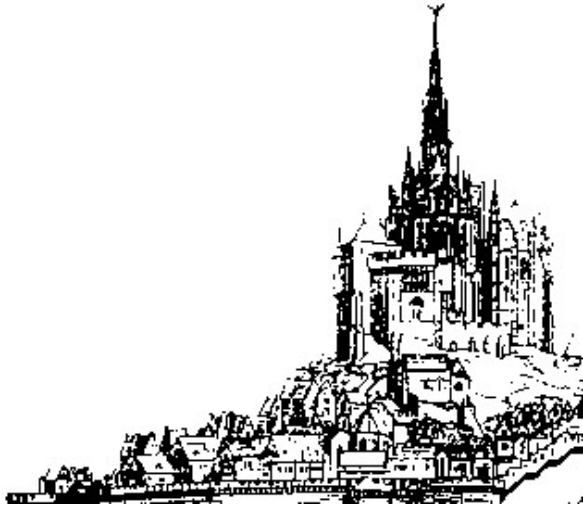


How to fight for Christ the King?

By the means the Church gives to the laity.



*"No, civilisation is no longer to be
invented,
nor the new city to be built in the clouds,
It has been, it is ;
It is the Christian Civilization,
It is the Catholic City,
It is only a matter of establishing it
And restoring it again and again. »
Saint Pius X, Letter on the Furrow,
25.VIII.1910.*

*"We need a Crusade...
in order to recreate Christianity,
as the Church desires...
with the same principles. »
Archbishop Lefebvre, Priestly Jubilee,
23.IX.1979.*

Ad hoc institutions

After having converted the peoples, the Church, which had long been persecuted, was able to live in peace the day it baptised the princes. It was the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 312, then the decision of Theodosius, which made the Christian faith the State religion. Later, other princes became Christians, along with their peoples : Clovis, king of the Franks in 496, then St Ethelbert, Saxon king of Great Britain, St Wenceslas, duke of Bohemia, St Wladimir, great prince of Kiev, and St Stephen, "apostolic" king of Hungary in particular. From now on, the earthly city prepares for the heavenly city for the salvation of the greatest number. It is no longer simply individuals and families, but the political and social structures of nations that are Christianised. All of them recognise Christ as their King.

As the *Doctrine of the Two Swords* explains, the Church exercises the kingship of Our Lord, *directly* on the spiritual plane through the ecclesiastical Hierarchy and *indirectly* through Christian princes and lay leaders, in the temporal domain. From the 8th century onwards, the pontiffs confer this mandate in a solemn manner through the royal or imperial coronation. It is a sacramental giving a mission and graces proportionate to it. At the same time, from the following century, which saw the collapse of Charlemagne's Empire, the Church extended this role to other political and military leaders - princes, barons and simple men-at-arms - whose responsibilities were, at their level, similar. Thus was born chivalry and the sacramental of knighthood, either liturgical given by a prelate or military conferred by a knight. Under this impetus, Christian civilisation passed from the anarchy of the 9th and 10th centuries to the apogee of Christianity in the 12th and 13th centuries.

But this Christianity had to be defended on all sides against its enemies : the Moors of the Iberian Peninsula, the Saracens of the Near East, as well as the pagan peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, or the Cathars and Manicheans of the South and Lombardy, who threatened society by challenging not only the Faith, but also the natural law, the foundation of society. Spain had been invaded by Islam in 711 and from that time onwards increasingly large expeditions, often encouraged by Rome, began the *Reconquista*. In 1095, the Pope preached the First Crusade to rescue

the Holy Places, but also to halt the expansion of Mohammed's followers into Europe. However, once the Crusades were over and their vow fulfilled, the Crusaders returned home and the reconquered lands remained vulnerable.

It was then that the poor Knights of Christ or Order of the Temple appeared, very small at first, which St Bernard praised in his *Praise of the New Chivalry*. The Hospitaller Orders of St. John, St. Lazarus and St. Mary of the Germans (the Teutons) became militarised after his example. Other military orders or orders of chivalry were formed on the various fronts : Calatrava, Alcantara, Santiago, Avis, in the Iberian Peninsula, the Porte-Glaive and the Teutons in Prussia and Livonia, the Militia of Jesus Christ in Lombardy, often made up of religious, but also sometimes of lay people or both religious and married men. In both cases, membership of this new institution was sanctioned by a profession and vows.

Sustainability of Church Institutions

When the Church establishes an institution, it is, by definition, the best means to achieve the end it sets for it. There is therefore no reason for it to change in principle. Thus we see monasticism appear and subsist, then the third orders, for the practice of the evangelical counsels, in the cloisters and in the world respectively ; the Christian monarchy and chivalry for the promotion of Christianity; the confraternities and guilds for its development; the crusades and military orders for its defence.

In spite of the josephisms and revolutions, the monks are still there and no one would question the third orders. The principle of the monarchy and the Christian state is still valid, even if it is now being undermined by liberalism, secularism and socialism. A restoration is always possible. At Christmas 800, the Papacy restored the Western Roman Empire, which had disappeared 324 years earlier. It became the Germanic Roman Empire, then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and lived on until modern times.

As for the crusades, they continued long after 1270, the date of the death of Saint Louis, since it was thanks to them that the victory of Lepanto was won in 1571 and that Vienna was twice delivered from the Turkish besieger in the 16th and 16th centuries. The Maltese galleys protected the southern flank of Christianity until the Revolution. And in 1956, on the occasion of the Soviet invasion of Hungary, Pope Pius XII declared that he had thought of calling for a crusade, which he reserved the right to do.

If, under the blows of the enemies of the Faith, chivalry and military orders have suffered the same decadence as the spirit of the crusades and the institutions of Christendom, they have nevertheless survived, and liturgical dubbing has remained in the Roman Pontifical until our own time. It is only a matter of restoring them, freeing them from the honorific and worldly aspect that their past glories earned them. Several initiatives were taken in the twentieth century: the creation of the German Order of the Knights of Mary, and then, by Pius XII, the restoration of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre with the use of liturgical dubbing. This was also achieved with the Order of the Knights of Our Lady, based on the two Church institutions of the sacramental of dubbing and profession within a secular order comparable in this respect to the Third Orders.

The Social Reign of Our Lord

If the essential role of the Third Orders is the personal sanctification of their members, the Order of the Knights of Our Lady has as its end, in addition to this indispensable sanctification, the struggle for the triumph of Christ the King over the nations and the political and social institutions of the City, and the restoration of Christian Civilisation, that is to say of a Christian Social Order or Christendom, what we call today the social reign of Our Lord.

Whatever many Catholics think, even among the most faithful, this is not an outdated or chimerical goal, even if it seems distant. The Roman Pontiffs have always recalled it with vigour, refusing to give in to the historical evolutionism of the liberals and the sense of history of the Marxists. In his 1910 *Letter on the Furrow*, St. Pius X warned us: "*We must remember this energetically in*

these times of social and intellectual anarchy, when everyone sets himself up as a doctor and legislator: the city will not be built otherwise than God built it, society will not be built unless the Church lays the foundations and directs the work, no, civilization is no longer to be invented, nor is the new city to be built in the clouds. It has been, it is, it is Christian Civilisation, it is the Catholic City. It is only a question of establishing and restoring it unceasingly on its natural and divine foundations against the ever-rising attacks of unhealthy utopia, of revolt and impiety : omnia instaurare in Christo. (1910)

It was to this crusade that Archbishop Lefebvre called the laity in 1979 when he declared: "*We must have a crusade (...) in order to recreate Christianity, as the Church desires (...) with the same principles.*"

The Order of the Knights of Our Lady

It was in response to this wish of the Sovereign Pontiffs that the future Dom Marie-Gérard Lafond created the Order of the Knights of Our Lady - or *Militia Sanctae Mariae* - in 1945, with the support of the Reverend Father Gabriel Gontard, abbot of Saint Wandrille, and then of various bishops. The Rule was given *the imprimatur* by His Grace Mgr Michon, Bishop of Chartres, who canonically erected the Order at Notre-Dame de Sous-Terre, the crypt of his cathedral. Subsequently, the Order received similar canonical status in Regensburg, Germany, Sion, Switzerland, Braga, Portugal and Santander, Spain.

The Order fought the good fight : the fight against public immorality, sects, Communism, support for the Church of Silence and the Captive Nations, visits to political and common law prisoners, dissemination of the social doctrine of the Church in the trade unions and in the army in particular, campaigning against communion in the hand, conferences in Rome during the Second Vatican Council to fight against the enormous liberal propaganda machine of the media.

The Master of the Order had suggested to Archbishop Lefebvre that he contact our Swiss knights, who were to put the house they had bought in Ecône at his disposal for a seminary. At the same time, several young members of the Order entered the French Seminary in Rome, then in Fribourg and in Ecône. Another became the first friar of the Society of St Pius X.

However, in 1970, the Magisterium of the Order finally accepted the new *Ordo Missae* out of misunderstood obedience. A number of knights then left and some of them formed a chivalric fraternity, actively encouraged by Archbishop Lefebvre. In 1989, four elders of the Order and of this Fraternity decided to restore the Order of the Knights of Our Lady itself to its traditional observance, as had been done among Catholics faithful to Tradition for monastic and religious orders, third orders and various lay organisations. The restored Order has adopted Archbishop Lefebvre's statement of 21 November 1974 on the neo-modernist infiltration of the Church. Its Constitutions, which define the framework for its restoration, were approved by the Canonical Commission of the Priestly Society of St Pius X, presided over by His Grace Bishop Tissier de Mallerais.

Its Members

To be a good Christian is necessary, but not sufficient, to enter the Order. It also requires a disposition of spiritual pugnacity proceeding from pure Charity and ordered to the universal Common Good. The mission of chivalry in general, and of the Order in particular, is not specifically personal sanctification, nor charitable action, nor the apostolate, but the reign of Christ over the institutions of society : family, profession, city, nation.

After six months of preparation and consecration to Our Lady according to the spirituality of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, the postulant is received into the Order as a squire. After two years of formation, he can become a donate by making temporary renewable private vows. Finally, the Master of the Order calls certain donates who are sufficiently formed and firm in the struggle to profession and adoubt.

The recipient then takes the three final private vows : a vow of conversion of morals, following the way of life described by the Rule; a vow of fidelity to the Order, i.e. obedience to its hierarchy within the limits of the Rule and of fraternal mutual aid; and a vow of defence of the

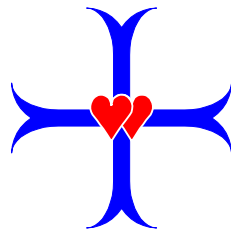
Church, a vow analogous to the crusade vow, to defend the Church and its institutions even at the risk of one's life. He then receives the white mantle stamped with the Order's cross, and spends the night in prayer: this is the vigil of arms. The next morning, after Mass, he receives the dubbing.

The knights undertake - and the other members of the Order commit themselves- to say the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and the Rosary in full each week, to spend a daily time in mental prayer, to attend the monthly chapter of their commandery, to continue their formation and to participate in the activities of the Order.

The wives of members of the Order may be received as sisters, and their daughters as maidens or female cadets. Sisters who make profession with their husbands become ladies of the Order. There are also pages and cadets, who have the advantage of being able to continue throughout their lives what they started as children.

The Order of the Knights of Our Lady is obviously not an *order of chivalry* in the sense used for orders of merit, honours and decorations in general. Nor is it a simple Catholic movement or association, for it is founded on two Church institutions : chivalry and military orders, as well as on the graces of profession and the sacramental of adoubment.

Through its Rule, its observances, its discipline, as well as the commitment it demands, the Order of the Knights of Our Lady constitutes a stable framework for the activity of the layman, whether single or a father, who really wants to devote himself to the fight for the social reign of Our Lord, while deepening his spiritual life and his doctrinal knowledge.



MILITIA SANCTAE MARIAE

**Order of the Knights of Our Lady OBSERVANCE OF THE
HOLY HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY**

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