



GRAND MASTER

Madrid, 25th of July, 2011

On occasion of the recent decease of HIRH the Archduke Otto of Habsburg, Protector of our beloved Order in Austria, I have read that, with him, *the last Chevalier of Europe* had died. Probably, what the reporter meant with that expression was that the Prince symbolized the virtues of an ancient medieval knight, in a Europe which will be unrecognizable in a few years as a consequence of the economic crisis and loss of values which we are suffering. The welfare state that we have known until now is collapsing in front of our eyes, and our society does not formulate convincing answers.

We must admit that a knight today remains, in spite of everything, he who, with extreme generosity, devotes himself to others in pursuit of an ideal, he who is faithful to the word given, he who on the whole pursues the Holy Grail of human perfection from the perspective of the Faith. In this sense, Otto of Habsburg was a perfect knight of both ancient and modern times. A man of deep religious convictions, dedicated to his sense of honour. In other times, the concept of honour constituted the corner stone of the chivalry code. Today it sounds empty but is not. The “word of honour” was the most solemn commitment of a knight and should still be so. The real Christian Knight should promote good and fight evil. A knight is he who, in order to guarantee his freedom fully, chooses freely to submit himself to the authority that will guide him where he wants to go. This is why I feel that the encounter of the modern man with his own history and the assumption of noble and generous models that were in the origin of chivalrous ideals is a formidable task which can only be done within the heart of an Order of Chivalry.

Today, the orders of chivalry are not, and should not be democratic societies, nor charity organizations, nor clubs of nostalgic indolent individuals, nor associations of ridiculous conceited members. They are religious hierarchical associations formed mainly by laymen, with charitable purposes of social and Hospitaller care. Although it is true that in this modern world the task of the military orders cannot be limited to charitable actions, rather more it is necessary to recover the moral principles for society which is so vitally in need by means of intellectual and formative work.

Analyzing the various focal points of international tension, we get the impression that it is the same underground fire that feeds unrest everywhere and therefore, behind so many disturbances there is only one disorder which is the cause of all of them. Private life is in a chaotic situation, including crisis in the family and society in general. Think how, now, evil is presented as a social good and a conquest of progress. The recovery of values that are inherent to our Western European civilization is a task for all of us.

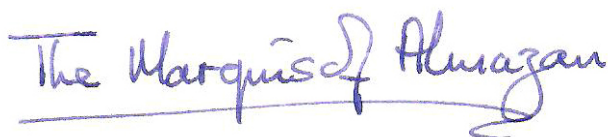
To come back to such important concepts for the correct education of our youth, such as discipline, sacrifice or obedience is not easy or simple. These principles constitute an essential part of our own tradition and of the military spirit that should pervade our daily work. It is not concealed to me that defence traditions is associated with right wing obscurantism which is an extended fallacy in our times. Without roots we are nothing. Tradition is the school of being, behaving, progressing and serving.

A military order such as ours, born in the Holy Land, which has survived so many historic comings and goings, so many setbacks, is summoned to carry out great objectives and serve today's society, so moved away from God, in the recovery of timeless values that contributed to its establishment. Man has, in the name of progress, constructed an atheist society, only ready to satisfy its desires, which contradictorily maintains mankind in slavery.

When I assumed the responsibilities and duties attached to the dignity of Grand Master I promised by my honour and swore by Jesus Christ Our Lord, to exercise them fully with dedication and in keeping with my predecessors, listening to everybody, without ever submitting myself to the dictation of spurious interests. The maintenance of the Unity and good Governance of the Order, which is a supreme value, requires a united command firmly committed with the traditions of chivalry and always ready to govern with will to serve the highest ideals of "Lazarism".

With the help of God, without which, we can do nothing and the help of the prayers of the Knights and Dames of our religion, we will conquer another Holy Land which is the return to our Christian European roots, to the origins of our western civilization which has been shaping the History of the World.

Atavis et Armis

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "The Marquis of Almazan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Carlos Gereda de Bourbon
Marquis of Almazan