

Press release

22 January 2008

It is with the deepest regret that on Monday 21 January in the course of a TV broadcast on *Channel 5* I watched the saddening spectacle of the award of yet another “Golden Tapir” to the Prince of Naples at the Hotel Exelsior in Rome.

(http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/2008/01/21/video_6681.schtm?adsl)

Apart from personal attacks against members of the Royal House, which I wasn't expecting, and apart from considerations as to whether it was a good idea to demand 100 from the State in the hopes of getting 1, I was all the more astounded to hear that the Order of the Saints Maurice and Lazarus had somehow become a “Swiss company” which published an annual balance sheet.

How on earth and with what right could the Chivalrous Order founded in 1572 by Pope Gregory XIII, Ugo Boncompagni, and entrusted by the Pontifex Maximus to the Duke of Savoy, Emanuele Filiberto, and his successors, have plunged to the level of a commercial enterprise? And where are these balance sheets deposited? At the Geneva Chamber of Commerce?

Many people seem to forget that this ancient and prestigious Order has a life of its own and a dignity which, thank heavens, is independent of instrumentalization and egoistic “desiderata” by and for anyone at all.

As is well known, every member invested, of every rank, has first and foremost the duty to respect and safeguard the dignity of the Order, and with constancy and commitment to observe an exemplary behaviour from every point of view.

Eugenio Armando Dondero
spokesman