



***AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SIGNED BETWEEN
THE SOVEREIGN ORDER AND THE MALTESE REPUBLIC***

Malta: The presence of the Knights continues

***“For us the Third Millenium will have
the Sant’Angelo Fort as its reference”***

It is mainly thanks to the Receiver of the Common Treasure, Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, that an agreement was signed between the Sovereign Order and the Republic of Malta for the return of the knights to the island from which they took their name. The International Review has asked him about the exact terms and scope of the agreement.

- *What exactly does this agreement involve from a legal and practical point of view? It grants us the exclusive use of the Magistral Residence and Church of St. Ann in Fort St. Angelo and some of its appurtenances for fifty years.*

- *For what end?*

To carry on activities based on the institutional aims of the Sovereign Order, with the idea of using this historic structure as a meeting point for all the members of the Order of St. John and, above all, for training both individual knights and our future leaders in the prospect of the new goals and new strategies imposed by the imminent third millennium. Therefore this agreement has a twofold scope, on one side the idea of the return to an island to which the knights have given much lustre over the centuries in the defence of the faith in the Mediterranean, and which has now become a symbol for us; and on the other hand, with regards to our commitments of ‘tuitio fidei’ and ‘obsequium pauperum’, the chance to train and upgrade our managerial cadres and to give periodical updates to all those who, in one way or another, feel linked to our Order and who will have the opportunity to reflect on their work and ideals in Fort St. Angelo.

- *By training do you mean religious training, as in the case of novices, or that of the knights in secular life, among lay people?*

The knights do not have to live the life of a religious community; the members of the Order, whatever their class or rank, are bound together in a virtuous Catholic life, evangelising through their good example and following the teaching of the Church. Thus, we do not

plan to create a monastic structure in Fort St. Angel, but it will be possible for people to stay there and perhaps create moments of communion on a spiritual level.

- *How will the training courses be organized?*

As soon as the fort has been restored (it will take about two years) all the Order's structures, from the Grand Priories to the Associations and Maltese Institutions, will be encouraged to participate in the project by identifying specific training sectors and pointing out any vocations of members from the different classes and ranks of the Order. Training courses may include those (already planned) on the basic aspects of the Order's life: its spirituality, history, its welfare and health activities, and civil defence. This will give us an increasing number of people with a thorough knowledge of our institutions and ready to assume specific responsibilities in all our activities. The Order will be able to expand its structures on the basis of these responsibilities and the many and pressing requests for help which come to us, and thus be better prepared to carry out its great duties. In the past we have had to look outside our Order for many of our practical and institutional needs and we have not always obtained concrete results, because to serve the Order well you have to know all its facets. So far we have not invested much in the training of our leaders, but I hope that the possibilities offered by Fort St. Angel, once it has started its operations, will help to remedy this lack.

- *Will these training courses be at university level?*

I would rather say that they will be post-graduate courses. Along the same lines as the masters, organized around the particular aptitudes of the persons involved and with an eye to the particular needs involved at the moment he signs on.

- *Now, spiritual training. The Commission for Spirituality has recently defined the guidelines in a document which has been given to the Secretary of the Strategies Commission for further action to modify the Constitutional Charter and the Code, perhaps around 1995.*

The new spirituality of the Order must mainly concern its lay members. The spirituality of the professed knight has not changed much from the times of Malta to present times, with its three canonical vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Our lay classes are not only asked to give an individual and familial example of an irreproachable Christian life, but also special offerings and occasions for prayer to be sought during their everyday actions and, above all, Holy Communion on Sunday.

- *You talked about restoration of Fort St. Angel. What does this entail?*

My offices in the Common Treasure have drafted a conservative restoration project, which has already been approved by the Maltese government, to be implemented under the supervision of the museums of Malta. It is a global project which also includes archaeological surveys on the origins of the fort, with the opportunity of finding testimonies to its remote past; for example, there are the ruins of a temple in that area, probably dedicated to Diana. The architectural patrimony will be carefully preserved, using leading-edge technologies without touching the main framework of the buildings in the restructuring. All the external spaces, greatly damaged by a previous hotel structure, will be cleaned up, and we will try to restore the building back in its pre-Napoleonic occupation state. All the recent military additions will probably be removed, and the Maltese government is currently arranging for the demolition of some early twentieth century buildings.

- *When will the restoration works begin?*

Early next year. The tender procedures have already been started.

- Besides having a political significance for the island and for our Order, could this return of the knights to Malta also affect the entire Mediterranean area?

I would say all five continents, in the historic continuity of the Order's mission, in its vocation as bulwark of the faith and of assistance to the poor and the sick, without discriminating between race or belief and in the expansion of its humanitarian action now present in so many corners of the world. The influence of our presence in Malta, if characterized by the spiritual and moral elevation of our knights and the training of our leaders, will be felt all over the world, with concentric circles radiating from the island of Malta to the furthestmost points of the globe. The Order will attempt to do its work following the criteria indicated by the Future Strategies, with that new spirit which is now more necessary than ever in the fifth centenary of the evangelisation of the Americas and the end of the second millennium. For us and for our activities the third millennium could start from that ideal which Fort St. Angel now symbolizes, but it is already preparing wider spaces for us all over the Earth; from the changes underway in Central and Eastern Europe to the developments in Latin America, from the ever-growing petitions and needs of the African continent to the various social and economic problems of the Middle East. Obviously, it should not be forgotten that a great part of the success of the initiatives in Fort St. Angel will depend on how willing the Maltese government is to help first the works and then the management of the services in this historic monument. It is planned to continue negotiations for the practical implementation of the project details. And I am optimistic about this. We have an excellent relationship with our Maltese counterparts and there is great appreciation for the Order's initiative of Fort St. Angel.

- Continuity in history, historic return, launched towards the third millennium: is this also part of the «Future Strategies» programme?

«The agreement to give us Fort St. Angel is a clear testimony to a continuity which the Sovereign Order has never broken and which is implemented today through its «Future Strategies» programme, the expansion of its humanitarian action. Partnership and communication, the pillars on which every development programme lies, meet and are epitomized in that «spirituality of daily life» which must accompany every single member of the Order in the world. The fair distribution of resources, whether human or material, must be based on proper communication, both interior and exterior. Both points, illuminated by vocation and spirituality, are essential for a serene interchange, an ecumenical dialogue; with all those human forces engaged, day by day or in long-term programmes, in the defence and affirmation of personal dignity and in particular, for we knights of Malta, of those who are weaker and marginalized: It is important for the Order, mindful of its historical role, to keep pace with the times. The strategies are projected towards the future, albeit in a moment of transition. All the components of the Order, and now also the knights of Eastern Europe, are engaged in implementing them, never losing sight of their commitment to *tuitio fidei* and *obsequium pauperum*. In the strategies programme, the Order's political and diplomatic structure is seen above all as a support to its institutional aims. This is the Order's true mission for 2000. These are the optimistic messages which, through our strategies, we hope we can soon launch from the commitment for the life of Fort St. Angel».

Planning strategies

Promotion of contacts among the Order's members Partial residence

Management project (schedule):

Three-year plan with the following activities:

Meetings of knights, especially professed knights

Meetings in the framework of the Strategies Programme

Headquarters of the Commission for the implementation of the Order's strategies

Temporary premises for spiritual exercises

Premises for knights' courses, in particular for novices and knights of obedience

Optional activities:

Premises for exhibitions on topics of interest to the Order

Centre for conferences, seminars and meetings

Proposal for a scholarship for the Order's members to study at the University of Malta

Philatelic and numismatic office

Information service for knights on particular subjects concerning the island

Information centre on the Order's assistance and hospitaller activities worldwide

International Study Centre on Orders of Knighthood



Valletta. Malta. La firma dell'accordo tra il Governo della Repubblica di Malta e il Sovrano Ordine per la concessione in uso esclusivo di Forte Sant'Angelo, il 21 giugno 1991. L'Amb. Conte Don Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, mentre sottoscrive il protocollo; alla sua sinistra il Presidente della Repubblica di Malta, Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, all'epoca Ministro dell'Educazione e dell'Interno; alla sua destra l'Ambasciatore dell'Ordine a Malta, Dino Marrajeni.

Valletta. Malta. The signature of the agreement between the Republic of Malta and the Sovereign Order for Granting the exclusive use of the Sant'Angelo Fort, on 21 June 1991. Amb. Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni while signing; left, the President of the Republic of Malta, Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, at the time Minister of Education and the Interior; on his right, the Order's Ambassador to Malta, Dino Marrajeni.