

*The question of misleading or erroneous statements
concerning the Order of SS. Maurizio e Lazzaro
[the Saints Maurice and Lazarus]*

**L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO
[THE ROMAN OBSERVER]**

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(states as follows, *ed. n.*)

Clarification

“A number of readers have requested information concerning the attitude of the Holy See towards Equestrian Orders dedicated to Saints or else bearing religious titles. In this respect, we are authorized to confirm the statements our newspaper has already issued in the past: apart from their own Equestrian Orders, the Holy See recognizes and safeguards the interests of only two Knightly Orders: the Sovereign Military Order of Malta – otherwise known as the Sovereign Military Hospital Order of St John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta - and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.”

The “*Clarification*” authorized by the Holy See and published in bold in L’Osservatore Romano entirely dismisses from any serious consideration the content of the *Letter* written in Geneva on the 27 August 2007 and signed by Johannes Niederhauser, Grand Chancellor of the Order of SS. Maurizio e Lazzaro, point 2 in particular. In fact it consider it mendacious, implicating it, on its own merits, in all consequences of the case.

This is perhaps the moment to draw attention to the fact that, *inter al.*, it was said with incredible approximation that the dynastic Order of SS. Maurizio e Lazzaro, instituted by a papal bull of 1572, “*in conformity with canon law it constitutes a public association of the faithful for the purposes of charity, and perhaps to serve religious faith. Instituted by the Supreme Authority of the Church in the Middle Ages its existence and function continue to be recognized in terms of its original mandate*”. The text of L’Osservatore Romano, the unofficial organ of the Holy See, reproduced above, completely refutes this statement.

This is also the occasion to clarify another misleading and erroneous assertion, according to which the Grand Master of the Order is also Head of the House, whereas the truth is the exact opposite, i.e. the Head of the House is Grand Master of the dynastic Orders, and therefore dynastic destitution (for violation of the dynastic laws of the House) implies the incapacity to hold the office of Grand Master.