



**ORDER OF MALTA
AUSTRALIA**

Handbook for the year of preparation

For admission to the Order of Malta

Second edition June 2021

Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem,
of Rhodes and of Malta Australian Association
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Prayer of the Order of Malta

Lord Jesus, Thou hast seen fit to enlist me for Thy service among the Knights and Dames of St John of Jerusalem.

I humbly entreat Thee through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin of Philermos, of St John the Baptist, of Blessed Gerard and all the Saints and Blessed of the Order, to keep me faithful to the traditions of our Order.

Be it mine to practise and defend the Catholic, the Apostolic, the Roman faith against the enemies of religion; be it mine to practise charity towards my neighbours, especially the poor and the sick. Give me the strength I need to carry out this my resolve, forgetful of myself, learning ever from Thy holy Gospel a spirit of deep and generous Christian devotion, striving ever to promote God's glory, the world's peace, and all that may benefit the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Amen.

Charism of the Order of Malta

Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum

Prayer of Consecration

O, Sacred Heart of Jesus,
O, Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Superabundant source of the living waters of the Holy Spirit and of the charity of God,
We consecrate to you, in complete submission and love,
the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta.

We offer to you our spirits and our bodies, our souls and our hearts, our interior
and our exterior goods, everything that we are and everything that we have.

We entrust to you all those to whose service we are sent, our Lords, the Sick and the Poor.
We ask you to let us always recognise in them the face of Christ, the Lord.
We entrust to you also all those who assist them.
We implore you to surround us all with your holy protection, especially in times of trial.

We beg you to make of each one of us, Religious, Obedients, Knights and Dames, Chaplains, Voluntary
Workers, Young People, docile and superabundant Instruments of Your Charity
and loving servants of our brothers and sisters in need.

Make of us true servants of the graces received by our family throughout
the length of its history, through the intercession of our Patron Saint, St John the Baptist,
of our Founder, Blessed Gerard, respecting our traditions, being firmly resolved to be of service
to the most deprived of our brothers and sisters, and in unshakable fidelity
to the Holy Church and to her Supreme Pastor, the Successor of Peter.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place our trust in You!
Immaculate Heart of Mary, intercede for us!



*The Consecration of the Order of Malta to the Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary was made at the behest
of the late H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio Sanguinetto, who
accomplished the solemn act of consecration on 4th April 2020 in the Magistral Chapel of the Grand Magistracy
in Rome.*



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Message from the 80th Prince and Grand Master

My greetings and warm wishes to the candidates who are involved in the year of preparation to become Knights and Dames of the Sovereign Order of Malta. My heartfelt thanks go to all those who are assisting you in this very important year of your life.

You are at a point of your journey to holiness where you are called by Our Lord to be welcomed into the Order of Malta so that it becomes your spiritual home.

In this home, members see the face of Christ in the poor and the sick whom they serve, and this effectively becomes an essential component of their way of being and living. These members strengthen the teachings of the Catholic Church by witnessing, nourishing and protecting their faith in this world of sickness and poverty.

During this journey, you will need to be firmly committed to getting to know and discern your vocation to be part of the Order of Malta, which is not only one of the oldest lay religious orders in the Catholic Church, but also one of the most extraordinary.

To be a Knight or Dame of the Order is a vocation. It is a life-long commitment which changes your life. Every candidate must be convinced that his or hers is a call from Our Lord, in the way Our Mother said “yes” to hers.

Being a member of the Order is not an honour or recognition of a certain rank in society. It is an opportunity to make use of one’s abilities for an extraordinary cause, which allows members to bear witness to their faith by personally exercising works of charity on behalf of the sick and the poor.

Strengthening the faith of each of us is an extremely important element in the Order of Malta. How can we put into practice the charism of *Tuitio Fidei* and, consequently, that of *Obsequium Pauperum*, if we do not keep our faith alive and strong within us?

Our commitment to strengthening our faith and to deepening our spirituality must never slacken. Our purpose can only be that of lifelong learning. Only in this way can we, as members of the Order of Malta, be ready to defend and bear witness to Christ’s truth and love.

Through the intercession of the blessed Virgin of Philermos, of St John the Baptist, of Blessed Gerard and of all the Saints and Blessed of the Order, may Our Lord bless you during this year of preparation and for life ahead as members of the Order of Malta.

With renewed best wishes to each of you and the assurance of my prayers for Our Lord’s blessing on the Australian Association and the New Zealand Delegation.

***His Most Eminent Highness the 80th Prince and Grand Master
Fra’ Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto***

Message from the Prelate of the Order of Malta

Dear Friends,

As you are about to start with the year of preparation to enter the Sovereign Order of Malta, I would like to wish you a holy and fruitful journey. When the Order receives new members during the beautiful and inspiring ceremony of the Investitures, it is always an extraordinary joy for everybody. I am convinced that many members of the Australian Association and of the New Zealand Delegation are already looking forward to that moment in which, God willing, you will enter next year the family of the Order St John of Jerusalem.

As Prelate of our Order, I ask the Lord to bless every one of you, personally. May this year be for you a new beginning in your Christian Life. As our dear Grand Master always says, it is not about honours or decorations or social promotion. It is an invitation that God addresses to us to grow in his friendship. The Lord wants to be at the very centre of your life while you express the desire to serve our lords the Sick and the Poor. Be sure that you will always be offered His grace if you renounce to any superficiality from the deepest of your heart.

On April 4, 2020, I had the opportunity to pronounce, in the name of the Grand Master, in the Chapel of the Grand Magistracy in Rome, the prayer of the Consecration of the Order to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary you will find below. It was an historical act that occurred through the express will and decision of Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre. On that day, the Grand Master told me that he would like this prayer be said by all members of the Order and be used to open all our meetings.

Dear Friends, you are not yet members of the Order, but in your heart, there is the sincere desire to belong to it. So I think that this prayer of Consecration will help you spiritually and contribute to make more fruitful this year. Do not hesitate to say it every day.

***His Excellency The Prelate of the Order of Malta
Reverend Monsignor Jean Laffitte***

Message from the President of the Australian Association

“At its core, the Order of Malta is a lay religious order devoted to deepening its members’ personal sanctification through service to the sick and the poor. Joining the Order of Malta is a lifetime commitment to a way of life deeply rooted in a Christ-like focus on the least in our midst.”

That passage, extracted from this handbook, summarises what we hope to achieve through our membership of the Order of Malta.

The handbook will be an invaluable guide to candidates during their year of preparation for reception into the Order. Candidates will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the long and fascinating history of the Order and come to grips with its spirituality and religious life. They will achieve this with the help of their sponsors and spiritual companion. The spiritual companion may be either one of the Order’s chaplains or one of our members in Obedience. Those members have been through a program designed to deepen their spiritual lives within the Order.

Those mentors will help candidates to become familiar with the Order’s activities, including our work for the poor, sick and dying and our activities in defence of the faith including our masses, meetings, retreats and reflection days. You will find that your spiritual companion will assist you to develop your own faith through regular prayer and reception of the sacraments coupled with spiritual reading.

Much of the advantage you will gain from this year will depend on your own work in reading and assimilating the essential and recommended documents and videos listed later in this publication and taking guidance from your sponsors and spiritual companion. As with any serious endeavour, the more you put into the exercise, the more you will receive from it.

I wish such a publication had been put into my hands when first I applied for membership. I urge candidates to use it effectively and am sure that they will benefit greatly from its close study.

***His Excellency the President of the Australian Association
The Hon James Douglas KHD***

Part One: Becoming a member

- Who are involved and what are their roles?
- What do you do to prepare for admission to the Order?
- What happens at the conclusion of your year of preparation?
- What would you study and reflect on during your year of preparation?
- What is expected of you as a member?
- How is our prayer a blueprint for lifelong formation?

Who are involved and what are their roles?

The Order of Malta as a lay religious order and spiritual home provides the means for members to respond to Our Lord's call to holiness (Mt 5:48).

While formation for the baptised is a lifelong process, preparation to be a member of the Order of Malta is a program with the specific goal of preparing the candidate for a spiritually fruitful life as an active member. This program takes place over a period of 12 months.

The preparation program has been drawn from official documents of the Order – Regulations and Commentary (2011) and Constitutional Charter and Code (1997). It is a common program for all candidates in Australia and New Zealand.

The Candidate

Thank you for accepting the invitation to commence your Year of Preparation for admission to the Order. Past candidates have found it to be a spiritually rich experience preparing to become a practising member of the Order of Malta.

You will be entering a lay religious order as a life member and will be, personally and fraternally, nurturing, witnessing and protecting our faith and serving the poor and the sick. You will hear with us the cry of the marginalised and respond with your heart and hands.

It is important that you acquire a working knowledge and experience of our Order to meet Christ in the poor and the sick (Mt 25:40); and to be a defender of His Body, the Church. With the rise of spiritual poverty in an increasingly secularised world, the tenets and practice of our faith are experiencing increasingly frequent and open opposition and attacks. Affluence and its attractions may also draw us away from our faith.

The Year of Preparation for candidates was designed with consideration for those whose state of life may already be a demanding one. There is a degree of self-pacing and fitting in with other duties in your life. Nevertheless, preparation to be a member does require allocating enough time and effort to achieve its aim – readiness to be an active and engaged member upon admission. Busy candidates, and few are not, would need to re-prioritise and free up space in their lives to allow for sufficient preparation. Preparation cannot be superficial or merely marking time for a year before the investiture ceremony.

These are the objectives we ask you to pursue to prepare yourself for admission to the Order:

- Familiarise yourself with the history, charism, spirituality, religious nature and life of the Order.
- Strengthen your spiritual practices.
- Discern wisely the call to be a member. It is not a casual decision.
- Engage in the activities of the Order, as much as possible with sponsors.
- Build relationships with others in the Order.
- Further your faith formation with the spiritual director assigned to you. If your spiritual director is not a chaplain of the Order, he would be a priest. In some cases, a spiritual companion who is a member in Obedience will be assigned to you.
- Join the Order's annual Lourdes pilgrimage. If that is not possible, commit to a Lourdes pilgrimage with the Order within three years of admission as a member.

The roles and commitments of your sponsors, spiritual director or companion and the regional hospitaller are

described in the rest of this section. In the following section, the preparation process is detailed in terms of three simultaneous streams of activities. Following that is the list of resources (texts, videos, website links).

If you are a candidate for the membership in the category of “Donat” in the Third Class, your preparation program is the same as that for a Knight or Dame.

The Principal Sponsor and Supporting Sponsor

Thank you for your commitment to sponsor a candidate preparing to be a member of the Order of Malta. As you know, your role extends far beyond providing a signature on a nomination form.

Time, effort, prayer and attention will be required of you to ensure that the candidate becomes an active and engaged member living our charism personally serving the poor and the sick. You and your candidate will be fellow travellers, mutually increasing what you understand to be membership life; and deepening your faith.

We ask you to meet these objectives in your role as sponsors:

- Accompany the candidate in the charitable works, attending spiritual and other activities of the Order. Be a companion, mentor, and exemplar. Sponsoring goes beyond signing an application form or being merely an adviser.
- Help integrate the candidate into the life of the Order and its community.
- Set clear expectations of membership. This is particularly important as all members are obliged to live up to the commitments they make at their investiture. Your personal example goes a long way to develop a successful member.
- Continue an active mentoring relationship with your candidate after his or her admission into the Order for at least a year.

The Spiritual Director or Companion

Thank you for your commitment to assist a candidate preparing to be a member. The Order is the spiritual house for members to respond to Our Lord’s call to holiness.

Continuously deepening one’s understanding of the Gospel is imperative to being a member of a Catholic order.

We ask you to assist the candidate in faith formation particularly in the context of the charism of the Order – Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum – around these topics:

- Being a member of a lay religious order
- Prayer & Sacraments
- Prayer of the Order
- The Beatitudes
- Mathew Ch 25:31–46
- The Good Samaritan
- Our patrons Our Lady of Philermos, St John the Baptist, and founder Blessed Fra’ Gerard

The Regional Hospitaller

Thank you for providing administrative support to the candidate during the Year of Preparation. It is important that the candidate feels welcome and supported with you as a point of contact for the various needs that occur during the course of the year. We ask you to assist with the following requirements:

- Pair the candidate with a priest, preferably a chaplain of the Order to provide spiritual direction. If one is not available, then pair the candidate with a member in Obedience as a spiritual companion.
- Assist the candidate to locate the resources for reading, viewing and reflection.
- Provide the candidate with the schedule of activities, meaning its works, Masses, meetings, retreats, reflection days, and social gathering in your region.
- Be the candidate's go-to person for practical information.
- Assist the candidate with mid-course adjustments if required.
- Introduce the candidate to members and experts who may have answers to the candidate's questions.
- Co-ordinate the candidate's documents for admission, payment of passage fees and annual dues. Most of the documents are required by Grand Magistry. Some are to meet safeguarding protocols.
- Towards the close of the preparation year, obtain from the principal sponsor and spiritual director/companion affirmation that the candidate is ready for admission.
- Help the candidate prepare for investiture such as ordering the insignia and robe or cape.

What do you do to prepare for admission to the order?

CANDIDATE	CANDIDATE & SPONSORS	CANDIDATE & SPIRITUAL COMPANION
<p>STUDY</p> <p>Become familiar with the history, spirituality, religious nature and life of the Order.</p> <p>Resources include texts, videos, websites.</p> <p>EXPAND SPIRITUAL LIFE</p> <p>Seek counsel from your spiritual director or companion to develop further your prayer and sacramental life and scriptural knowledge.</p> <p>RETREAT TO DISCERN</p> <p>You are preparing to be admitted to a lay religious order. Reflect on the purpose of the Order (Constitutional Charter Art.2) and the commitments made at the investiture of new members.</p> <p>Make a retreat during the year to discern the call to join the Order. Is it a true call?</p> <p>Ideally, join an Order's retreat for your discernment. Otherwise, one conducted at a retreat centre of your choice.</p> <p>LOURDES PILGRIMAGE</p> <p>Make a pilgrimage to Lourdes with the Order during the Year of Preparation or commit to make it within three years of becoming a member.</p>	<p>INITIATE CANDIDATE INTO THE LIFE OF A MEMBER</p> <p>The principal and supporting sponsors will guide and initiate the candidate into life as a member of the Order throughout the year.</p> <p>This is accomplished by one or both sponsors accompanying the candidate in participating in the activities of the Order, meaning its works, Masses, meetings, retreats/reflection days and social gatherings.</p> <p>There should be a minimum of six joint activities covering the full range of the activities. Candidates should as a minimum attend with their sponsors one reflection day, Mass, regional meeting, and a credible amount of work with the poor and the sick.</p> <p>Ensure that the candidate is introduced to other members.</p> <p>It is helpful to arrange with the Regional Hospitaller a "kick-off" meeting with other candidates and their sponsors. This will facilitate a sense of solidarity and direction, and some basic knowledge of the Order.</p> <p>Sponsors continue to be mentors after candidates have been admitted as members, for at least a year.</p> <p>REMOTE LOCATION</p> <p>Candidates in remote locations arrange with their sponsors a schedule of telephone or web-based contact if face to face contact is difficult.</p> <p>As a substitute for performing works of the Order, they may engage in charitable works in their own locations such as their parish.</p>	<p>DEEPENING THE FAITH</p> <p>A priest, preferably a chaplain of the Order will provide spiritual direction to the candidate. Where one is unavailable, a member in Obedience will accompany the candidate in faith formation.</p> <p>Structured meetings should be planned rather than conducted in an ad-hoc manner.</p> <p>Three meetings for the year are the minimum. Face to face meetings is ideal. If that is not possible, then use telephone or web-based conferencing.</p> <p>The content of the meetings should be oriented to the purpose of the Order and our charism Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum.</p> <p>These topics are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a member of a lay religious order • Prayer & Sacraments • Prayer of the Order • The Beatitudes • Mathew Ch 25:31–46 • The Good Samaritan • Our patrons Our Lady of Philermos, St John the Baptist, and founder Blessed Fra' Gerard <p>Candidates are encouraged to keep a journal of what they learn from meetings with their spiritual director or companion.</p>

What happens at the conclusion of your year of preparation?

When the Year of Preparation concludes:

Principal sponsor:

Please write to the Regional Hospitaller and National Formation Coordinator indicating the activities you and the candidate have engaged in and your conviction that the candidate is ready for admission as a member of the Order.

Spiritual director or companion:

Please confirm in writing to the Regional Hospitaller and National Formation Coordinator to indicate your conviction that the candidate is ready for admission as a member of the Order.

Candidate:

Please provide to your Regional Hospitaller or Membership Officer all the necessary documents as advised for the final stage of approval for admission by Grand Master and Sovereign Council.

The Chancellor vets the documents provided to ensure completeness and advises the President and the National Executive Council.

The President, with concurrence from the National Executive Council, formally requests the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council to admit the candidate into the Order. This request cannot be made less than 11 months after the candidate has been permitted to commence the preparatory year.

Please note:

The candidate becomes a member as of the date of approval by the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council (provided passage and annual dues are paid). He or she will be permitted to wear the member's rosette (lapel pin) until the investiture ceremony. After that, robes (for Knights) or capes (for Dames) and insignia may be worn.

What would you study and reflect on during your year of preparation?

ESSENTIAL READING & VIEWING

It is important that candidates complete reading and viewing the items on this “essential” list to be familiar with the history, traditions, spirituality and culture of the Order of Malta. This can be accomplished over the period of preparation. These documents are in hyperlinks in the PDF version of this handbook.

Official documents of the Order Of Malta

1. [Membership in the Order of Malta - Regulations and Commentary \(2011\)](#)
 - Introduction (Chapters I, II, III)
 - Third Class (Chapters IV, V, VI, VII)
2. [Constitutional Charter and Code of the Sovereign Order of Malta \(1997\)](#)
 - Articles 108, 109, 113–117, 119–129, and 230–239.

Publications of the Order of Malta

3. [Handbook for the year of preparation](#)
4. [The Sovereign Order of Malta at a Glance](#)
5. [The Order of Malta - Its sovereignty diplomacy and government](#)
6. [Sovereign Order of Malta's Activity Reports](#) (published every two years)
7. [Knights of Malta \(short history of the Order from Italian Association\)](#) – Marcello Marrocco Trischitta
8. [Journal of Spirituality](#) Published by the Order since 2002. Please explore the index of contents of the whole series in the Appendix for subjects of interest to you or read these selections:
 - a. Volume 3: Chapter 1 – Faith Formation
 - b. Volume 4: Chapter 6 – Pilgrimages with the Sick and Disabled to Lourdes
 - c. Volume 5: pp 25–35 – The Third Class and its Spiritual Demands / Practical Aspects of Being a Member of the Third Class
 - d. Volume 6: St John the Baptist, Guide and Witness
 - e. Volume 8: pp 93–107 – Obsequium pauperum in the Order of Malta
 - f. Volume 11: pp 65–70 – Formation and Service in the Third Class
 - g. Volume 15: pp 149–161 – The Spirituality of the Order of Malta in Daily Life
9. Papers and Speeches:
 - a. [The Religious Nature of the Order of Malta](#), Fra' Richard J Wolff
 - b. [The Essential Elements of the Spirituality of the Order of Malta](#), H.E. Reverend Monsignor Jean Laffitte, the Prelate of the Order of Malta
 - c. [Defence of Faith Advisory – Euthanasia](#)
 - d. [Defence of Faith Advisory – Religious Freedom](#)
 - e. [Defence of Faith Advisory – Seal of Confession](#)

Public video documentaries

10. [A Bastion of Christianity](#) – (Deutsche Welle)
11. [The Order of Malta – History and Modern Day](#) (EWTN Vaticano)

More Resources

Beyond the essential list, there are other resources available for a broader study of the Church's teachings, history of the Order, print and digital prayer and reflection aides as well as news of the Order. The resources listed here would be helpful for ongoing formation after your admission to the Order.

Church documents

1. [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)
2. [Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)
3. A Year with the Catechism, Dr Petroc Willey and others

Papal documents identified in Regulations and Commentary 2011

1. Second Vatican Council: [Lumen Gentium](#) and [Apostolicam Actuositatem](#)
2. [St Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici](#)
3. [Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's Encyclical Letters](#) Deus Caritas Est and Caritas in Veritate

There is an abundance of papal documents since 2011 from Popes Benedict and Francis. You may like to browse via this link: [Papal Encyclicals Online](#).

History of the Order (Recommendations to select from)

1. The Knights of Malta, H.J.A. Sire
2. The Knights of Malta, A Modern Resurrection, H.J.A. Sire
3. The Knights of Malta: 900 Years of Care, Rosita-McHugh
4. The Great Siege, Malta 1565 (History), Ernie Bradford
5. The Siege of Malta, 1565 (Eyewitness account), Francisco Balbi Di Correggio

Prayer and spirituality

1. [A Spiritual Companion Prayer Book](#), The Australian Subpriory of the Immaculate Conception. (Located in the Prayers section of the Order of Malta Australia App)
2. [Divine Office](#) – Liturgy of the Hours
3. [Magnificat](#) (for morning and evening prayers and daily reflections)
4. Spirituality & Formation of Members, Future Members & Volunteers of the S.M.O.M., Monsignor John Dimech (Available from Maltese Association. Please email: info@orderofmalta-malta.org.mt)
5. [The Imitation of Christ](#), Thomas à Kempis
6. Catholic Bible with commentaries based on the Catechism of Catholic Church such as the Didache Bible

Smart phone apps

1. Order of Malta Australia ([Apple](#)) ([Android](#))
2. [Universalis](#)
3. [Pray As You Go](#)
4. [My Catholic Life](#)
5. [Word on Fire](#) (Can also be accessed via the Order of Malta Australia App)

Browse the web

1. orderofmalta.int
2. orderofmalta.org.au
3. [Global Fund for Forgotten People](#)
4. [Malteser International](#)
5. [CIOMAL](#)
6. [Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem](#)

What is expected of you as a member?

A candidate at his or her investiture ceremony makes this pledge:

'We promise, in the name of God, in chivalrous fidelity, always to bear witness to the Catholic Faith, to defend the Church, and to lead our lives in accordance with the teaching of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church.

We declare ourselves as ready, as members of Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta, to care for our lords, the sick and the poor, with all our strength and ability.

We also declare ourselves ready to obey the Constitution, the Statutes, and the Rule of The Order, and so to fulfill with fidelity and diligence whatever The Order, and our superiors impose on us.

To all this, so help us God, Our Lady of Philermos, St John the Baptist our glorious Patron, Blessed Fra' Gerard, our founder, and all the Saints of our Order. You here present, we also call to witness our commitment.'

In Chapter V of Regulations and Commentary (2011), you will find what is expected of your lifestyle as a member. *You are obliged to work on and deepen your spiritual life continuously.* Therefore, it is firmly recommended that you:

1. Frequently receive the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance.
2. Say daily prayers, especially morning and evening prayers and the Prayer of the Order, the Rosary, the Angelus and parts of the Prayer of the Hours, and to pray for each other and the deceased, the ill and those in need.
3. Make a yearly retreat, preferably of three days, and look for regular guidance from a spiritual director and/or confessor.
4. Keep informed about the concerns and topics of the Church in its dealings with society at large and with respect to the life of the individual.
5. Take part frequently in the meetings and religious celebrations of the Order of Malta.
6. Make use of the initiatives offered by the Order of Malta aimed at helping you deepen knowledge of the faith and the history, traditions and spirituality of the Order.
7. Actively be involved in the works of the Order, and those of family, parish and local community.
8. Live a life of moderation in accordance with the spirit of poverty, chastity, and obedience in accordance with one's single or married status in life, and financially support the works of the Order having due regard for family duties.
9. Not neglect obligations towards family and set an example of love and fidelity in your family.
10. If you and your spouse are both members, note that membership can be an occasion to help you progress together in spirituality and service to the needy.
11. Be a model citizen and exercise Christian influence within your community.

How is our prayer a blueprint for lifelong formation?

Lady Janette C Murray DMG (Ob) , Australian Association

The spiritual formation of the members of the Order of Malta is a personal, lifelong commitment. This begins as a candidate preparing for membership, is developed as a member of the Third Class and as a member in Obedience and brought to fruition as a professed member of the Order. Primarily this is the work of God within each person, assisted by regular spiritual guidance.

The official Prayer of the Order of Malta might be the blueprint for spiritual formation throughout the life of the member, deepening and intensifying the life of service to the sick and the poor, underpinned by a firm spiritual foundation.

The Order's Prayer as our Blueprint for Service		
1.	Lord Jesus	We say this prayer to Christ and address Him as Lord, Creator, and Man.
2.	Thou hast seen fit to enlist me	A definite choice by Our Lord offered to each aspirant. What is this grace offered to us? What are we called to do? To be? What had led us to this point, to this moment?
3.	for Thy service	The reason the aspirant was chosen by the Lord Jesus to serve and glorify the Father. What service are we called to perform?
4.	amongst the Knights and Dames of St John of Jerusalem	What does it mean to be a member of the Order? What is the significance of having St John the Baptist as our patron? How is his life an example for us? What words did he utter and what actions did he take that can be translated into the way we live?
The Entreaty of the Prayer		
5.	I humbly entreat Thee	We recognise a need for assistance in this call. What are the dangers of pride and vanity in being a member of the Order?
6.	through the intercession	We name those most powerful and understanding to help us: the Mother of God, John the Baptist the proclaimer of Christ's coming, and Blessed Gerard who first responded to God's call to serve the sick and poor in the Holy Land, and all the Saints and Blessed of the Order. How much do we know of their lives and charisms?
7.	to keep me faithful to the traditions of our Order	The reason for our entreaties as we call on powerful heavenly help for the constant gift of fidelity. How can we remain steadfast to the traditions of the Order, the centuries old commitment to a pattern of thoughts, words and deeds?

The Traditions of our Order

8.	Be it mine to practise the faith	A daily commitment to a personal way of life that deepens both understanding and practice. What are the visibles and invisibles when we practise the Faith?
9.	[be it mine] to defend the faith against the enemies of religion	A continuing call to live our lives in the light, never ashamed of our commitment to follow Christ. The enemies of religion surround us in the many contemporary forms which call us away from the imitation of Christ. In what way may we defend our faith in our small, everyday actions? How can we identify an enemy of religion? How do we fight the temptation of maintaining harmony by hiding our faith? What do we sacrifice to defend our faith?
10.	be it mine to practise charity towards my neighbours, especially the poor and the sick	This is the “tradition” which can develop into involvement in the works of the Order wherever they are evident by our insight into contemporary needs. What is “charity”? How is it practised? “He who does not love does not know God; for God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). In today’s world, who are the poor? the sick?

Scripture underpins and nourishes all commitment to the Order

11.	Give me the strength I need	Recognition, again, of our need for daily help and perseverance in carrying out our resolution. How do we recognise the temptation of pride in self-sufficiency and being right?
12.	forgetful of myself	Strength for service that can only be carried out by self-forgetfulness in the interest of the other. How do we recognise our false self? How do we decrease while He increases?
13.	learning ever from Thy holy Gospel a spirit of deep and generous Christian devotion	Strength and perseverance to carry out a daily learning and study of the Gospels which will gradually deepen our love of the Lord Jesus and give rise to a generous attitude of heart and mind. What are the time-tested approaches that will help us understand Christ who is at the core of the Gospels?
14.	striving ever to promote God’s glory	We ask for this strength to underpin our work in prayer and action so that God will be glorified in all. How do we promote God’s glory ceaselessly in everything, every place, every moment?
15.	[striving ever to promote] the world’s peace	Working always that the final commandment of the Lord Jesus to love be brought to fruition. To work ceaselessly in spite of all barriers to be channels of Our Lord’s peace to all around us.
16.	and all that may benefit the Order of St John of Jerusalem	Personal commitment to whatever may further and benefit the charism of the Order, defence (witnessing, nurturing, protecting) of the faith and loving preference for the poor and the sick. How do we maintain continuous focus and act daily on our charism?



Part Two: About the Order of Malta

- Our purpose
- Our founder
- Our history
- Our structure
- Our Order in Australia and New Zealand
- Our spirituality and uniqueness
- Our patron saints
- Our works

Our purpose

The purpose of the Order is the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, service to the faith and to the Holy Father, and assistance to one's neighbour, in accordance with its ancient traditions.

True to the divine precepts and to the admonitions of our Lord Jesus Christ, guided by the teachings of the Church, the Order affirms and propagates the Christian virtues of charity and brotherhood. The Order carries out his character his charitable works for the sick, the needy and refugees without distinction of religion, race, origin and age.

The Order for fulfils its institutional tasks especially by carrying out hospitaller works, including social and health assistance, as well as aiding victims of exceptional disasters and of war, attending also to their spiritual well-being and the strengthening of their faith in God.

Constitutional Charter and Code Article 2, Par. 1 and 2

Our founder

BLESSED FRA' GERARD

Fra' James-Michael von Stroebel, Federal Association



Founder of the Order of St John of Jerusalem

Towards the end of the eleventh century, Gerard went to Jerusalem. There, next to the Church of St John, he established a hospice, a resting place, for pilgrims and the sick. To maintain his work, he founded a religious fraternity.

During the Crusader siege of Jerusalem in 1099, he was in the city. All the inhabitants of the city including the Christians were forced to assist in the defence of the walls, but instead of stones, Gerard threw small loaves of bread to the hungry besiegers. Having been so observed by the Muslim guards, he was accused of treachery, but when ordered to open his cloak, instead of loaves of bread, stones fell out.

After the conquest of the city, Gerard served the multitude of wounded, sick and dying. Many of the crusading knights put aside the sword to join Gerard in this work and the brotherhood expanded rapidly.

On 15 February 1113, Pope Paschal II solemnly approved the Order with the Papal bull, *Pie postulatio voluntatis*, addressed to 'Gerard, Founder and Warden of the hospice at Jerusalem and to his lawful successors'.

Gerard conceived the principle that the sick and the poor were the 'Lords' of the members of his order and the members were their 'serfs', under the feudal obligation to render the same devotion and reverence that secular lords would receive from their liegemen.

He died at Jerusalem on 3 September 1120. His feast is celebrated on 13 October.

Our history



1048 – Jerusalem

The birth of the Order of St John dates back to around 1048. Merchants from the ancient Marine Republic of Amalfi obtained from the Caliph of Egypt the authorisation to build a church, convent and hospital in Jerusalem, to care for pilgrims of any religious faith or race.

The Order of St John of Jerusalem, the monastic community which ran the hospital, became independent under the guidance of its founder, Blessed Gerard. Pope Paschal II approved the foundation of the Hospital with the Bull of 15 February 1113, and placed it under the aegis of the Church, granting it the right to freely elect its superiors without interference from other lay or religious authorities. By virtue of the Papal Bull, the Hospital became a lay religious order. All the knights were religious, bound by the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

The constitution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem obliged the Order to take on the military defence of the sick and the pilgrims, as well as guarding its medical centres and main roads. The Order thus added the task of defending the faith to that of its hospitaller mission. As time went on, the Order adopted the white eight-pointed cross that is still its symbol today.



1291 – Cyprus

After the fall of St John of Acre and the loss of the Holy Land in 1291, the Hospitaller Order of St John transferred its seat and hospital to Limassol on the island of Cyprus, where it had been present since 1210 thanks to the concession of important properties, privileges and commercial rights.

It continued to build new hospitals faithful to its hospitaller mission and benefitted from the strategic position of the island to constitute a naval fleet to protect pilgrims on the sea route to the Holy Land. The number of members coming from all over Europe continued to grow and contributed to the strengthening of the Order's structure, acquiring new possessions on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Among these were the important port of Famagusta, the city of Nicosia and numerous commanderies.

Due to increasing instability in Cyprus, which restricted their expansion on the island, the Hospitallers sought to consider a more suitable base for the seat of the Order of St John on the Island of Rhodes. Nevertheless, magistral lieutenants remained present in Cyprus to govern the priories and commanderies (said to have been over 60 by 1374) for another century until the middle of the fifteenth century, when the Knights were recalled to the conventual seat in Rhodes.

1310 – Rhodes

Under the leadership of Grand Master Fra' Foulques de Villaret, in 1307, the Knights of the Order of St John landed with their fleet in Rhodes, completing the acquisition of the island by 1310 when it transferred its seat there. Besides offering natural ports for its fleets, the island was a strategic location that linked the eastern and western worlds. From then, the defence of the Christian world required the organisation of a naval force. Thus, the Order built a powerful fleet and sailed the eastern Mediterranean, engaging in many famous battles.

The Order's independence from other nations granted by pontifical deed, and its universally recognised right to maintain and deploy armed forces and to appoint ambassadors, has constituted the grounds for its international sovereignty.

In the early 14th century the institutions of the Order and the Knights who came to Rhodes from every corner of Europe were grouped according to the languages they spoke. There were initially seven groups of Langues (Tongues): Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon (Navarre), England (with Scotland and Ireland) and Germany, and later on an eighth: Castille and Portugal. Each Langue included priories or grand priories, bailiwicks and commanderies.

The Order was governed by its Grand Master (Prince of Rhodes) together with the Council. It minted its own money and maintained diplomatic relations with other states. The senior positions of the Order were given to representatives of different Langues. The seat of the Order, the Convent, comprised religious members of various nationalities.

After six months of siege and fierce combat against the fleet and army of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the Knights were forced to surrender in 1523 and left Rhodes with military honours.





1530 – Malta

The Order remained without a territory of its own until 1530, when Grand Master Fra' Philippe de Villiers de l'Isle Adam took possession of Malta, granted to the Order by Emperor Charles V with the approval of Pope Clement VII. It was decided that the Order should remain neutral in any war between Christian nations.

In 1565 the Knights, led by Grand Master Fra' Jean de la Vallette defended the island for more than three months during the Great Siege of the Ottomans.

Following this victory, the city and port of La Valletta was built and named after the Grand Master, its founder. The Knights transformed Malta, undertaking urban construction projects: palaces and churches were built, as well as formidable new defence bastions and gardens. Architecture flourished as did artistic patronage. The island was given a large new hospital, considered to be one of the best organised and most effective in the world. A school of anatomy was also founded, and the faculty of medicine followed. In particular, the Order contributed to the development of studies in ophthalmology and pharmacology.

As well as these activities, for centuries the Order of Malta's fleet took part in the most important manoeuvres in the Mediterranean against the Ottoman fleet and against North African pirates.

1571 – The Battle of Lepanto

In 1571 the fleet of the Order of Malta took part in the Battle of Lepanto, contributing to the victory of the Christian fleet against the Ottoman Empire's expansion into Europe.

From – 1798 Difficult years

Two hundred years later, during his Egyptian campaign in 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Malta for its strategic value. Because of the Order's code prohibiting them from raising weapons against other Christians, the Knights were forced to leave their island. The Treaty of Amiens, signed in 1802, which established the sovereign rights of the Order over the island of Malta, was never applied.

1834 – Rome

After temporarily residing in Messina, Catania and Ferrara, in 1834 the Order settled in Rome, where it owns, with extraterritorial status, the Magistral Palace and the Magistral Villa on the Aventine Hill.

The 20th and 21st Centuries

In the second part of the 19th century, the original hospitaller mission became once again the main focus of the Order, growing ever stronger during the last century, most especially because of the contribution of the activities carried out by its grand priories and national associations in many countries around the world. Large-scale hospitaller and charitable activities were carried out during World War I, and World War II under Grand Master Fra' Ludovico Chigi Albani della Rovere (1931–1951).

Under the Grand Masters Fra' Angelo de Mojana di Cologna (1962–1988) and Fra' Andrew Bertie (1988–2008), the projects expanded until they reached the furthestmost regions of the world.



Our structure

The Order of Malta is a lay religious order of the Catholic Church. Faithful to its centuries-old mission of service to the vulnerable and the sick, it runs medical, social and humanitarian projects in 120 countries with 250 entities including 48 national associations. It has 13,500 members, 80,000 volunteers, 42,000 employees (most of them doctors and paramedics).

Its mission is summed up in its motto, *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*: nurturing, witnessing and protecting the faith (*tuitio fidei*) and serving the poor and the sick (*obsequium pauperum*).

As a sovereign entity, the Order of Malta today has diplomatic relations with over a hundred countries, has a permanent observer mission to the United Nations, and maintains representations to numerous international humanitarian organisations.

The Order is headed by the Prince and Grand Master who is elected for life by a council convened solely to elect the Grand Master when a vacancy occurs.

The Grand Master must be a Professed Knight (taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience). According to the Constitution, as the religious superior and sovereign, he must fully dedicate himself to the development of the works of the Order and to set an example of living by Christian principles, to all the members of the Order. He is vested with supreme authorities. Together with the Sovereign Council, the Grand Master issues the legislative measures not covered by the Constitution, promulgates government acts, manages Common Treasure assets, and ratifies international agreements and the summoning of the Chapter General.

He reports to the Pope as head of a religious order, although in most circumstances his rank of independent head of state prevails. He enjoys the protocol rank of cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church albeit he does not have a vote in the Consistory when a new pope is elected.

The Sovereign Council, elected every five years by the Chapter General, includes the high offices of Grand Commander, Grand Chancellor, Grand Hospitaller, and Receiver of the Common Treasure (Treasurer), and six other members. The Sovereign Council assists the Grand Master in the government of the Order. The Grand Master presides over the Sovereign Council.

The Grand Commander is responsible for religious and spiritual matters. He assists the Grand Master in fulfilling the charism of the Order and in the diffusion and protection of the faith, in the supervision of the grand priories and subpriories, and in the supervision of the members of the First and Second Class.

The Grand Chancellor is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, responsible for the foreign policy and the diplomatic missions of the Sovereign Order of Malta. He is also the Minister of Internal Affairs, in charge of the 48 National Associations of the Order in the world. Under the authority of the Grand Master he is responsible for the representation of the Order to third parties, the carrying out of policy and the internal administration, as well as the coordination of the activities of the government of the Order of Malta.

The Grand Hospitaller's responsibilities include the offices of Minister of Health and of Social Affairs and Minister for Humanitarian Action and Minister for International Cooperation. The Grand Hospitaller also coordinates and supervises the initiatives of the grand priories, national associations and other Order institutions world-wide.

The Receiver of the Common Treasure – the Minister of Finance – directs the administration of the finances and the property of the Order in coordination with the Grand Chancellor, under the authority of the Grand Master and the surveillance of the Board of Auditors.

Our Order in Australia and New Zealand

When in 1974 Australian membership attained the then minimum required number of 15 members, the Australian Association was announced by decree by HMEH the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council on 29 September. A later decree on 20 October 2004 approved both the institution of a Delegation of the Australian Association in New Zealand and its code. In 2020, there are close to 300 members in the two countries.

The Australian Association is also responsible for guiding members in Thailand and Korea until they evolve into national associations, as it did with the Singapore and Hong Kong Associations.

In 2017, the Australian Association moved from a state-based structure to a consolidated national structure with geographical regions reporting to national executives. There are currently six regions:

- North Central (Northern Territory)
- North Eastern (Queensland, Northern NSW)
- Central Eastern (NSW, ACT)
- South Eastern (Victoria, Tasmania)
- South Central (South Australia, Western Australia)
- New Zealand

The National Executive Council comprises of the President, Vice-President, Chancellor, Treasurer, National Hospitallers and Regional Hospitallers. They are elected for four-year terms.

Supporting the National Executive Council are the Delegate and Vice-Delegate of Communications, National Formation Coordinator, National Safeguarding Coordinator, Master of Ceremony and Honorary Historian. These are appointed positions.

Regional Hospitallers are responsible for directing work to fulfill the Order's charism – *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum* (defending the faith and serving the poor and the sick who represent Our Lord).

Our spirituality and uniqueness

At its core, the Order of Malta is a lay religious order devoted to deepening its members' personal sanctification through service to the sick and the poor. Joining the Order of Malta is a lifetime commitment to a way of life deeply rooted in a Christ-like focus on the least in our midst.

The full title – Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta – is usually referred to by the shorter Order of Malta, but the longer version provides a better understanding of our identity, the additional words shedding light upon the various rich aspects of who we are, where we came from, and what our purpose is.

Because of the chivalric background of the Order, there is a focus on honourable behaviour and the arcane geographic places in our full name. The knights were initially called the Knights Hospitaller (or Hospitallers) to describe their mission. But they were also called the Knights of St John because of the Order's patron saint, St John the Baptist, and also of Jerusalem because of their presence in the Holy Land. After conquering the island of Rhodes in 1310, they became the Knights of Rhodes. In 1530 the Emperor Charles V ceded the island of Malta to the Knights. Since then the Order's members are commonly referred to as the Knights of Malta.

Service is a principal element of the charism of the Order of Malta. It would be a grave misunderstanding to think that membership is an honour you are invited to share without thinking of the primary duty you will assume of service to the sick and the poor.

Witness to the Gospel is the other principal element of the Order's charism. We serve the sick and the poor, but we also commit to defend the Catholic faith by nurturing, witnessing and protecting it — the two go together. Our hospitaller activities demonstrate our defence of our faith.

The sanctity of human life and the sanctity of marriage are no longer commonly accepted by many communities, nor protected by our respective nations' laws. We rely on the traditions of the Order to remain faithful to the Gospel. As individuals, our adherence to the Catholic faith should be manifested by our moral conduct, our ongoing learning and sharing of this faith, and our service.

What does it mean to belong to a “lay religious order?” These adjectives seem contradictory. How can something be both religious and lay at the same time? Members of the Order are divided into three “classes”.

- The **Third Class** – to which most members belong and to which you will be invested – requires a **commitment to the rules and the mission of the Order of Malta**. They are “to conduct their lives in an exemplary manner with the teachings and precepts of the Church, and to devote themselves to the charitable activities of the Order according to the provisions of the Code” (Constitutional Charter, article 9, par. 3).
- The **Second Class** – these are members in Obedience, those who after a minimum of five years of membership, choose to **make the Promise of Obedience** and oblige themselves to “strive for the perfection of Christian life in conformity with the obligation of their state, in the spirit of the Order” (Constitutional Charter, article 9, par. 2). The members of the Second Class make a deeper commitment to the works of the Order through the Promise of Obedience. Members in Obedience currently comprise 5 per cent of the world membership.

- The **First Class** profess **Vows of the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience** (Constitutional Charter, article 9, par. 1). These professed members are a small minority but are essential to the life of the whole Order of Malta. It would not be an “order” without them. “Religious” refers to the vows taken by the members of the First Class. Only men are admitted in this class. “Lay” refers to the fact that they are not ordained; and that this order is not primarily composed of priests and deacons.

The three classes of the Order of Malta do not reflect degrees of greater or lesser prestige but rather increasing degrees of self-sacrifice. Our patron St John the Baptist gives us the stirring reminder, “He must increase, I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). St Paul makes more explicit the meaning of the entire Christian life: “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

Service to the poor and witness to the faith are means to the end but not the end itself. Herein lies the great difference between the Order of Malta and other charities:

The purpose of our Order is the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members.

Far more than doing good works, the Order of Malta is our path to Heaven. In a way similar to those who become Benedictine Oblates or Third Order Franciscans or lay Carmelites, the members of the Second and Third Classes associate themselves with the vowed religious of the First Class in seeking holiness by praising God through the gift of their lives in the Order of Malta. There is a distinctive spirituality in the Order of Malta that should guide us.

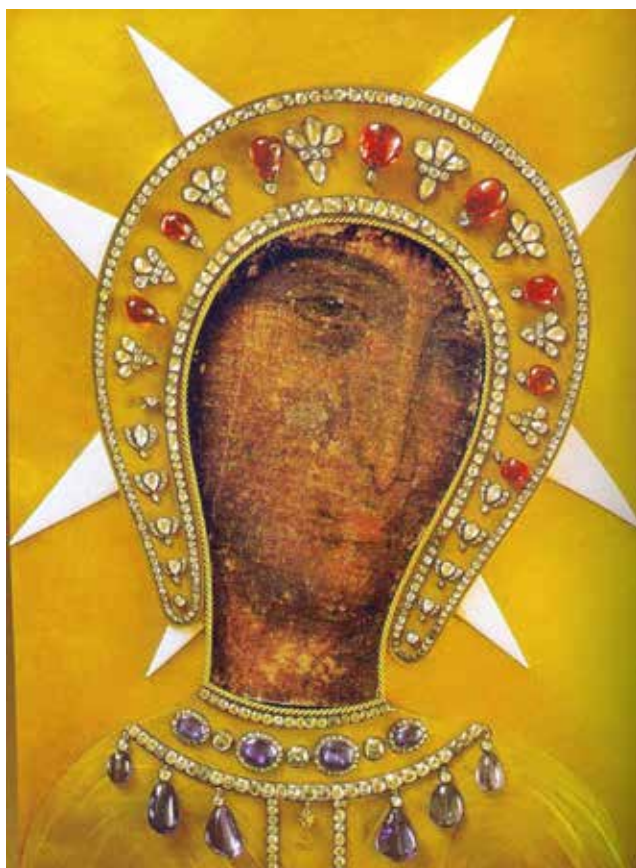
We are first and foremost disciples of the Lord Jesus seeking to follow Him more closely by living according to the way revealed to our founder Blessed Gerard. The eight points of our white cross symbolise the Beatitudes taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt Ch 5). St John Paul II described the Beatitudes as the self-portrait of Jesus. As members of the Order of Malta, we are called in a special way to meditate upon and put into practice the Beatitudes. Blessed Gerard shows us how to live them using our service and witness, and thus shaping our lives to be ever more Christ-like.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the model for all those who seek to draw close to God. Under her title of Our Lady of Philermos, she and St John the Baptist are the patrons of the Order of Malta. More information about our patrons and intercessors follows next.

Our patron saints

OUR LADY OF PHILERMOS

Fra' James-Michael von Stroebe, Federal Association



From the 4th to the 11th century, the island of Rhodes belonged to the Greek Byzantine Empire. In 1052 it was occupied by the Venetians. In 1306 they sold the island to the Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem. On Mount Philermos in southwestern Rhodes, there were the remains of a Byzantine church. It had housed a “miraculous” pilgrimage icon of the Blessed Mother, which pious tradition accredited to having been painted by St Luke the Evangelist and having been brought from Jerusalem.

The Knights of St John built a basilica on the spot and reinstated the icon, which was venerated as “Our Lady of All Mercies” and became known as “Our Lady of Philermos”. Since then the Order has been devoted to Our Lady under that title as its protector and patroness. The island was invaded several times unsuccessfully. After the first great siege by the Ottoman Turks in 1480, Mount Philermos was considered insecure and in 1513 the icon was moved to St Mark’s church in the city of Rhodes.

During the second Ottoman siege, in 1522 under Suleiman, the church of St Mark was completely destroyed, but the icon was found intact. Running out of supplies, the Knights accepted Suleiman’s offer to depart with military honours. On 1 January

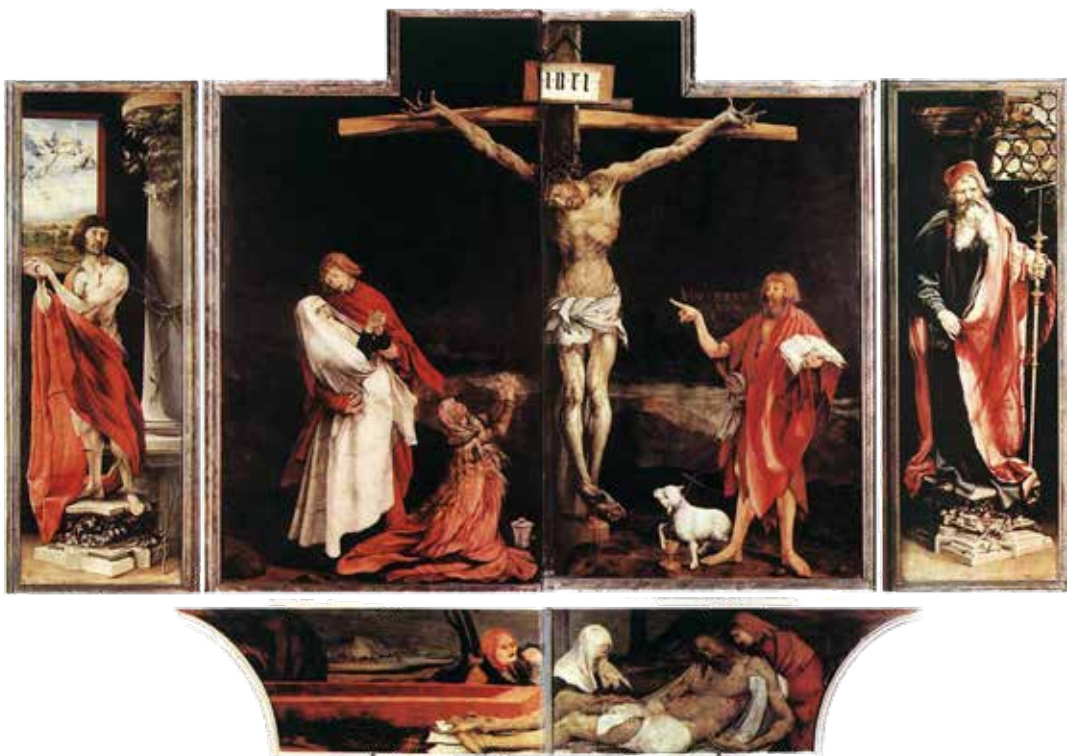
1523 they left Rhodes, taking the icon of Our Lady of Philermos with them.

In 1530 the Order moved to Malta. The icon was placed in the church of St Lawrence, which soon was badly damaged by fire, but once again the icon was not harmed. On 19 May 1565 Suleiman began the third and most famous of the Ottoman sieges of the Knights of St John, this time in Malta. Although greatly outnumbered, the Order withstood the attacks. On 8 September, celebrated by the Order as the Feast of Our Lady of Philermos, a relief army landed on Malta and the Turks fled.

After Bonaparte captured Malta in 1798, the Order was allowed to take away several important relics and the icon of Our Lady of Philermos. These objects ended their travels in St Petersburg under the protection of the Tsar, and came to be regarded as the personal property of the Russian imperial family. By the grace of God the relics were saved from the 1917 revolution, and in 1919 they were taken to Copenhagen. In 1931 they were transferred to Yugoslavia and placed under the protection of the king. When the Germans invaded in 1941, the icon was hidden in a monastery in Montenegro. It later was found by Tito and finally placed in a museum in Cetinje, the old capital of Montenegro, but was never displayed. Considered lost for some time, a few years ago the icon was rediscovered and now is on display.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Very Reverend Prof Gerald O'Collins,
Emeritus Principal Chaplain of the Subpriory of the Immaculate Conception



We have probably all seen pictures of John the Baptist wading out into the river Jordan to baptise Jesus, his cousin whose coming he has predicted and prepared for. Artists have also portrayed John as an emaciated ascetic on whom a long shirt made of camel hair hangs loosely. He carries not only a staff but also a scroll referring to Jesus, *Ecce Agnus Dei* (Behold the Lamb of God). At times he bears a book or a dish with a lamb on it.

In his famous painting of the crucifixion now held in the Colmar Museum (France), Matthias Grünewald (d. 1528) depicts John the Baptist pointing his long index finger towards Christ on the Cross, with the inscription: 'He must increase and I must decrease' (Jn 3:30). Nothing represents better the witness Christians are called to give through the witness of their worship and lives. They should point away from themselves to the crucified Jesus, whom they seek to serve in His deprived brothers and sisters (Mt 25:31–46).

Since the beginning of its existence, the Order of Malta has treasured and drawn inspiration from St John the Baptist. Its members wear on their robes a special cross of eight points. Like John, they want to point away from themselves towards the crucified Jesus. They seek always to maintain faith in Him (their ideal of *tuitio fidei* or defence of the faith) and to serve Him in the hungry, sick, homeless, and all His other suffering brothers and sisters (the ideal of *obsequium pauperum* or service of the poor).

Our Works

The Order of Malta is today a global institution offering professional medical, social and humanitarian aid. It operates through six grand priories, six subpries, 48 national associations, 133 diplomatic missions, one worldwide relief agency and 33 national relief corps. It does not pursue any economic or political goal and does not depend on any other state or government.

Its 13,500 members, 80,000 permanent volunteers and qualified staff of 42,000 professionals – most of whom are medical personnel and paramedics – form an efficient network that includes everything from hospital work, health care and emergency relief for the victims of war or famine, intervention in areas hit by natural disasters, general medical care and social services. Its programs – run independently or within a framework of partnerships with governments and international agencies – are now active in 120 countries around the world. The Order of Malta both supports and directly manages hundreds of medical centres, 20 hospitals, 30 ambulance teams and 110 homes for the elderly.

Malteser International

Malteser International is the worldwide relief agency of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid. Its worldwide operations include emergency medical interventions, long term reconstruction and development programs. Malteser International has more than 60 years of experience in humanitarian operations. There are twenty-six Order of Malta Associations belonging to Malteser International. Malteser International has its headquarters in Cologne, Germany, and currently runs 100 projects in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

For more information, visit: www.malteser-international.org

CIOMAL (Campagne Internationale de l'Ordre de Malte contre la Lèpre)

CIOMAL provides assistance to people currently or previously affected by leprosy – who are often victims of exclusion – for their medical and socio-economic rehabilitation. The disease is still officially present in more than a hundred countries.

Since its creation, CIOMAL has funded and managed centres providing prevention, health care, social rehabilitation and medical staff training in agreement with the government of the country concerned. CIOMAL carries out its own projects but also coordinates the projects of the Order of Malta to fight leprosy and support its victims.

CIOMAL currently manages in Cambodia a major program to fight leprosy throughout the whole country. In this program priority is given to the early detection and rehabilitation of patients in Order to spare them as much as possible the irreversible consequences of the disease. CIOMAL is also dedicated to the rehabilitation of the patients at the Kien Khleang Centre in Phnom Penh, who receive personalised physiotherapy as well as customised prosthetic limbs or orthotics if necessary. CIOMAL assists patients in their efforts to reintegrate into their community. The social and economic dimensions, through basic vocational training and the development of economic micro-activities, are an integral part of the programs.

For more information, visit: www.ciomal.org



Holy Family Hospital

The Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, Palestine, is a joint project across the Order of Malta under the operational responsibilities of the French Association of the Order. The hospital provides the population of Bethlehem and its surrounding area with an indispensable service, offering the only possible place for women of the region to give birth under good medical conditions. Since 1990 80,000 babies have been born in the hospital. Its primary objective is to offer high-quality maternity care to all women, regardless of race, religion, culture or social condition. Because of the continuing unstable political landscape and the very tight economic situation, the need for the hospital's services has increased. In recent years the hospital has added mobile units, enabling staff to travel in medical vans out into the countryside to serve a wider audience.



The hospital's operating costs are sustained by the Order of Malta. Patients pay what they can afford. For those unable to pay, charges are reduced or waived. The heavy financial burden is borne by the French Association, with help from the associations of Germany, USA, Ireland and Switzerland, and by the European Union.

For more information, visit: www.holyfamilyhospital-bethlehem.org

Global Fund for Forgotten People

The Global Fund for Forgotten People was founded by the government of the Order of Malta in 2011. The fund raises money for works of the Order of Malta, which reach out to those who would otherwise be forgotten. In partnership with the Order's national organisations and embassies, the Fund raises awareness of, and support for, particular issues which have fallen under the radar.

Forgotten people are those who, even in our modern world when the spotlight of attention seems to shine everywhere, are suffering beneath the surface.

The priority areas are:

- Forgotten diseases
- Maternal and neonatal health
- Children of prisoners
- The elderly
- Disabled children and adults
- The homeless
- Displaced people
- Marginalised communities

The Global Fund makes approximately 40 grants a year in support of the forgotten and builds the capacity of the Order of Malta to support forgotten people around the world.

For more information, visit: www.forgottenpeople.org

Lourdes Pilgrimage

The Lourdes pilgrimage is one of the most important works of the Order. It is so important that the Regulations and Commentary speak of attending the pilgrimage as an obligation to be completed in the first three years of membership, with the recommendation that candidates in their year of preparation attend the pilgrimage if possible. Although distance has been a barrier for members living in Australia and New Zealand, many members have overcome this barrier, and some have made numerous returns to Lourdes.



The Grand Master has designated the Lourdes pilgrimage as one of the key priorities of the Order. In addition to the important work of helping the sick, the pilgrimage provides a focus for the Knights and Dames of the Order that they do not find elsewhere. It is often said that once a member attends the Lourdes pilgrimage, they understand better what the Order is all about. The active participation in service to the Malades (the sick people who journey with the Association to Lourdes) is an eye-opener for many good people whose participation in hands-on work may have been limited. The Pilgrimage brings together everything the Order stands for – witness to the faith, service to the sick and the poor, a worldwide organisation serving in many countries, an institution of the Church with a long history and a strong tradition.

Around seven thousand members of the Order gather in the little village in the mountains of southern France each year over the first weekend in May. With them come thousands of sick people and their caregivers, medical teams, chaplains, and volunteers. Knights and Dames from all over the world meet in solidarity with each other through the bond created when they joined the Order of Malta.

In addition to Lourdes, members of the Order make pilgrimages to other Catholic shrines around the world, together with their sick and handicapped guests.

The spirit of pilgrimage dates from the Order's foundation in the 11th Century; in its hospital in Jerusalem ailing pilgrims were cared for, among all who needed help. For centuries the Order has run hostels and first-aid posts all over Europe to offer shelter and food to pilgrims. Allied to this is its mission to care for the poor and the sick. Pilgrimages always include accompanying the sick, in a sharing of love and care. This mission, which distinguishes every pilgrimage, is a life-giving experience.

The Order of Malta Clinic

The Order of Malta Clinic in Dili, capital of Timor-Leste opened in November 2017. It is a project of the Asia Pacific region.

It is focused on maternal and infant health care, particularly on nutrition. The under-five mortality rate in Timor-Leste is currently reported by UNICEF at 45.8 per 1,000 live births, which is a stark statistic if we compare it to only 3.7 per 1,000 for Australia.



The Order's primary mission is to do all we can to make any impact on this figure, with our Clinic located in the poorest part of Dili. All care is free to Timorese, and our service is supported purely by philanthropy. 70 to 100 patients are treated daily.

Creating Leaders

Creating Leaders is an Order of Malta scholarship program in Timor-Leste. The scholarships support underprivileged children to participate in formal continuing education.

Creating Leaders aims to assist children in the program develop to their full potential and prepare them for taking a fundamental role in the leadership of their country, so that they become positive agents of change and progress.

The Creating Leaders scholarship provides for school fees, meals in school, uniforms (including shoes) and transportation to and from school. Children no longer need to walk in 35-degree heat.

Asia Pacific Youth Camp

The Order of Malta's European tradition and thirty-year-old experience in running international and national summer camps for the disabled has now crossed the border into Asia. The first camp was held in Singapore in 2017 and is now an annual event.

Participating associations include Australia, Korea, Hong Kong, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Each take turns in hosting the camp. The host association funds the accommodation, transport and food for the disabled delegates, their carers and volunteers.



Defence of Faith Panel

The Defence of Faith Panel comprises of members who are experts on issues where Catholic beliefs and practices are opposed. The panel provides members with information and updates regarding issues such as euthanasia and religious freedom. The advisory the panel develops “arm and inspire” members with recommendations for actions they can take as individuals to protect our faith.

Coats for the Homeless

This project started in 2009. The Order of Malta spent time with the homeless in Sydney to understand their needs. As a result, the Order designed a three-quarter length coat, quilted and warm; shower proof; comfortable and portable.

Each night, 20,000 Australians and New Zealanders sleep rough on the streets. Half of all the people who request accommodation from the homeless service system are turned away each day due to lack of beds. This leaves them extremely vulnerable to the cold weather.



The Order of Malta annually distributes 6,000 coats in Darwin, Alice Springs, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Ballina, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Queanbeyan, Cooma, Newcastle, Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington.

Palliative Care

The Order of Malta has been active in supporting the provision of quality palliative care in keeping with its mission “to practise charity towards my neighbours, especially the poor and the sick”.

Melbourne: In Melbourne, for many years the Order has supported St Vincent’s palliative care hospice Caritas Christi in Kew and is a partner, along with St Vincent’s and Outer Eastern Palliative Care Services in Eastern Palliative Care (EPC). Volunteers interview and write the biographies of those in palliative care. This activity provides dignity and is life-affirming for those close to the end of their lives.

Brisbane: At St Vincent’s Hospital, members on a regular basis sit with, console and listen to patients in their time of great need. They also support the ongoing restocking of the drinks cart, which is a favourite among many patients.

Adelaide: Members in Adelaide visit the sick and dying at Mary Potter Hospice; and administer the Eucharist in hospitals.

Breakfast Program

Since July 2019, the Order has been sponsoring a breakfast program at Gray Primary School in Palmerston, half an hour from Darwin. The program provides some students with breakfast, as well as recess and lunch to ensure all children have access to food.

Community Care Vans

– Sydney and Parramatta, NSW

Poor health amongst the homeless is common and much of it is preventable. Our Community Care Vans provide much needed support and protection to some of the most vulnerable and marginalised members of the community.

The vans are staffed by volunteer drivers who visit locations around Sydney and Parramatta to distribute seasonal items of use to those sleeping on the streets. A nurse travels with them to offer healthcare.



In summer our volunteers distribute water, sun hats and sunscreen. Coats are distributed during the colder months and, year-round, simple hygiene packs containing toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and sanitary items for women. These packs make a big impact on their daily life and longer-term physical health. Masks and sanitising lotion were added for protection against COVID 19.

Meals for the Homeless

Members in Adelaide serve meals in Hutt Street Centre and Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless Persons.

BBQs in Sydney

Volunteers cook and serve meals to residents at Gorman House, an alcohol and drug unit, and Tierney House, a 12-bed residential unit, assisting the inner-city homeless population to access health care. Both are operated by St Vincent's Hospital.

Disaster Relief

Immediately after the New Year's Eve bushfires south of Sydney, members of the Order responded with visits to parishes in afflicted areas, bringing much needed food and fuel vouchers. Subsequent visits focused on listening to those in pain and anxiety arising from the trauma of the fires which were followed by floods and then COVID 19! A story telling centre was set up in the town of Milton and supported by a trained team of local volunteers. Members hosted BBQs for men to provide support for each other sharing their experience.



Appendix

What is in the Journal of Spirituality?

The Journal of Spirituality series is a publication of the Order under the direction of the Prelate of the Order. Articles reflect aspects of the spirituality of the Order and are written by members with considerable spiritual experience and knowledge. The entire series of Journal of Spirituality may be opened in the PDF version of this handbook with this hyperlink: [Journal of Spirituality series with index to content](#)

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Your notes:

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ORDER OF MALTA
AUSTRALIA

Our Brotherhood will be an everlasting one,
for the soil in which it is rooted is the misery of the world,
and God willing, there will always be people who seek to reduce
this misery and make distress easier to bear.

Blessed Fra' Gerard
1113, Jerusalem