



RIVISTA 1995

United Nations

The Order of Malta at the General Assembly of the United Nations “THE ORDER’S COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS”

*Address of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta on the Occasion of the Celebration
of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations - 22 October 1995*

Mr. President,

On this happy occasion, the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, it is a great honour for me to give to the General Assembly the greetings of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and its Prince and Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie. Our institution joined this Assembly just over one year ago as Permanent Observer, but it has been a member of the international community for many centuries. We are therefore well qualified to understand - together with all the peoples in the world - the meaning of today's celebration, to rejoice at having accomplished so much, and to co-operate to the fullest in implementing the principles of the Charter. Fifty years ago the creation of the organisation of the United Nations marked the hope for a new era of peace and well-being in the world. An era meant to leave behind the horrors of the biggest war ever known to man, a war that with the introduction of the nuclear weapon had convinced peoples and governments that peace had to be pursued at all costs: a failure of that attempt could mean the destruction of mankind. Today, after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin wall, the hope of a lasting peace in the world appears a much more achievable target than fifty years ago, and it is a great privilege to extend to this General Assembly the wish and the testimony of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta for a constant and meaningful commitment to the community of nations.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, established about nine centuries ago in Jerusalem, today has its seat in Rome. It has diplomatic relations at embassy level with 68 member states of the United Nations, over one third of its present members. This fact by itself explains the status of the Order in the international community, since it is recognised by these members as par inter pares.

The Order of Malta, thanks to its high moral standing, its religious and chivalrous nature, its military traditions which exalt the self-sacrifice, the high-mindedness and the discipline of the Knights of St. John, operates in ninety countries on the five continents. The Order

counts 10,500 members who are able to mobilise thousands of volunteers world-wide for charitable and welfare actions.

Today the flag of the Order flies world-wide over specialised hospitals, clinics, first-aid centres and general surgeries where children, women, the elderly, the disabled and chronic invalids are cared for. These facilities provide medical and pharmaceutical assistance where epidemics are most widespread.

The Order's vocation focuses on assistance and solidarity, especially towards the weakest, those who suffer and the victims of discrimination and intolerance.

The humanitarian aid supplied by the Order has always been among the first to reach the most critical areas of social and civil conflicts. I remember, for example, that during the long years of the civil war in Lebanon, our dispensaries scattered over the entire country took care of thousands of wounded; this was possible because all the fighting parties respected the flag of the Order of Malta with its eight-point cross. Recently, we agreed to contribute to the sanitary needs of the blue helmets in Lebanon and Kuwait, as we did in the past in Central America.

Furthermore, in 1989, the Order gave assistance to thousands of refugees going from East to West Germany through Hungary and Austria.

The Order has also been one of the first to assure humanitarian aid to the former Yugoslavia. The Order looks on its humanitarian assistance as a safeguard of the fundamental values of man and as an indispensable instrument for helping to guarantee international peace and security: without these values, political, military and diplomatic action is not sufficient to establish an international order worthy of man. Inspired by these principles, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, thanks to its political neutrality and its supranational character, can carry out a peacemaking and mediating action, respectful of dialogue and understanding among peoples.

The values and purposes of the Order match well with Article One of the United Nations Charter. The Order, in its capacity as Permanent Observer, is fully available to co-operate with the United Nations, especially in the field of humanitarian assistance. In particular, the Order is ready to offer its co-operation to organise forms of medical assistance in support of peace-keeping operations.

With these observations, the «people» of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta join all the PEOPLES of the United Nations in today's celebration, confirming their commitment to co-operate for an even fuller implementation of the objectives of the United Nations Charter.

Finally, let me express the wish that the beginning of the «second fifty years» of the United Nations, with the help of the Almighty, be the dawn of a new era for future generations. May the United Nations increasingly meet the PEOPLES' ambitions of peace, well-being, social progress and human solidarity.



Città del Vaticano. S.Em.za

Rev.ma il Segretario di Stato, Cardinale Angelo Sodano, in colloquio con S.A. Em.ma il Principe e Gran Maestro Fra' Andrew Bertie, e con il Gran Cancelliere, Amb. Conte Carlo Marullo, dopo l'Udienza Pontificia in occasione della Festa di San Giovanni.

Vatican City. His Most Reverend Highness the State Secretary, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, talking with His Most Eminent Highness the Prince and Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie, and with the Grand Chancellor, Amb. Count Carlo Marullo, after the Papal Hearing in occasion of the feast of St. John.