharistic Celebration. The Choir directed by Maestro Monsignor Pablo Colino, Constantinian Knight, animated the liturgy. Concelebrating with His Eminence, Cardinal Alfons Maria Stickler, were some Bishops and numerous priests of the Order. During his homily, Cardinal Stickler underlined the importance of this moment of prayer for the Knights and Dames of the Order as well as the Marian dimension, which the presence of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima lent to the jubilee celebration. In the first row, the Royal Family was accompanied by some Knights in the long blue mantles with the Constantinian Cross.

At the conclusion of the celebration, the Knights and Dames in procession made a brief stop before the statue of the *Pietà* by Michelangelo before visiting the Tombs of the Popes, opened especially for the Order in consideration of its jubilee observance. After the visit, the Royal Family moved from Vatican City to the Via della Conciliazione to the *Sala Baglivi* on the Borgo Santo Spirito for a conference on “The Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George: Perspectives for the New Millennium”. Before the conference, the Royal Family, welcomed by the leading administrators of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, visited the beautiful frescoed halls and admired the hospital’s monumental library.

The conference, followed by all the Knights and Dames via simultaneous translation, had some of the most prestigious speakers from the world of culture, international voluntarism, and politics. After H.R.H. the Duke of Calabria and Grand Prefect of the Order spoke, Donna Mariapia Fanfani presented the highlights of humanitarian action. Senator-for-Life Giulio Andreotti then recalled the Rome of the Popes and the close relationship between the Royal Family and Blessed Pope Pius IX. Professor Antonino Zichichi spoke on the relationship between science and faith, while Professor Roberto de Mattei presented perspectives on the Order of which we publish below some excerpts.

At the end of the conference, the Royal Family went, together with the Knights and Dames of the Order, to the Hotel Columbus for a luncheon, accompanied by traditional Neapolitan music. In the afternoon, the jubilee celebration was concluded with the prayer of the rosary before the Marian image in Saint Peter’s Square together with His Holiness.

The Message of H.R.H. Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Calabria

Rome, October 7, 2000

Lord Cardinals, Most Reverend Excellencies, Monsignori,
Royal Highnesses, Distinguished Guests, Dear Knights and Dames:

October 7 is a special day for our Order: the occasion of celebrating the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 has permitted us, for the first time in the history of our Order, to gather together such a large representation of the Members of the Order from the different Delegations.

The choice of this date was not accidental: the happy opportunity to be able to pray together with the Holy Father before the image of Our Lady of Fatima, together with the

Bishops of the world, permits us to remember the message of conversion which She entrusts to all who struggle in our Order. We feel honored to be able to participate this afternoon in the Rosary to be prayed by true pilgrims, like the ancient “*romei*”¹ who came from every part of the world to render homage to the Vicar of Christ.

Today we feel like the Church, together with all our brethren who share our same experience of faith, united around the Holy Father, under the sign of the Cross and under the protection of our Patron, the martyr Saint George.

I am happy to announce, also in the name of my August Father, that the suggestion of the Holy Father to give a generous offering to those who suffer because of the recent disasters in Calabria has been enthusiastically received.

We therefore turn our thoughts to those dear people who are faced with many emergencies, especially in Locride, heavily hit by the recent floods.

Our Sacred Order enters today into the third millennium of the Christian Era. We hope that it will be always stronger and more committed, counting on the personal commitment of each individual.

Only with the real commitment of one who shares its goals will each Member be able to be a promoter of the glorification of the Cross and the propagation of the Faith.

In conformity with the necessities of the times, our commitment in the social arena will be realized especially in hospitalier assistance and Christian charity.

The efforts of each Delegation must be directed to the realization of these activities, pursuing projects which have already been initiated and which already have borne satisfying results.

Different Delegations are already carrying out activities to meet the needs of the elderly, such as the creation of centers where each of those we assist can find not only comfort, but special, medical, and social assistance.

The historical tradition of our Order continues to be connected to a better knowledge of the history of southern Italy and a better evaluation of the potential of her people. With exhibits, conferences, and various other initiatives, we must make an effort to keep alive the memory of the South with its glorious past and ancient traditions.

It is, in fact, to the Delegations of the South of Italy, so close to the heart of our Family, that we want to express our deepest gratitude for all they have done and all they will do to render ever more rooted and important the presence of the Constantinian Order in their respective Regions.

A thanks also to the other Delegations of Italy and abroad.

With your support, today our Militia, beside the official recognition which it enjoys on an institutional and international level, can also be proud of the appreciation which comes to it, not only from its centuries-old historical-knightly tradition, but also from its increasing presence wherever there is need for assistance and help to the suffering and to those in need.

The commitment which the Order continues to require of each Member is to assist those who suffer, to spread the Faith, to serve the Holy Roman Catholic Church, especially in carrying out those projects which make clear today, as in centuries past, the relevance of the Constantinian Order.

¹ *Editor's Note:* The “*romei*” were the medieval pilgrims who traveled along to pilgrim roads of Europe to come to the shrines of the Eternal City.

Now with pleasure I yield to our distinguished guests: Donna Mariapia Fanfani, who is dedicated internationally to carrying out important humanitarian missions and projects; Senator-for-Life Giulio Andreotti, who will recall the Rome of the Popes; Professor Antonino Zichichi, scientist who will deal with the difficult relationship between faith and science; and Professor Roberto de Mattei, distinguished historian who will speak about the relevance of our Order. I yield to them the floor, expressing to all of you the thanks of the Grand Master as well as my own, wishing you all the best.

Carlo of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Calabria

U

***HISTORIAN DE MATTEI:
"THE MESSAGE OF THE ORDER IS ALWAYS RELEVANT"***

Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Jubilee represents a good opportunity to rediscover our identity as the Constantinian family. The Constantinian Order, in order to continue to living and developing, must be itself. History says that the Constantinian Order is a family order, united not to a State, but to a dynasty. This dynasty is today the Royal House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, heir of the House of Farnese, which in 1731 transferred the Order along with its patrimony to the Prince Carlo of Bourbon, sovereign of Parma and, subsequently, of Naples and Sicily. The Farnese, in turn, received the Magistracy of the Order in 1697 from the imperial dynasty of the Comnenii, emigrants to West after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The remote origins of the Order go back to the Eastern Roman Empire, constituted by Constantine the Great, the Emperor to who was responsible for the foundation of what one 17th century writer, Andrea Guarino, described as "this order of Knights, the most noble and most ancient of all those which have ever been erected".

Going back in time, however, the documentation is more uncertain, tradition substitutes for history, legend builds up around tradition. According to this tradition, the origins of the Constantinian Order go back to the famous vision of Constantine in which, as he prepared to do battle against the Emperor Maxentius, he saw a cross with motto "*in hoc signo vinces*". Constantine affixed the Cross to a *Labarum* which he decreed would be accompanied in every expedition by fifty of the most valiant warriors of his army who enjoyed consular and senatorial dignity. This chosen Legion was the first nucleus of Christian chivalry. The Order was called "Sacred Military" because of its religious and military character; "Imperial" because its was instituted, approved, and conferred by the Emperors of the East; and "Angelic" because it was founded by the dynasty of the Angelii Flavii Comnenii.

The crowning this ideal continuity for more than a thousand years, represented by the Constantinian *Labarum*, is a second phase, the modern history of the Order which is characterized especially by fidelity to the Church and the Papacy. This needs to be underlined since – even as the long history of the presence of the Constantinian Knights in the East is covered in the glory of a struggle, especially against the Turks, and of participation in historic battles, such as that of the Field of the Black Birds in Kosovo in 1389 – it was under the banner of the an Emperor that in 1054 the Schism occurred and the Order was separated from Rome.

Thus fidelity to the Roman Church became one of the essential elements of the Order's identity in its life in the West beginning in the 16th century. The Church, for her part, recognized with her supreme authority the legitimate series of Grand Masters of the Order, approving the transfer of the Grand Magistracy from the Angelii Comnenii to the Farnese and from the Farnese to the Bourbons, down to their legitimate representative: Ferdinando of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Duke of Castro.

Among the many Popes who protected the Order, beside Saint Pius X, I cannot not mention two who are particularly dear to me: Pius XII, who before becoming Pontiff was a Constantinian Knight (as one can read on the stone plaque in the Basilica of the Holy Cross²) and Pius IX. Fidelity, knightly spirit, disinterested service to the Church: these have been the principal characteristics of the Constantinian Order since the fall of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The primary objective purpose of the Constantinian Order is the glorification of the Cross, the propagation of the Faith, and the defense of the Holy Roman Church. The secondary purposes of the Order, the charitable and relief activities, acquire their significance only in the light of the primary purpose, which must never be forgotten. The Constantinian family, I believe, needs to rediscover in itself a vision based on the relevance of perennial message of the Church, and then to be the herald, with all the means of modern technology, of that message in the lives of its members and in its public activities.

English translation of Italian text prepared and edited by the Rev. Dr. John-Peter Pham

² *Editor's Note:* Professor de Mattei refers to the Basilica of *Santa Croce al Flaminio* in Rome, near the Milvian Bridge, reputed site of the Emperor Constantine's vision. A small chapel in the basilica is dedicated to the Order's Patron, Saint George, and therein is a plaque, erected in 1915, listing among the contributors to the chapel Monsignor Eugenio Pacelli, Knight of Grace.