



## GRAND MASTER

Madrid, 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2010

Dear Confreres and Consoeures,

As we once again approach the celebration of the birth of Our Lord, I wanted to share with you all just how much these familiar dates mean to me and, I am sure, for each of us who profess the faith of Christ amidst the growing number of false hopes, prophecies and inappropriate ideologies that are seen so often in our society today. It is undoubtedly true that the secular world around us is becoming more and more materialistic and less and less interested in faith and truth.

In his recent visit to Spain H.H. the Pope indicated the way we should live as God's people but his words clearly resonated with the work of our Order in our spiritual and hospitaller work within this troubled society. Pope Benedict defended the family, the solid foundation of married life, the need to meet, head-on, the challenges of science and faith; he maintained the value of truth linked to freedom for all people and defended of the precious gift of life. We must study these simple truths in depth, truths which are at the very heart of our nature.

Historically the Order has always been associated in the defense of the innocent, the poor, the destitute, and the vulnerable. Christian chivalry was essentially a personal devotion to a way of life which demanded unlimited courage, loyalty to our lord, forgiveness and clemency and the respect of its enemies. Little has changed and we can be sure that, in these uncertain times, we must continue to give witness, as did our predecessors, to our faithfulness and Christian values; to our personal sacrifice, whether in the time we give or the money we share, and, above all, to the love of our neighbours. Today our faith is being challenged and, I believe, that every challenge should be met head on with faith.

Although there are dark clouds in the horizon, we have hope in that the Lord will pour his blessings on the world, that men of good will can achieve a better society and that the Order, with its example and sacrifice, may contribute to this way of life as it has since the time of our beginning. The star that guided the Wise Men still shines over humanity!

I wish you a very happy Christmas with your families and friends.

Carlos Gereda de Bourbon  
Marquis of Almazan