



**OTJ HOLY PILGRIMAGE
DIPLOMATIC MISSION
TO VATICAN
2 – 6 December 2025**

THE FINAL REPORT



**ORDRE DU TEMPLE DE JÉRUSALEM
CORPS DIPLOMATIQUE**

I. INTRODUCTION – ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES

By the decision of the OTJ Grand Master, expressed in the decree of July 26, 2024, the Diplomatic Corps of the OTJ was established. This act was an important step in the development of the Order's structures and was a response to the growing need for more systematic, orderly and long-term relations with international, ecclesiastical and state institutions.

The scope of competences, objectives and tasks of the Diplomatic Corps of the OTJ are described in detail in the Charter document, which has become the basic reference point for all OTJ Diplomatic Corps external activities since its adoption. This document clearly emphasizes the need to build the recognition of the OTJ Order on the international arena and to strengthen its position as a community that draws on the heritage of the historical Templars, and at the same time actively involved in responding to the challenges of the modern world.

In the course of analytical and strategic work, it was recognized that one of the most important short-term strategic goals of the OTJ Diplomatic Corps should be to establish direct diplomatic and operational contacts with the Vatican.

The aim of these activities was not only to present the OTJ Order at the highest institutional level, but also to begin the process leading to the recognition of the OTJ as the formal and full-fledged heir to the historical traditions of the Templars, understood not only in symbolic terms, but also in the context of the continuity of mission, ethos and responsibility.

As a special context and at the same time a point of reference for the planned activities, the perspective of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2033 was adopted, which will be celebrated by the universal Church as the bimillennium of Redemption – the salvific passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This perspective gave the initiatives a long-term dimension and deep spiritual rooting.

II. PREPARATORY STAGE AND STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

Work on the implementation of the assumed goal began in June 2025 as part of the Commandery of the OTJ Diplomatic Corps. Already at this stage, it was decided that the activities would not be only symbolic or image-oriented, but would be aimed at building real relationships based on common projects and responsibility.

A special role in the preparatory process was entrusted to Father Marcin Schmidt, who in July 2025, by virtue of the decree of the Grand Master, was appointed Chaplain of the Commandery of the OTJ Diplomatic Corps. Father Marcin Schmidt is an experienced and constantly active missionary, working on an international scale, as well as a person performing

responsible managerial functions in international church humanitarian organizations. His competences, experience and network of contacts turned out to be crucial for the effective preparation of the ground for future activities in the Vatican.

The strategy adopted was based on the assumption that only real operational cooperation – and not PR actions limited to diplomatic gestures – can lead to lasting and measurable results.

In this context, an in-depth analysis of the Vatican structures was carried out, as a result of which it was concluded that the most appropriate way would be to establish relations with those responsible for key pontifical programs. Establishing direct contacts should therefore result in direct cooperation with high-ranking papal officials.

These pontifical programs, as initiatives directly inspired by the incumbent Popes and under their special concern, have not only an operational significance but also an enormous symbolic and international weight.

III. SELECTION OF PONTIFICAL PROGRAMMES AND KEY PARTNERS

As a result of further conceptual work and consultation, two specific pontifical programs were selected that were considered particularly consistent with the mission and values of the OTJ.

The first of them is **Scholas Occurrentes** – an international program of a papal nature, implemented by the Foundation founded in 2013 by Pope Francis. This program covers more than 190 countries around the world, focusing on youth work, and in particular on supporting young people living in the most difficult social and cultural conditions. In more than 70 countries, these activities are particularly intense.

The key figure of this program is **Professor José María del Corral**, co-founder and World Director of the Foundation, theologian and pedagogue, serving as an educational advisor to the Holy See. His personal commitment and openness to dialogue created space for in-depth talks about possible cooperation with OTJ.

The second selected project is **the Pontifical Committee for World Children's Day**, established by Pope Francis in November 2024 and then continued by Pope Leo XIV. The Committee is headed by **Father Enzo Fortunato OFM** – a Franciscan, who is also the Director of Communications of St. Peter's Basilica and the Head of the Press Office of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

An important element of the preparations was also the establishment of cooperation with **Bishop Ariel Torrado Mosconi** - one of the closest collaborators of the late Pope Francis, and at the same time a person enjoying considerable trust of new Pope Leo XIV. This bishop actively participates in the Vatican's consultation work on the Church's mission in the world. Thanks to the efforts of the Chaplain of the OTJ Diplomatic Corps, Bishop Torrado Mosconi agreed to take the planned pilgrimage and diplomatic mission under his patronage and gave it his support and blessing.

IV. THE CONCEPT OF THE HOLY PILGRIMAGE AND DIPLOMATIC MISSION

On the basis of the above findings, the concept of the Holy Pilgrimage to the Vatican was formed, which from the beginning was perceived as an event of a dual character – spiritual and strategic. It consisted of three key elements.

Holy pilgrimage was deeply religious and included prayer and pilgrimage to the four papal basilicas, combined with passing through the Holy Door and the possibility of obtaining a plenary indulgence.

Establishing the platform for opening a dialogue, presenting the OTJ and initiating real cooperation with the Vatican institutions. The aim was provoking joint meetings with high-ranking Vatican officials to present the OTJ and establish real cooperation in order to build the positioning of the OTJ as the true heir to the Templar tradition

Opening a broad discussion in the form of a synod called the **Templar Synod**, an integral element of the pilgrimage and diplomatic mission but understood as a OTJ space for joint reflection and discussion on the future path of the OTJ in the perspective of the Holy Year 2033.

V. PARTICIPANTS AND THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION

The realization of such an important task of such an important mission could only be possible thanks to the support and personal and material commitment of 11 Pilgrims from few different countries. These Pilgrims represented four ecumenical Christian denominations, which particularly emphasized the universal and supra-denominational character of the OTJ and this only confirmed how important it is to build our Templar community.

It is also worth noting that among the participants there were three postulants, for whom participation in the pilgrimage was an important formative stage. The pilgrims supported the implementation of the mission not only through financial contribution, but also through active participation in all events and meetings and for their very active personal involvement during all the days spent together.



VI. RESULTS

Despite all the external and internal obstacles, all strategic objectives, described above have been achieved in 100 percent.

Tactical objectives were achieved in about 80 percent as finally due to ongoing changes in Pope duties and schedule we did not have a chance to conclude separate private audience.

VII. THE COURSE OF THE PILGRIMAGE / DIPLOMATIC MISSION

The first program of the pilgrimage/diplomatic mission to the Vatican, scheduled for 2-5.2025, and the objectives were developed in the summer of 2025 and then presented to all the Grand Priors using the available means and communication channels such as the WhatsApp group (Grand Magistral Council OTJ), emails and the [website www.otj.ngo](http://www.otj.ngo)



Finally, after organizational changes resulting from changes in dates in the Vatican, **we held the event on 2-6.2025**

In our report, in below part, we will focus only on summarizing the operational and strategic aspects in relation to the assumed goals, while all spiritual, prayer, religious issues have remained with full respect, due respect for the internal affairs of the Pilgrims. Photos are only illustrative – full archive and videos are available upon request.

2.12.2025

In the evening of that day, an introductory and organizational meeting was held, during which all the pilgrims could get to know each other, and the most important element of this meeting was the fact that most of the Pilgrims had a special and exceptional opportunity to meet for the first time with the Grand Master of our Order, General Ronald Mangum. During the meeting, we discussed in detail the program and goals of the pilgrimage and diplomatic mission.

3.12.2025

St. Peter's Basilica

Saint Peter, first among the apostles and rock of the Church, offers a living pattern for every Templar knight who bears arms in the service of Christ. His story unites courage, failure, repentance, and martyrdom into a single path of sanctified knighthood.

Peter's denial and bitter weeping show that even the greatest can fall, yet his repentance and return to leadership reveal that true honor lies in rising again in loyalty. For the Templar, his final witness in Rome proves that the highest victory is not earthly glory, but the total gift of life to God and defense of His Church.



Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore

For a Templar knight, Santa Maria Maggiore would appear almost as a great “Temple of Our Lady,” perfectly aligned with the Order’s original deep Marian devotion. The ancient icon *Salus Populi Romani*, Mary as protectress of the people, reflects the way Templars saw her as the heavenly Lady who shields warriors and for whom they ride into battle.

The triumphal arch and apse mosaics, where Christ and Mary sit enthroned in royal majesty, show the true court a knight serves and the only crown worth winning. In this light, a Templar’s discipline, poverty, and courage become an armed liturgy: the sword is pledged to Mary’s protection of the weak, and every campaign is offered to Christ the King and His Queen.



Templar Synod / Scholas Occurrentes

We have devoted a separate, extensive chapter to the proceedings of the Templar Synod and its results later in this report.







4.12.2025

St. Paul's Basilica Outside the Walls

For a Templar knight, St Paul himself is the great standard-bearer of mission and meaning. Once a persecutor, he let Christ overturn his life on the road to Damascus and rose from the dust as a "soldier of Christ," showing that a knight's true worth is not his past, but his willingness to be radically re-forged by grace for the Gospel.

Paul's journeys, wounds, imprisonments, and final martyrdom under the sword reveal what a consecrated warrior lives for: not safety, success, or human praise, but the spread of Christ's Kingdom, whatever the cost. His words about fighting the good fight and putting on the armor of God give the Templar a clear rule of life: every duty is a mission field, every trial a training ground, every sacrifice a deliberate step toward finishing the race and keeping the faith



Basilica of St. John Lateran

Saint George answers the Templar's deepest question: *What is a knight for?* A soldier of empire who became a soldier of Christ, he offered his strength and status to the true King, choosing faith over fear and truth over survival. In him, the Templar learns that knighthood finds its meaning only when courage, discipline, and skill serve justice, the weak, and the honor of God.

The dragon he confronts is every power that enslaves a people in fear and falsehood, and his martyrdom shows that real victory is not avoiding wounds, but refusing to deny Christ even under threat. For a modern Templar, George's life becomes a rule of mission: put on faith as armor, ride out against the "dragons" of hatred, despair, and spiritual emptiness, and let every choice, public or hidden, be a quiet, unwavering "yes" to Christ.



Templar Synod / Pontifical Committee for World Children's Day

We have devoted a separate, extensive chapter to the proceedings of the Templar Synod and its results later in this report.





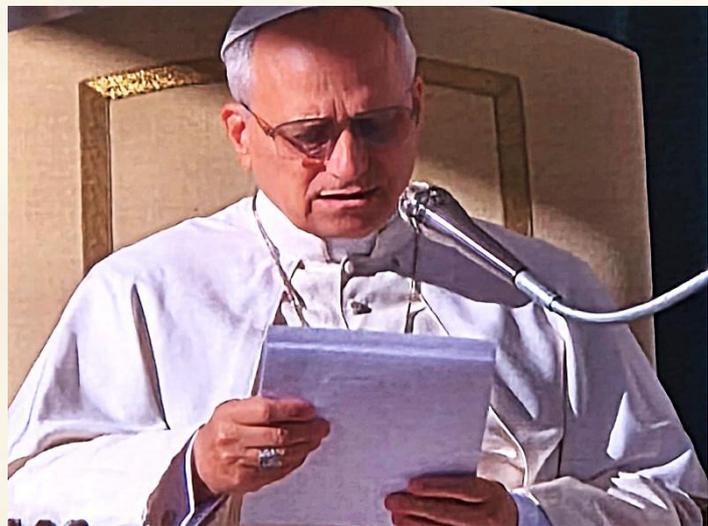
6.12.2025

St. Peter's Basilica – it was an exceptional, emotionally strong moment of the pilgrimage, namely we had the opportunity to pray in the completely empty St. Peter's Basilica at his tomb, which was made available to us exceptionally.

Bishop Ariel Torrado Mosconi blessed us with the rosaries that all the pilgrims received, as well as consecrated the testimony received by each of the pilgrims (Testimonium) testifying to their participation in this unique Holy Pilgrimage, the promise of a plenary indulgence and participation in the opening of the Templar Synod.



Then we participated in the Pope General Audience.



At the end of the last day of the Pilgrimage, we were guests in a private part of the Vatican Gardens, inaccessible to most people, where we had the opportunity for final reflections and prayer.







VIII TEMPLAR SYNOD – EXTENDED REFLECTION AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The Templar Synod, initiated as part of the Holy Pilgrimage and the OTJ Diplomatic Mission to the Vatican, turned out to be one of the most important and important results of the whole

undertaking. Although from the beginning it was treated as a symbolic event, in practice it became a space for authentic dialogue, in-depth reflection and joint discernment of the path of the OTJ in the perspective of the coming years.

The participants of the Synod representing different countries, cultural traditions and Christian denominations made a joint effort to answer fundamental questions about the identity, mission and responsibility of the Order in the modern world. In the course of the talks, it was clear that the OTJ is at a breakthrough moment, requiring not only the continuation of the existing activities, but above all their deepening, targeting and unambiguous definition.

One of the key conclusions of the Synod was the statement that the general declaration of charitable activity despite its undeniable value and moral importance does not provide the Order with a sufficiently strong, recognizable and unambiguous identification today. This kind of activity, carried out by thousands of organizations around the world, does not fully reflect the uniqueness of the Templar heritage or exploit the potential that the Order's historical ethos brings.

In this context, the talks held in the Vatican with representatives of the Scholas Occurrentes program and the Pontifical Committee for World Children's Day were of breakthrough importance. These discussions, based on data, analyses and the experiences of experts working on all continents, revealed a dramatic picture of contemporary social problems affecting children, young people and entire families.

Regardless of whether the talks concerned social exclusion in poor countries or, paradoxically, the growing frustration, depression and existential crises in highly developed societies, the participants of the meetings repeatedly returned to one common conclusion: the modern world increasingly lacks meaning and purpose – *meaning and purpose*. The result is phenomena on a global scale, such as a dramatic increase in the number of suicides among young people, progressive mental burnout, loss of self-esteem and loss of identity.

It was at this point of reflection that the Templar Synod saw a significant shift in perspective, leading to the formulation of a vision that could become the long-term hallmark of the Order of the OTJ. The participants of the Synod boldly attempted to reinterpret the historical mission of the Templars in the light of contemporary challenges.

The idea of the modern Templar as a warrior and guardian was born, who like his predecessors from centuries ago stands guard over pilgrims. Today, however, these pilgrims are not only people who travel physical routes, but above all children and young people, lost in a world of rapid cultural, technological and social changes. They are "new pilgrims", looking for a way, meaning and hope.

This inspiration, deeply rooted in the tradition of the Order, was naturally combined with the idea of an active, courageous and consistent fight for the rights of children and for their

protection from violence, exploitation, human trafficking, psychological and spiritual degradation. The data and testimonies presented by the experts of both pontifical programs showed the scale of the global drama of the youngest in a way that touched all participants and left no room for indifference.

During the Synod, the conviction that it was in this space the defense of children and young people as the weakest and most vulnerable participants in the modern world – that the OTJ can find its unique, unambiguous and deeply meaningful mission – was increasingly clear. A mission that combines the spiritual heritage of the Templars with concrete, measurable action for future generations.

The participants of the Synod asked themselves directly: if it was not the Templars, faithful to their ancient mission of protecting pilgrims, who should stand up today for these new pilgrims – children and young people – then who should take up this challenge? Although this question was symbolic, it also became an impulse for a very real reflection on the responsibility of the Order on a global scale.

The conclusions of the Synod Templar indicate that the OTJ may be on the threshold of forming a new, long-term mission, coherent, distinct and strongly identifying the entire community of the Order around a single, clearly defined goal. This mission is fully in line with the directions set by the Grand Master OTJ, including the idea of international cooperation in the areas of counteracting human trafficking, child exploitation and other forms of modern slavery. Those conclusions follow also OTJ current focus on the educating and training of young people. We may support postulants all over the world to study and pass training in leadership skills and have training and study programs that focus on developing leadership talents in contemporary international society.

The Templar Synod did not end with the formulation of closed declarations, but opened the process. A process of shared discernment, responsibility and building a path that can lead the Order of OTJ to the Holy Year 2033 as a community united around a clearly defined mission, rooted in tradition and at the same time courageously responding to the most urgent needs of the modern world.

IX. SUMMARY OF THE SYNOD AND OUTLOOK

During all meetings with all officials in the Vatican, Grand Master consistently declared the openness and full readiness of the OTJ and all the OTJ Grand Priories to work closely with the Vatican and its institutions in order to carry out common projects and tasks.

As part of the Templar Synod, the Grand Master appointed and delegated Commander Hubert Drabik, representing the OTJ Diplomatic Corps, as the coordinator of the cooperation between OTJ and the Vatican institutions in the Holy See. This nomination was accepted as a special distinction and an expression of trust.

X. NEXT STEPS

Further activities will include:

1. The signing of formal and official cooperation documents between OTJ and the Vatican within the framework of 2 agreed projects previously described (Q1 2026)
2. The development of a coherent global action plan for the OTJ in cooperation with the OTJ Grand Priors, necessary for the OTJ to implement the declarations made within the framework of the pontifical projects described already in this report (Q1 2026)
3. The deployment of working teams by the Grand Priors for the implementation and carrying out selected projects together with the Vatican institutions in the period 2026-2033 (Q1 2026)
4. The meetings of the OTJ Diplomatic Corps and Grand Priors delegates with representatives of governments and government institutions in the countries to engage these institutions and their budgets in the implementation of the established OTJ action plan (Q2-Q3 2026)

Special thanks to:

- The Grand Master for his presence and fraternal support in difficult moments.
- All Pilgrims for their active participation and the wonderful fraternal atmosphere.
- The Grand Prior of the Philippines for the additional gift to the Pope in the form of a painting by an exceptional artist.
- All those involved in the organization and coordination of this unique event.

Marian Skrzypiec
OTJ Diplomatic Corps
Commander



Hubert Drabik
OTJ Diplomatic Corps
Commander Seneschal





**Templar Prayer for the Path of
Renewal of Spiritual Mission**

Lord Jesus Christ,

Divine Knight of Mercy, You who conquered evil through the Cross and redeemed the world by the power of Your love, grant that we, Your Templars, may renew in You the spirit of courage, fidelity, and humility.

Teach us to fight not with the sword but with a pure heart, to defend the truth not with violence but with the witness of life, and to bring the light of the Gospel where darkness prevails.

St. Paul, Apostle and Warrior of Christ, who said: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith," guide us on this path of renewal, so that, like You, we may lay down our lives in service to the Gospel and to our brothers and sisters.

May our community become a living sign of the Kingdom, a temple of hearts built on the rock of faith, hope, and love. May the Holy Spirit ignite within us the fire of courage and mercy, so that we may be worthy to bear the name of Knights of Jesus, keeping vigil by His Cross and setting out into the world with His peace.

Mother of Christ and Queen of the Templars, envelop us in your mantle of protection and teach us humble service like Yours.

Lord, bless our Order, our pilgrimage, and our path toward the Jubilee of Redemption. May everything we do lead us to You, the Victor over death and the source of true life.

Amen



