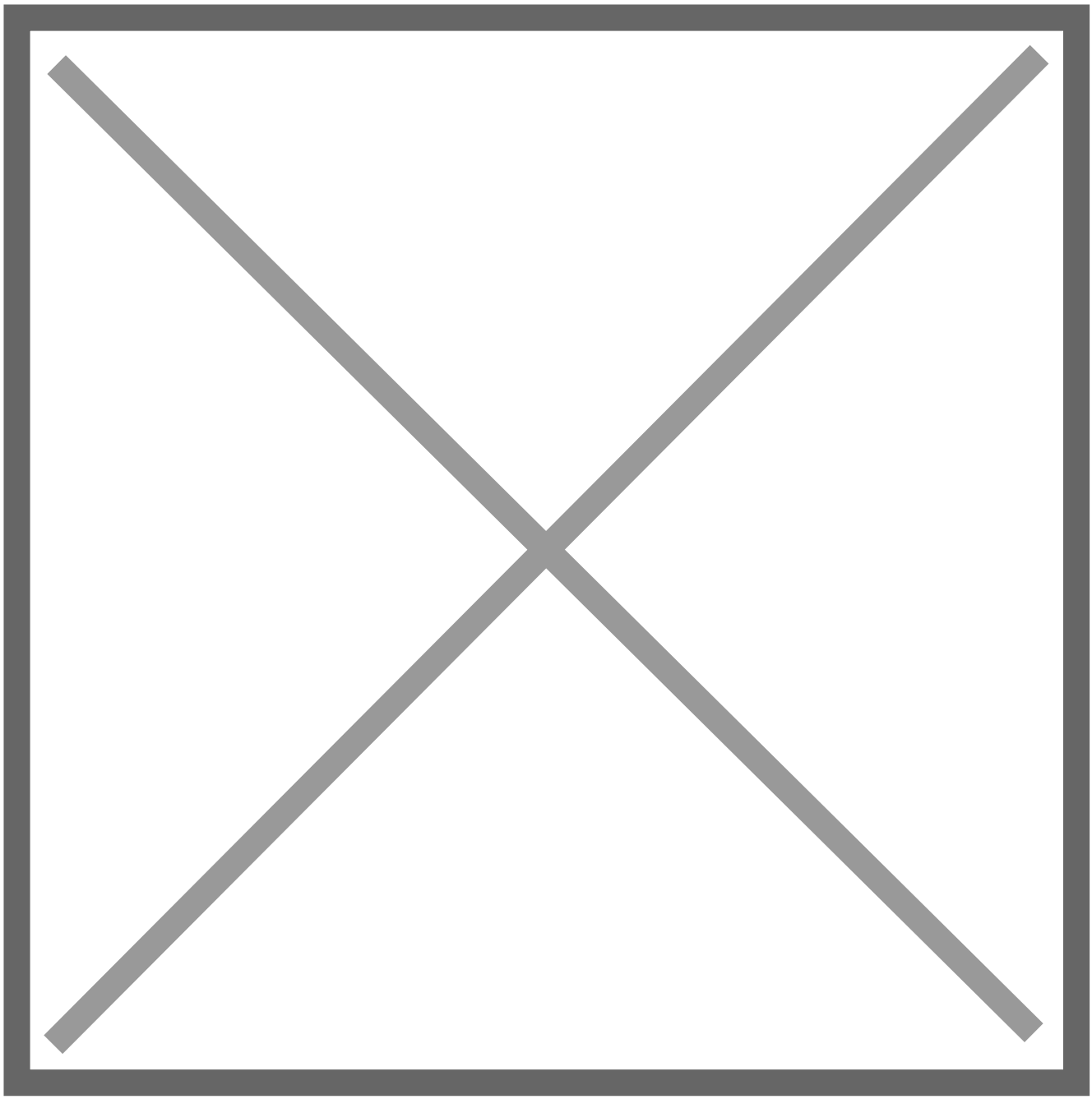
News



Fra’ Marco Luzzago is pictured at the headquarters of the Knights of Malta before an election in Rome Nov. 8, 2020. Luzzago was elected to a one-year term as the order's interim head. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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The Knights of Malta have elected Fra' Marco Luzzago, a native of Brescia, Italy, and a member of the order since 1975, as its interim head.

A statement released by the order Nov. 8 said Luzzago was elected to a one-year term as the order's new lieutenant of the grand master.

"The newly elected head of the Sovereign Order of Malta swore his oath before the members of the Council Complete of State, the order's electoral body, and the pope's special delegate, Cardinal-designate Silvano Maria Tomasi," the order said.

Pope Francis named Cardinal-designate Tomasi Nov. 1 as his special delegate to the order after the surprise resignation of Cardinal Angelo Becciu in October.

The order said the pope was informed of Luzzago's election.

After his election, Luzzago addressed the order's electoral body and thanked them "for placing your trust in me and for showing by your presence here today a great love and a great dedication to our order."

"For my part, I can only assure you of my maximum commitment to address the challenges that lie ahead of us in the coming months. First of all, the reform of the Constitutional Charter and the Code carried on with such fervor by our late Fra' Giacomo, whom at this moment I remember with emotion," he said.

The Council Complete of State convened in Rome Nov. 7-8 to elect a new leader following the death in late April of the order's previous grand master, Fra' Giacomo

dalla Torre.

The Knights of Malta said that of the 56 voting members of the Council Complete of State, 44 were present at the Nov. 8 election, including members from Argentina, Peru, the United States, Lebanon, France, Sweden, Austria, Germany, Holland, Spain, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Malta and Italy.

"All phases of the election were carried out in full compliance with anti-COVID measures," the order said.

Marianna Balfour, the order's diplomatic public affairs and press officer, told Catholic News Service Nov. 9 that given the order's continuing efforts to reform its constitution, the council decided prior to voting that it would elect a lieutenant of the grand master, who serves a one year term, rather than a grand master who would serve a lifelong term.

The Knights of Malta have 13,500 members, as well as 80,000 volunteers and 25,000 medical professionals providing relief and humanitarian aid in 120 countries.

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