

...continues from front page

service. It forms part of a broader ethos that encourages students to integrate their academic pursuits with practical acts of compassion.

It's not difficult to give some of my time.

Danusia says that students are told at their initial interview, 'We'd like you to do service.' For some, this continues a tradition begun at their Catholic schools. 'Community service helps the development of the whole student, not just the academic aspect,' she says. 'It makes them ready for life.'

Jazz was drawn to the residential college partly because of its emphasis on volunteering, which she read about in the handbook. 'I mentioned at the interview that I'd be interested in volunteering. I haven't done much of that in my life, and I'd really like to.' She says there is no real excuse not to get involved with something like the Knights' Coats for the Homeless, with the program being so well organised and close to the university. 'It's not difficult to give some of my time.'

The evening began in Carlton, where the volunteers approached several people on one of the main restaurant strips. Care packs were gratefully received. One smiling young woman took a can of coke, but explained that it was safer for her not to take anything else, as she had nowhere to store toiletries or extra clothing and they would likely be stolen—a stark reminder for the volunteers of the challenges faced by rough sleepers.

He was heading into rehabilitation and his sense of determination was palpable.

Later, in North Melbourne, Sophia found herself in a deep conversation with another woman. 'She was telling me she's on her third time being homeless. She's gotten kicked out of her apartment just because of tenancy issues.' The woman spoke of the particular vulnerability of being a woman on the streets and revealed that a friend had recently been sexually assaulted.



Despite her grim circumstances, or perhaps because of them, Sophia believed the woman 'was very, very happy to talk. I think she honestly would have stayed there a lot longer if we didn't have to leave.' The interaction left Sophia with a sense of the limits of what she could offer. 'I felt a little bit helpless though. "I'll just give you some water, yeah?" Like, that's all I can do. But just having a chance to try to do something is a good thing though, 100 per cent.'

Jazz, too, found value in the conversations. 'It's really interesting hearing everyone's stories, and actually getting to talk to them, as opposed to kind of just walking past on the street. It's a different perspective.'

In North Melbourne, different communities take turns offering meals. This week it was an Indian community.

The volunteers also arrived at several points where the Vinnies soup van was setting up. These locations tend to be near public housing high-rises, and the long queues attest the need for a decent meal, even for those who have shelter. Joe and Richard explain that the Knights of Malta do not judge, and if people ask for something they can give, they give it.

Once again, the volunteers fell into conversation with those who wanted it. One man clearly knew the Knights well and came up to laugh and joke with them. Another man revealed his struggles with methylamphetamine addiction, which had robbed him of his teeth and contact with his children. He said he was heading into rehabilitation, and his sense of determination was

palpable. One handsome, elderly man had a long chat in Vietnamese—which unfortunately none of the volunteers could understand—but he walked away at the end of the conversation with a broad smile, leaving the impression that he had benefitted from feeling listened to.

Danusia Kaska, who has run Newman College's outreach program for several years, says she often tells the students, 'Treat everyone like he's Jesus.'

'These experiences stay with our students long after they leave,' she says. 'They learn that service is not only about what we offer, but also about what we receive: lessons in humility, gratitude and shared humanity.'



As the demand for our services continues to grow, so too do the costs of delivering them. Your generous, tax-deductible donation will help us meet this increasing need and continue our vital work. Please support us in making a meaningful difference.



CREATING LEADERS GRADUATE UPDATE "I AM NOW A MEDICAL DOCTOR"

We are pleased to share an inspiring message and update from one of our Creating Leaders program's inaugural students, Maria José Sarmento.

Maria's journey reflects the possibilities and the opportunities of the scholarships made possible through the generosity of donors.

Dear Order of Malta,
Since my last update, I am delighted to share that I have graduated from Nova Medical School – Faculdade de Ciências Médicas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and I am now a medical doctor.
This is the realization of a long-held dream, made possible thanks to the support I received along the way, including from the Order of Malta and the Creating Leaders Scholarship program.
Looking back, I feel incredibly thankful for all the opportunities and encouragement that helped me reach this milestone, and I carry with me the inspiration to continue working hard and giving back.
Thank you once again for supporting Timorese students. Your generosity truly makes a difference, and I am proud to be one of the many who have benefited from it.
With gratitude,
Maria José Sarmento

Follow Maria's story from the beginning at orderofmalta.org.au

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

The scholarships cover school fees, uniforms, transport and school lunches.

Currently we have nineteen children in the Creating Leaders program, with four expected to graduate this year. All the children come from low-income families with multiple siblings and have shown academic promise. Amongst these students we have aspiring doctors, teachers, engineers and more.

To continue the scholarships for the fifteen children already in the program for another academic year we need to raise a further \$7,000 by the end of October.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to support this project.



COATS, COKE AND AN EYE-OPENING DOSE OF REALITY

Article originally published on melbournecatholic.org and reproduced with permission.

Nearly everywhere in Melbourne, the homelessness crisis is growing, as is the need for help. Social welfare volunteers go onto the streets every night to assist in some way, but they only scratch the surface.

On a surprisingly balmy winter's night last week, two Knights of Malta and students from the University of Melbourne's Newman College headed out for one of their weekly runs around the inner city to offer conversation, care packs and warm coats to those sleeping rough. The aim is not to solve the issue of homelessness but to offer recognition and dignity.

The outreach is part of the Coats for the Homeless program, an initiative started years ago by the Order of Malta—the ancient Catholic lay Order dedicated to serving the poor and sick. They distribute specially made black coats that are shower-proof, quilted and warm, with secret internal pockets for items of value.

It's not just about giving them coats.

It's about connecting with them.

They drive through the streets, looking for people sheltering outside shops who may need something. They approach respectfully, offering bottled water, a can of coke or a care pack containing essentials like socks and toothpaste. Most importantly, they offer their time.

Member of the Order of Malta Joe explains: 'We actually look for homeless people mainly in the city. They're under verandas, in doorways, and we just approach them. That's been very good, probably more what we're about, what we should be about.' He finds people are very receptive. 'But look, it's not just about giving them coats. It's about connecting with them. That's where I get my satisfaction from, connecting with them, because they're really great.'

On this occasion, there was not a lot of demand for the coats. Joe and the other Knight on hand, Richard, had predicted this, because the evening was warm and dry. They gave the students—two young women named

Jazz and Sophia—vests to wear bearing the order's distinctive eight-pointed Maltese cross and explained that many of the people they would encounter are aware of what the Knights carry and may ask for what they want.

Richard suggested starting with a friendly greeting and proffering some bottled water, while ascertaining whether the person might need anything, but mostly to take a bit of time for conversation if that was what the person wanted. Joe, recalling a recent encounter, says some might want privacy, but others are hungry for human contact. 'This lady in the city, she said, "Oh, thank you for stopping," because most people, when they see them, you know, they walk on.'

For the students accompanying the Knights, the experience often provides an eye-opening dose of reality. Danusia Kaska, Newman College's faith director, says that many students find it life-changing. Volunteer work is a cornerstone of the Jesuit-administered college's commitment to community

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OUR CHARITABLE WORKS IN ACTION

Every week, members of the Order of Malta provide direct support to the homeless, disadvantaged, and lonely. This vital work is made possible by the dedication of our volunteers who offer their time and compassion, and by the generosity of our donors who fund these essential services.

1. Semester 2 of our **Read to Learn** program in Preston is underway. This semester there are 20 students in the program supported by 10 volunteer tutors. This program assists primary school children build their reading capacities and good study habits. Many of the children in the program may not have the opportunity to read at home with their parents or have parents speak English as an additional language.

2. Pictured are our Order of Malta **Community Care Van volunteers** in Parramatta. Volunteers provide a weekly outreach service to the homeless by distributing Coats for the Homeless in winter, sun protection items in summer, and water and hygiene packs year-round. A first aid kit is also available if trained volunteers are on duty. Order of Malta Community Care Vans also operate in Sydney and Melbourne.

3. Every Wednesday, the Order of Malta **Community Care Kitchen** in Bondi Kitchen

provides a hearty free meal to anyone in need. Volunteers run the entire service, which feeds approximately 25 guests each week.

4. Twice a week, the **Mobile Community Café** visits public housing estates that are home to senior residents (aged 55+). Many live on their own and experience, to varying degrees, loneliness and isolation. The weekly visits provide an opportunity for participants to seek assistance/support from our volunteers, who can also connect them with community services if necessary. It is also an opportunity for residents to chat, share a cup of coffee and a snack.

5. Twice a month, Order of Malta volunteers run the Sunday food service at **Emmanuel City Mission in Brisbane**. They serve guests breakfast with a barista coffee followed by a sausage sizzle for lunch.

6. Our Order of Malta **Homeless Outreach Service** in Darwin has recently expanded to twice a month. Volunteers prepare, pack and distribute 90 meals to the homeless. In addition to offering a nutritious meal, they also distribute hygiene packs take the time to speak with those they meet and offer advice on nearby services.

7. The last of our **2025 Coats for the Homeless** have been distributed by our Order of Malta distribution teams. This nationwide project has provided 4,000 homeless with a warm shower-proof coat hygiene packs and socks this winter. Planning is underway for our 2026 distribution.



LOURDES HEALING MASS

For over 60 years, the Order of Malta has held an annual pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France each May. Over 7,000 participants from all over the world come together for confraternal fellowship and the opportunity to be of service to our Lords the Sick.

Here in Australia, the Order of Malta celebrates annual Lourdes Masses in each state, in the tradition of the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

On Sunday 3 August, members of the Order of Malta had the pleasure of hosting the Annual Lourdes Healing Mass at St Mary's, South Brisbane.

Conventual Chaplain ad honorem, the Most Reverend Ken Howell, Bishop of Toowoomba, was the chief celebrant for Mass that included the opportunity for those in need to receive the sacrament

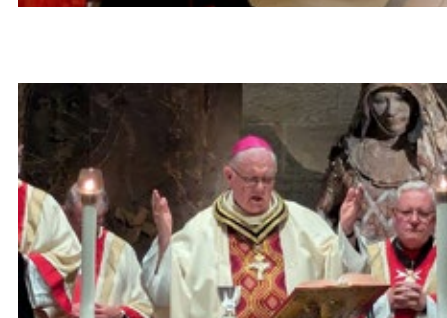
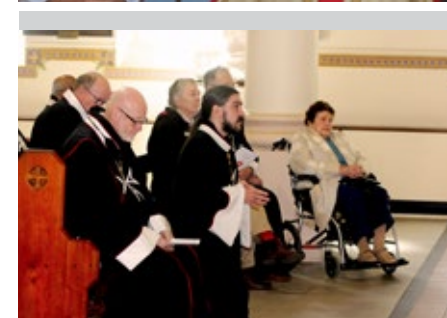
of anointing of the sick.

Magistral Chaplain Fr. Gerard McMorrow gave an inspiring homily in which he expanded on the "Hail Mary" as a prayer to show how it encompasses so much of the Gospels of St Juke and St John.

Following Mass, members distributed bottles of Lourdes Water and Rosary Packs while hosting a morning tea with the assistance of Emmanuel City Mission.

The next Lourdes Mass will be in **Sydney at St Mary's Cathedral on Saturday 6 December at 11am**. All are welcome to this special celebration but those with health challenges are particularly encouraged to attend.

Interested in joining the 2026 Order of Malta International Pilgrimage to Lourdes in May? Email info@orderofmalta.org.au



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION NEWS

MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

The Order of Malta Australia would like to introduce and congratulate the following Members who have recently been appointed to critical leadership roles in the Australian Association.



PRESIDENT
John Murphy



NATIONAL HOSPITALLER
Frank Testa



CHIEF CHAPLAIN
Archbishop
Anthony Fisher

INSTALLATION OF ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY IRELAND AS THE ARCHBISHOP OF HOBART

Congratulations to Order of Malta Chaplain, Archbishop Anthony John Ireland who on 12 August 2025, was officially installed as the Archbishop of Hobart during a solemn Mass at St Mary's Cathedral in Hobart.

The installation Mass was attended by nearly 600 people, including bishops, clergy, and lay faithful from across Australia. Among them were 17 members of the Order of Malta who travelled from around the country to participate in the celebration, as well as 10 Order of Malta chaplains.

The Order of Malta in Australia gives thanks to Archbishop Ireland for his ongoing guidance and service and offers prayers as he begins this new chapter of leadership in the Church.

ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE DD PROMOTED TO CONVENTUAL CHAPLAIN GRAND CROSS

On Thursday 31 July, National President, John Murphy, joined with members to celebrate the promotion of the Order of Malta's Chaplain, Archbishop Mark Coleridge DD to Conventual Chaplain Grand Cross ad honorem. The presentation took place at the Chapel of St Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane and was followed by a celebratory dinner with members.

Archbishop Mark has been a chaplain of the Order of Malta Australia since June 2003. During this time, he has been a constant supporter of and participant in the activities of the Order in Australia, fulfilling the role of Chief Chaplain for many years. We congratulate His Grace on the promotion and extend our heartfelt gratitude for his years of dedicated service to our Order.



HUMANITARIAN AID TO GAZA

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the Australian Association has transferred \$20,000 to assist the work of our international relief agency, **Malteser International, in Gaza City**.

Due to ongoing conflict and infrastructural devastation, the healthcare system in Gaza City has been pushed to the brink of collapse. Nearly all hospitals have suffered damage or partial destruction, and just

38% of primary health care centres are operational. The destruction of medical facilities, combined with shortages of essential supplies and personnel, has severely limited access to healthcare for the population.

The Order of Malta remains deeply committed to providing medical aid, with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem coordinating food aid distribution. Our priority is to establish a primary healthcare facility in Gaza to provide essential health services to the local population.

Prefabricated clinic containers have arrived in Israel and we are now

awaiting final clearance and border access to deliver the clinic and medical supplies to northern Gaza.

Please keep all those impacted by this conflict in your prayers. We will continue to support the work of Malteser International in the region as this crisis unfolds.

YOU CAN SUPPORT OUR HUMANITARIAN AID EFFORTS WITH A DONATION

Interested in volunteering? Enquire at orderofmalta.org.au/volunteer
Please consider a donation to support our works orderofmalta.org.au/donate



On the back of the card is a note about the Order's history and inside there is a Christmas greeting that reads:

'May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you throughout the Year'

PRE ORDER CHRISTMAS CARDS

Every year since the early 1980s, the Australian Association of the Order, has produced an Annual Christmas Card. It always maintained the same theme, an image of the **Madonna and Child Jesus with his cousin John, very familiar to us as John the Baptist, the Patron Saint of our Order**.

This year on the front cover we have the Madonna and Child with

the young Saint John the Baptist mid-16th century by Polidoro da Lanciano (Italian, c.1515-1565).

Members, Candidates and friends of the Australian Association are urged to support the spiritual and charitable works of the Order by ordering these exceptional cards.

Orders will be despatched from 30 October 2025 onwards.

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for a pack of 10
+ shipping

Visit orderofmalta.org.au to learn more about these members and their appointments.

I WANT TO HELP

You can make a donation by visiting orderofmalta.org.au/ donate, making a direct deposit or by completing this form and returning it in the reply paid envelope provided.

DIRECT DEPOSIT:

Order of Malta
BSB: 083 453, Account: 44 888 1897

- I am happy for the Order to allocate my donation to where the need is greatest;
or I would like to support:
- Coats for the Homeless
 - Emergency Relief Fund (Gaza)
 - Creating Leaders Scholarships

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- Send me information about leaving the Order a bequest
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Donations will be allocated to projects as requested by the donor. However if the needs of a project have already been met, we will allocate funds to another Order of Malta charitable activity.



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