

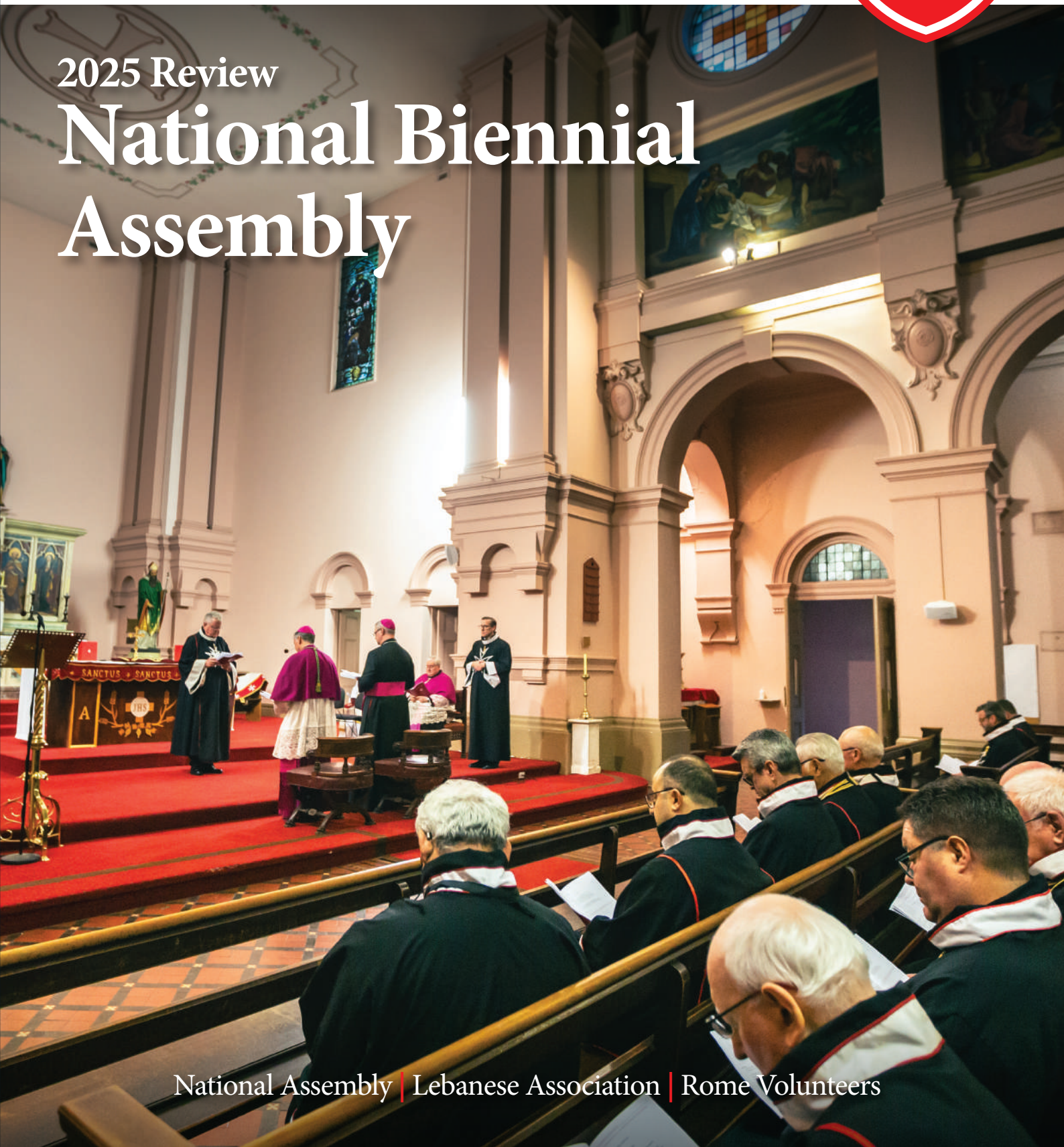
2025 Australian HOSPITALLER

The Annual Review of the Australian Association of the Order of Malta



2025 Review

National Biennial Assembly



National Assembly | Lebanese Association | Rome Volunteers



WELCOME

2025 Australian HOSPITALLER



POPE LEO XIV'S THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS OF THE ORDER OF MALTA

Pope Leo XIV received in the Paul VI Hall, the representatives of the organisations that contributed to the realisation of the Jubilee of Hope. Nearly 1,000 members of the Sovereign Order of Malta were also in attendance, alongside Grand Hospitaller Josef D. Blotz. Over the course of the Holy Year, they staffed medical facilities at the four Major Basilicas, offering care to those in need. During the gathering, the Pope personally thanked them for their efforts, reflecting, "There is so much goodness in the world, and you embody that goodness." His remarks honoured a year of humble and generous service made possible through the Order of Malta, with the support of more than 2,200 volunteers representing about 30 countries. Images credit: Vatican media



Welcome to the 2025 edition of The Australian Hospitaller, our annual review of the Australian Association of the Order of Malta. This publication offers an opportunity to reflect on the year that has been, to celebrate the dedication of our members and volunteers, and to look ahead with renewed purpose and commitment. In his 2025 message to the Order, Pope Leo XIV, who holds the rank of Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion within our Order, expressed heartfelt gratitude to members and volunteers for their generous service. His words speak directly to the heart of who we are: "Your Order has as its purpose the *tuitio fidei* and the *obsequium pauperum*, the faith that is propagated and protected in loving dedication to the poor, the marginalised, all those who are in need of support, and the help of others." This reminder calls us back to first principles. Our works are not merely humanitarian initiatives; they are acts of faith. They are expressions of Christ's love made visible through service.

Throughout 2025, we have taken time to review our key priorities to ensure that our efforts are directed where they are most needed and most effective. Pope Leo XIV also reminded us in his letter to "not limit yourselves to meeting the needs of the poor but announce to them God's love with word and witness." A powerful reminder that we should always be doing our work in the name of Christ.

It has been a significant year for our Association, and I write this message as the newly appointed President of the Australian Association. It is an honour to step into this role, supported by the wisdom, experience and generosity of so many within our community. I extend my sincere thanks to the Honourable James Douglas for his leadership and the substantial work accomplished during his tenure as President. His stewardship has left a strong foundation upon which we continue to build. I also want to acknowledge Frank Testa, who has stepped into the important role of National Hospitaller, and I thank him for his readiness to serve.

Fundraising and membership growth have become central areas of focus, strengthening our capacity to support the causes entrusted to us. In the spirit of renewal, we commenced collaboration with the Prelate's office on a worldwide handbook for the clergy in the Order and are progressing with strengthening our formation program for admission to the Third Class with advice from Grand Magistry.

As we look to 2026 and continue the works of the Order across Australia, I extend my thanks to every member, volunteer and supporter. Your generosity, faith and dedication are key to serving our mission. Together, we honour a tradition that spans centuries while responding to the needs of our time.

May we move forward with courage, unity and commitment to our calling.

John Murphy KMG (Ob)
Publisher



2025 National Biennial Assembly held in Melbourne with the theme: Defending the Faith

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

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- Vice President: Daniel Kwok KGCMG (Ob)
- Chancellor: Frank Zipfinger KMG
- Treasurer: James Gurry KMG
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2025 Biennial
National Assembly:

DEFENDING THE FAITH

From 20–22 June 2025, members of the Australian Association of the Order of Malta gathered in Melbourne for the Biennial National Assembly, for a weekend of prayer, reflection and education, under the theme *Defending the Faith*.

Approximately 110 Knights, Dames, clergy and distinguished guests travelled from across Australia and overseas to participate in the National Assembly 2025. The program included spiritual sessions, hearing from the Association's leadership and being intellectually challenged and inspired by guest speakers.

The Assembly was honoured by the participation of several guest speakers. Among them was Fra' Max Rumney who is the 58th Grand Prior of England, he travelled from London to address members.

We were also honoured with addresses from:

- Professor Francis Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Notre Dame Australia and Professor of International Relations
- Associate Professor Natasha Michael, University of Notre-Dame
- Professor Darius von Guttner Sporzyński KGD, Historian and Academic, Australian Catholic University
- Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM DMG, Deputy Chancellor of the University of Divinity
- Greg Sheridan, journalist and author, who spoke at the black-tie dinner on the Saturday night.



Alongside our guest speakers, we heard from our members of the Order's Executive Council who reported on recent accomplishments and discussed strategic future directions for the Association. Proceedings for the first day commenced on

Friday with Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, grounding the Assembly in prayer. The majority of delegates were accommodated at the historic Windsor Hotel, conveniently located near the conference venue at Australian Catholic University (ACU).



The Assembly formally opened with a recitation of the Litany of Humility and welcoming remarks from the Association President at the time, The Hon James Douglas, followed by the conduct of the Association's Annual General Meeting which included deliveries by the former Treasurer, Mr James Gurry KMG, the outgoing Hospitaller, John Murphy KMG and our Chancellor, Mr Frank Zipfnger KMG. The main item discussed that morning was the adoption of the revised Australian Association Constitution and the formal establishment of the Order of Malta Korea as a foreign delegation of the Australian Association – a significant step in expanding the Order's mission in the Asia-Pacific.

Delegates were then welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor of Australian Catholic University, Professor Zlatko Skrbis KMG, and by the South Eastern Region Hospitaller, Mr Paul Hoy KMG.

Professor Darius von Guttner Sporzyński KGD then opened for our guest speakers presenting on the topic "History as a Beacon: Embracing our past to illuminate our Charism". A central focus of the presentation was an examination of how the proposed History of the Order of Malta program, to be offered through Australian Catholic University, could effectively contribute to the ongoing formation and education of members. In particular, the presentation considered how structured historical study might deepen members' understanding of the Order's traditions, spiritual foundations, and service-oriented mission, and how this knowledge could be applied meaningfully within parishes, local communities, and the broader context of the modern world.

Our next speaker for the day was Most Rev Bishop Terry Curtin who presented on the Spirituality of the Order and the importance of this.

At lunch, the first investiture ceremony for the Assembly was held at the University's St Mary of the Cross, MacKillop Chapel. This ceremony was for Most Rev Bishop Tony Ireland who was invested as Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*.

The afternoon continued with guest speaker, Dr Gabrielle McMullen. Dr McMullen delivered an



address entitled "Perspectives and Hopes for Lay Governance in a Missionary Synodal Church: An Australian Perspective." Her presentation examined developments in lay leadership and governance within the Church, with particular emphasis on Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJPs), and their evolving role in supporting the Church's mission in Australia.

Presentations to close the first day were led by Australian Association members who are leading Hospitaller projects. Conf. Gerard O'Donnell KMG (Ob) and Richard Palk KMG focused on Lourdes Aged Care Masses and the Lourdes Pilgrimage, North Eastern Regional Hospitaller Danny Higgins on Philermos House and our now National Hospitaller, Frank Testa on a new Volunteers Strategy.

Day One concluded with remarks from outgoing President, The Hon James Douglas and attendees then travelled to Sacred Heart Church, for a presentation of insignias and a Vigil Service and the investiture of Archbishop Peter Comensoli and promotion of Archbishop Anthony Fisher to Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem* Grand Cross.

*Left (top to bottom): The Hon James Douglas welcoming everyone to the Assembly. Professor Darius von Guttner Sporzyński speaking on his presentation: History as a Beacon. Right (top to bottom): A message from SER Hospitaller Paul Hoy, Bishop Terry Curtin addressing the group on 'Spirituality of the Order' and below John Murphy KMG with Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*, Bishop Anthony Ireland.*



Delegates then returned to the Windsor for a Welcome Dinner to celebrate the gathering and a successful first day.

On Saturday 21 June, the second day of the Assembly, everyone arrived back at ACU for another 9am start. Opening remarks were made once more by The Hon James Douglas, and we began with the presentations straight after.

The first speaker for the day was our very special guest Fra' Max Rumney who gave an enlightening and uplifting presentation on "Life of the Professed". This presentation was broken down into three main parts: What the spirituality of the Order is, which include the rules, Constitutional Charter and Code, the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience taken by professed knights and then the Order's daily prayer and what it means to live the spirituality of Our Lady of

Philermos, St John the Baptist and Blessed Gerard, our works, our witness to faith. It was such an insightful presentation, and we felt very blessed that Fra' Max flew all the way out from London to join us purely for this occasion.

Fra' Max Rumney's presentation was followed by that of the second guest speaker for the day, Associate Professor Natasha Michael, who delivered a speech on "The Hospitaller Spirit and its Relevance to Contemporary Palliative Care." Associate Professor Michael explored the enduring commitment of the Order to the promotion of compassionate palliative care, particularly within jurisdictions where assisted dying is legal. The presentation examined how the provision of consistent, long-term, and empathetic care remains central to the Hospitaller mission and can make a profound and meaningful difference in the lives of patients and their families during times of vulnerability.

Our third guest speaker was Professor Francis

Campbell; Vice Chancellor of Notre-Dame Australia, who spoke on Faith and navigating the public square, highlighting the importance of emphasising the role of faith-based communities in participating thoughtfully in public discourse.

We also heard from National Hospitaller at the time, John Murphy KMG who spoke about works for the Order, David Armstrong about fundraising and growing membership and Vice President Daniel Kwok KGCMG (Ob) on our partnership with Malteser International in Asia Pacific.

By 2:00pm, the scheduled presentations for the day had concluded, with proceedings conducted efficiently and in accordance with the program. All members then prepared for transport by coach to St Mary's Star of the Sea Church where the Investiture Mass was celebrated. The service marked the investiture of Mr Graeme Finch, Mrs Jocelyn Cull Finch and Ms Rachel Pingel. The occasion also included the investiture of two chaplains, Rev Father

Left: Speeches from Gerard O'Donnell Richard Palk, current National Hospitaller Frank Testa and NER Hospitaller Damy Higgins.

Right: (L-R) The Grand Prior of England Fra' Max Rumney, Professor Natasha Michael, Professor Francis Campbell, current President John Murphy, David Armstrong, and Vice-President Daniel Kwok.





Bing Le and Rev Dr Max Vodola, who were invested as Magistral Chaplains.

On the Saturday night, we had a black-tie dinner and celebration held at The Carousel in Albert Park. We had around 140 people in attendance and overall, it was a wonderful evening. Awards were given out to Anthony Gerada KMG (Ob) for his incredible work as well as The Hon James Douglas KHD (Ob) for his terms as Association President and the wonderful contributions over the past six years. We were fortunate enough to have guest speaker Greg Sheridan who spoke on the future of the Catholic Church. A brilliant speech offering thoughtful insights and reflections that sparked meaningful conversation among attendees.

On Sunday, the last day of the Assembly, members attended Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral. The solemn liturgy brought the weekend to a fitting and prayerful close, gathering us together once more in thanksgiving for the time shared and the work accomplished.

Following Mass, we took part in the Corpus

Christi Procession, walking through the streets with the Blessed Sacrament, led by Archbishop Comensoli. It was a powerful public witness of faith, with members processing in their church robes and capes alongside clergy, altar servers and the wider faithful. The reverence and unity displayed throughout the procession was deeply moving, as hymns were sung and prayers offered for the Church and the broader community.

The procession provided a profound reminder of the centrality of the Eucharist in our lives and in the mission of the Church. Concluding the Assembly in this way reinforced the spiritual foundation of our gathering and sent members home renewed in faith, fellowship and purpose.

The 2025 Order of Malta National Assembly was a resounding success, marked by meaningful discussion, strong fraternity, and a renewed commitment to our shared mission. We want to again thank everyone who attended and we look forward to attending the 2027 Biennial Assembly in Sydney. 🇻🇪

Left: The new Executive Council, Investiture Mass at St Mary Star of the Sea celebrating three new members Rachel Pingel, Jocelyn Cull Finch and Graeme Finch (bottom right).

Right: Guest speaker, Greg Sheridan speaking on the future of the Church at the Saturday night Gala Dinner, The Hon James Douglas with award winner Anthony Gerada and then alongside John Murphy who presented James himself with Grand Cross Honour and Devotion.



ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

His Excellency, **John Murphy KMG (Ob)**, reflects on a year of change for the Australian Association, with new structure and priorities that allow a clearer focus on strengthening our faith and charism.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the remarkable leadership of The Hon. James Douglas, who served as President for six years and provided steady, wise, and principled guidance throughout, and has set us up with a wonderful opportunity for future growth. Frank Testa KMG (Ob) has stepped into the role of National Hospitaller, we look forward to seeing everything he will achieve in this role.

Over the past six months, we have realigned our focus and created more specific priorities to ensure we continue to best serve the sick and the poor. Our national priorities for the year include strengthening our membership, enhancing spiritual formation, raising the profile of the Order and increasing our fundraising capacity.

These priorities are intended to support the growth of the Order by attracting new members and increasing available resources, enabling us to better assist those in need and to continue developing as an association. To support this work, we are engaging an external organisation to assess our current fundraising approach and provide guidance in regard to fundraising. The spiritual life of our members remains central to the Order, we encourage all members to attend the Order's Masses, commit to daily prayer, and participate in at least one regional retreat each year, and chaplains' online reflections.

The key event in 2025 was the Biennial National Assembly which we hosted here in Melbourne from 20 – 22 June. This was a fruitful moment for the Australian Association. A large amount of the conference focused on the topic of "Defending the Faith" and brought members from all over Australia, New Zealand and overseas, to pray and walk away with a better understanding of what defending the faith really means and how we can contribute. With over 110 members in attendance, the three-day program included our AGM, keynote presentations, discussions, spiritual fellowship, and a moving liturgical program which saw the investiture of four new Chaplains.

Fra' Max Rumney, the Grand Prior of England joined us for the occasion and his presentation on life of the professed was a



highlight for all. The event ended on Sunday with a Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral and then members attended the Corpus Christi Procession. I would like to thank everyone who was involved with organising this event, we look forward to the next assembly in 2027 which will be hosted in Sydney.

We extend our warm congratulations to the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney, on his appointment as Chief Chaplain of the Australian Association. Archbishop Fisher is a highly respected figure within the Catholic Church in Australia and brings to this role a profound dedication to the spiritual life and charitable mission of the Order. We would like to thank our past Chief Chaplain Mark Coleridge, Archbishop Emeritus of Brisbane, who announced his retirement in 2025. Archbishop Coleridge has been promoted to Conventual Chaplain Grand Cross *ad honorem* for his selfless service, which included supporting the Order's spirituality and activities for over 20 years.

In 2025, we had the opportunity to work in close collaboration with Malteser International, with the objective of expanding our impact across the Asia-Pacific region through the establishment of MIAP (Malteser International Asia Pacific). The aim of this initiative is to strengthen collaboration with regional associations on joint projects in international aid.

In October, 17 members attended the

Asia Pacific Conference in Singapore, which was an exceptionally well-organised and valuable event. We extend our sincere thanks to Rose Lu and all those involved for hosting such a successful conference. Following the conference, a number of our Australian members including myself travelled to Timor-Leste to visit the Order of Malta clinic in Dili, now eight years old, and observe the work being undertaken by MIAP. We were hosted by Dr Alastair Furnival, and were also joined by the Grand Hospitaller, Dr Josef D. Blotz, who is the first member of the Sovereign Council to visit Timor-Leste. Everyone expressed great enthusiasm for MIAP and the outcomes achieved through these projects. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who have donated money after witnessing the impact of this work and we remain committed to continuing our efforts to support communities in these countries where assistance is most needed.

I also had the pleasure of travelling to Korea for the investiture of four members. The investitures were celebrated by H.E. Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung Archbishop Emeritus of Seoul, together with Father John Pak Ki-sok Magistral Chaplain of the Order of Malta. It was a special occasion also as it was the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Korean Delegation of the Order of Malta. In just a decade, the growth, energy, and commitment have become a shining example of what it means to live out our mission *tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*: The defence of the faith and service to the poor and the sick. Over these past ten years, the Korean Delegation has developed into a dynamic and compassionate force within the Asia-Pacific region. Under the exceptional leadership of Past President Silvano YM Park, current President Francisco SK Lim, Hospitaller Veronica Kim and many other dedicated members. We look forward to accompany the Korea Delegation in their journey to become an association in their own right.

Overall, 2025 provided great learnings and new experiences. We are well placed for growth, I look forward to seeing more wonderful achievements and events from everyone in 2026. 🇵🇸

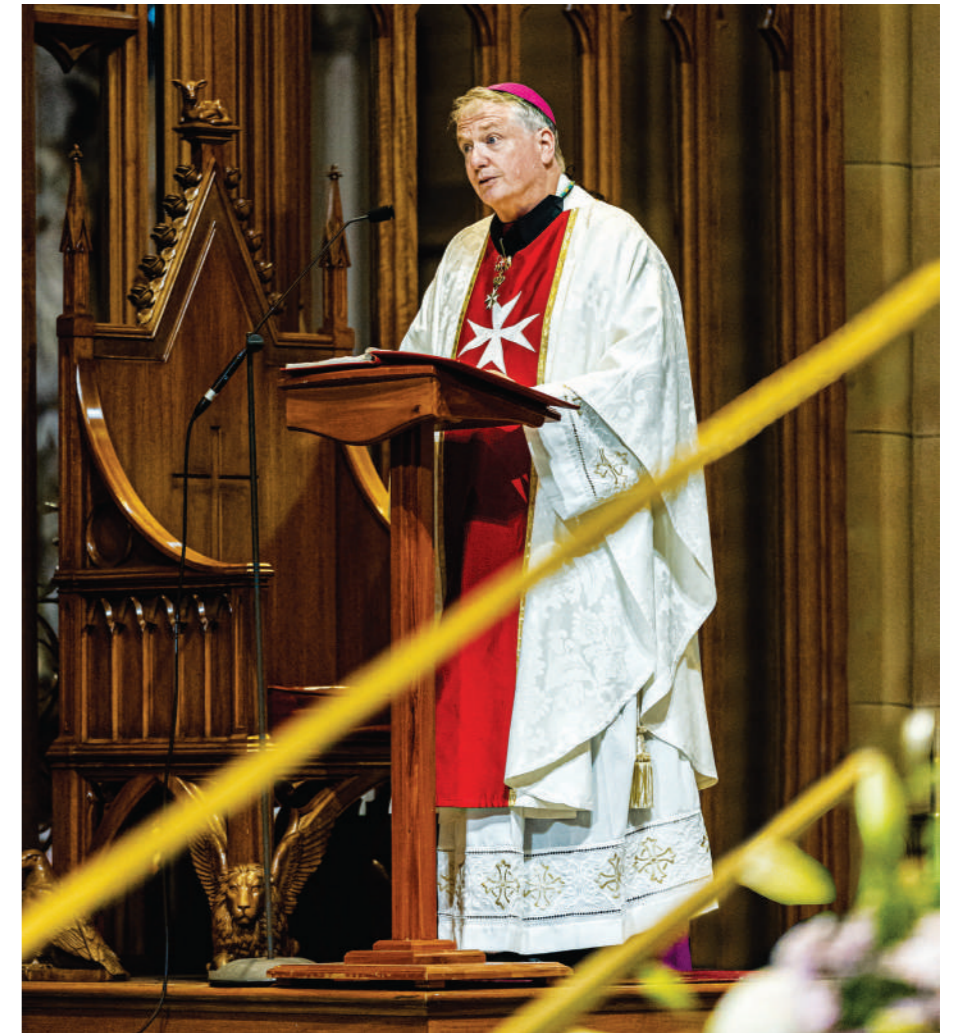
A message from our new CHIEF CHAPLAIN

It's with great honour and humility that I accept the appointment as Chief Chaplain of the Australian Association of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta. I ask for your prayers as I take up this responsibility, and trust that with your support I will be able to faithfully serve the mission of the Order.

For nearly a thousand years, the Order of Malta has understood its mission with clarity. At its heart lies a twofold vocation expressed in its motto: *tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum* - defence of the faith and service to the poor and sick. Both of these are, of course, more than just the goals of an institution or a slogan. They are a personal call to each of us to strive for holiness, an invitation for members of the Order to become, in the words of the Gospel, a living sign of God's mercy in the world. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church reaffirmed that the call to holiness is not reserved for the clergy or the consecrated life alone, but is issued to each person at baptism (*Lumen Gentium*, 39-42). This conviction has long been understood by the Order of Malta, indeed it exists first and foremost to glorify God through the sanctification of its members by virtue of the lives they lead.

Yet sanctification cannot happen on its own. It requires above all the grace of God. Critical to this is the regular encounter with the sacraments, formation of conscience, immersion in scripture and tradition, and the habit of charitable action rooted in Christ-like love. The Order nourishes spiritual life and provides opportunities to encounter God's grace through regular Masses, retreats, days of recollection, national online prayer, chaplains' reflections, publications, and more. The charitable works of the Order are themselves acts of faith, carried out in the spirit of Matthew 25, the Good Samaritan, and the parable of Lazarus — works which remind us that in the face of every person who suffers, we encounter the face of Christ.

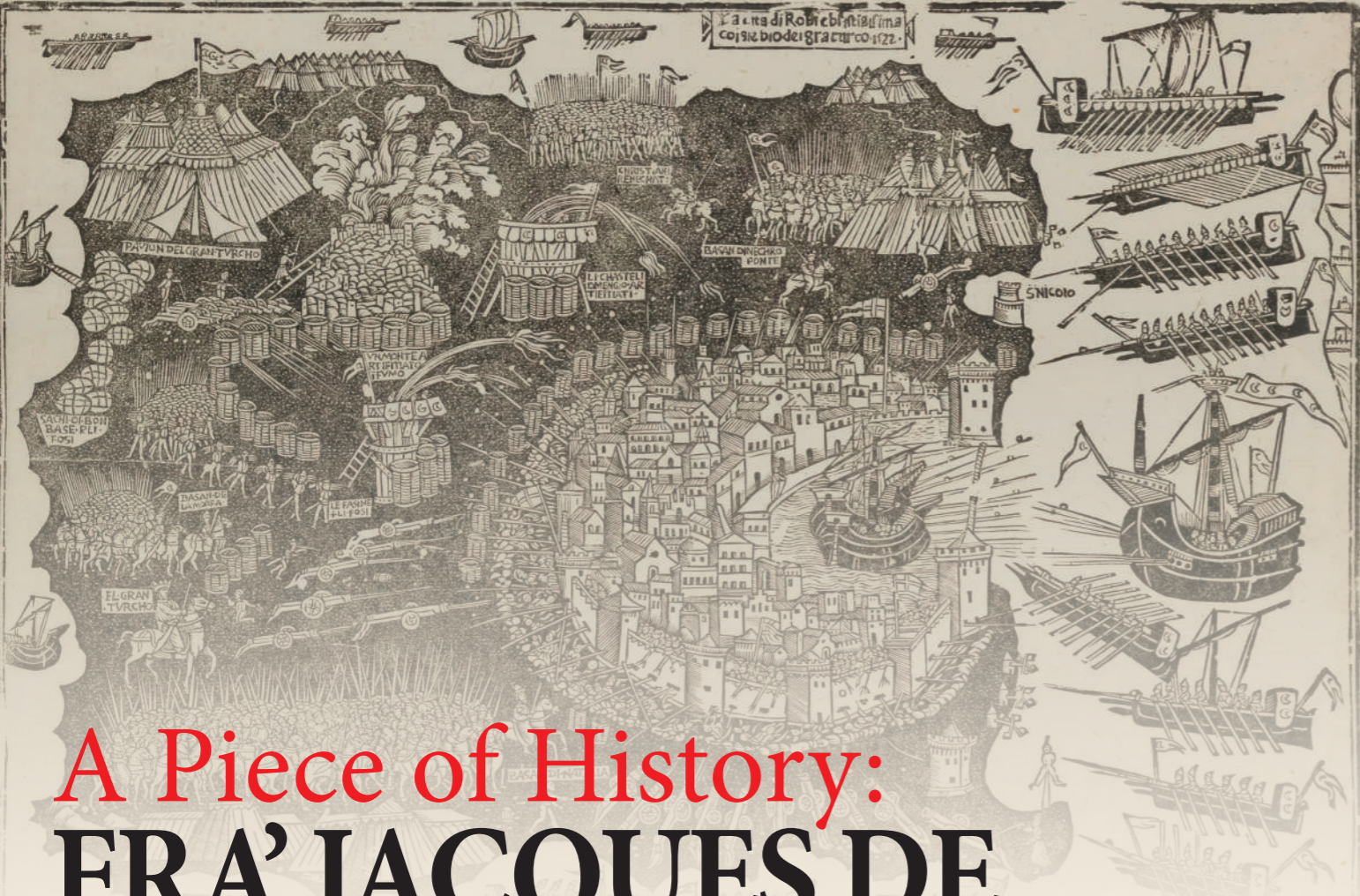
To this end, chaplains of the Order have a vital role. In celebrating Mass and presiding at liturgical ceremonies including the investiture of new candidates, they help sustain the sacramental life of the community.



By accompanying candidates in their formation, offering spiritual direction to members, and leading retreats and reflections on the Order's spirituality, chaplains help each person to hear and respond to their personal call to holiness. I encourage every chaplain to participate in the Order's hospitaller works, to join our meetings and pilgrimages, and to deepen their own knowledge of the Order's rich history and spirituality.

May the Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady of Philermos and Blessed Gerard, renew in each of us the fire of charity that has sustained this Order across the centuries. 🇵🇸

New Chief Chaplain, Most Reverend Anthony Fisher OP.



A Piece of History: FRA' JACQUES DE BOURBON AND THE BOOK THAT SAVED THE ORDER

Scott Samson KMG

500 years ago, in 1525, a Paris printer near the rue Saint Jacques quietly published a slim book. Its title was long and theatrical, *La grande et merueilleuse et très cruelle oppugnation de la noble cité de Rhodes*, but its purpose was clear and urgent.

Its author, Fra' Jacques de Bourbon, a French knight of the Order of St John and a veteran of the 1522 siege of Rhodes, had written something exceptional: the most detailed eyewitness account of the fall of Rhodes and, at the same time, a powerful defence of a dispossessed military religious Order fighting for its survival. This book is not simply a rarity of early sixteenth century

printing. It is the text through which a defeated institution explained itself to Europe and helped secure a new future in Malta.

Fra' Jacques de Bourbon: nobleman, humanist, knight

Jacques de Bourbon was born in 1466 into one of France's greatest dynasties. He was the natural son of Louis de Bourbon, Prince Bishop of Liège, and grandson of Charles I, Duke of Bourbon. Even more significant for his formation, his uncle Pierre de Bourbon and aunt Anne de Beaujeu governed France as regents from 1483, when Jacques was a teenager.

Their court was famous as a centre of Renaissance culture. Classical texts, humanist scholars and refined political discussion were part of daily life. Jacques therefore grew up at the intersection of arms and letters, well placed to become the kind of knight who could both fight and write.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, he came late to the military-religious life. Around 1503, at about 37 years old, he entered the Order of St John. By 1522, he was in his mid fifties and sat in the Grand Council, the Order's governing body. When the siege of Rhodes began, he stood at the very heart of the Order's decision making.

An eyewitness on the walls of Rhodes

In June 1522, Sultan Suleiman's immense armada appeared off Rhodes. The siege that followed was one of the defining military confrontations of the early sixteenth century. The Ottomans committed huge resources: heavy artillery, tens of thousands of troops and a corps of expert sappers to undermine the city's walls.

Opposing them was a small but determined garrison: fewer than 500 knights and sergeants of the Order, reinforced by paid soldiers and Rhodian civilians. They relied on discipline, religious conviction and the engineering genius of the Venetian military theorist Gabriele Tadini da Martinengo.

Fra' Jacques was not watching from a safe distance. On 24 September 1522, during a ferocious assault on the Bastion of Spain, a moment most historians see as the crisis of the defence, he was on the ramparts and was wounded by an arquebus shot.

In the book, this dramatic event is dispatched in a few spare lines. The tone is characteristic: serious, restrained, uninterested in self glorification. He writes as a witness for the Order, not as a hero of his own tale.

The fall and the choice

The core of the book is a tightly organised, chronological account of the siege from June to December 1522. Jacques divides the campaign into clear phases: the approach of the fleet, probing bombardments, escalating assaults, the subterranean struggle of mine and counter mine, and the long attrition of the final months.

He writes with striking technical precision. Artillery positions and calibres, the layout and weaknesses of specific bastions, the tactics of the Ottoman engineers and the counters devised by Martinengo and the Order. All are described in careful detail. The narrative is filled with the textures of real war: sudden collapses of wall, hurried night time repairs, desperate counter attacks, moments of panic, and acts of cool courage.

Crucially, he does not disguise the grim reality. Powder stocks dwindle; defensive works crumble under sustained bombardment; casualties mount among both knights and townspeople. Most bitterly, diplomatic appeals to Christian Europe bring no substantial relief. Christendom is too divided to act.

In this context, Grand Master Fra' Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam faces an agonising decision. Continued resistance promises only slaughter and total destruction. On 22 December 1522, he negotiates honourable terms with Suleiman: the Order and those Rhodians who choose to depart may leave with arms, movable property, archives and sacred relics; those who remain are guaranteed their lives and property. On New Year's Day 1523, after more than two centuries on the island, the Order sails away from Rhodes.

A book forged in exile

It is in the shadow of this catastrophe that the idea for a book on the siege is conceived and written. Jacques almost certainly composed it between early 1523 and late 1524 while travelling with the exiled Order through Crete, Sicily and the Italian peninsula. In 1525,

it was printed in Paris; other editions soon followed in Spain and elsewhere.

For such a substantial historical work in the early sixteenth century, this speed is extraordinary and revealing. The Order, suddenly without a territorial base, remained wealthy in lands and revenues across Europe but politically exposed. The memory of the destruction and dispossession of the Templars in 1312 loomed large as a warning.

Fra' Jacques' book on the siege is, in this sense, more than a chronicle. It is an act of institutional self preservation. Jacques knew that the Order needed a compelling, credible account that would defend the honour of the Grand Master and Council, explain their decisions and justify the Order's continued existence.

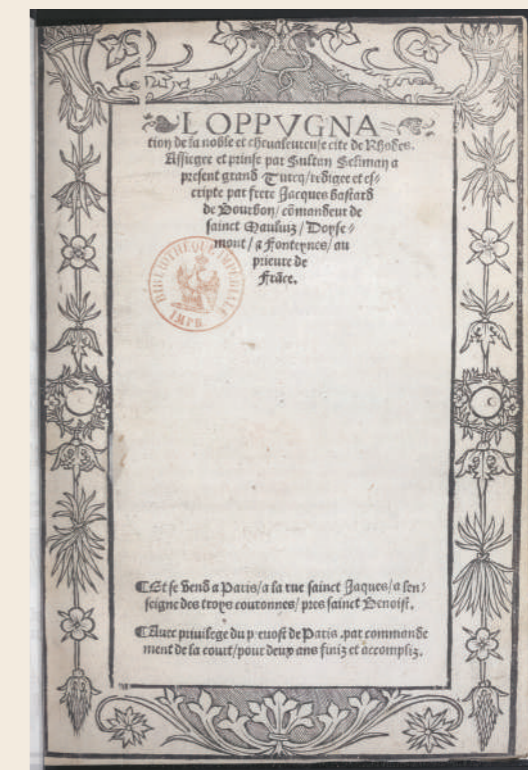
The result is not crude propaganda but a loyal, self aware institutional memoir, which is rare for its time.

From defeat to continuity

The final section of the book follows the Order through its first year of exile, culminating in its temporary settlement in Viterbo in January 1524. Here, Jacques shows that although the Order has lost its island, it has not lost its identity.

Rhodes is not treated as an ending, but as a turning point in a longer story. Instead, his narrative tone shifts from catastrophe to endurance. Within a few years, in 1530, Charles V would grant the islands of Malta and Gozo, as well as Tripoli to the Order.

In 2025, exactly 500 years on, we recall the moment when an exiled community, stripped of its fortress, chose to fight on with ink and paper, and, in so doing, helped secure its place in history. Between Rhodes and Malta stands this book.



Left: A page from Fra' Jacques' book "The great, marvelous, and most cruel oppugnation of the noble city of Rhodes".



SUBPRIORY REGENT

Professor **David Kissane, AC KGCMG (Ob)** Regent, reports on the Subpriory of the Immaculate Conception

Our world. We continue to live in an era of war, exemplified by the Ukraine and Russia, with new or continuing conflict in East Africa, especially South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia, Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), Central Africa (especially Democratic Republic of Congo) and West Africa (e.g., Nigeria). These conflicts create massive displacement and large numbers of refugees. While a peace accord has developed between Israel and Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, desperate poverty has resulted. Antisemitic attacks reach Australia with shootings at Bondi Beach. With such global upheaval, our Order is challenged to heed the cry of the sick and the poor, the stranger, prisoner, refugees and the homeless. There is so much work to do.

Our Subpriory As a result of the reform enacted by the Constitutional Charter and Code (2022), the Subpriory of the Immaculate Conception sits as a juridical body in its region governed by canon law, while Associations are civil bodies governed by the law of their country and incorporated as companies limited by guarantee.

In the past, Subpriories were home to members of the first and second class with their focus on spiritual formation; Associations were home to everybody in the Order within their country with their key focus on the works, alongside spiritual development. This was changed by the constitutional reform to bring everyone in the Order into the Subpriory, irrespective of whether they belonged to the first,

second or third class of the Order. Thus, the major difference lies in the Subpriory being governed by canon law; the Association by local civil law.

Our Aspirants to Profession

Following approval by the Council of the Professed and H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master, four members of our Subpriory became Aspirants this year to discern a vocation to enter the Novitiate and then take the three Evangelical Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience to become members of the First Class. This was a cause for great joy. The Subpriory has been deeply engaged in prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide Confrères Graham Beal and Dunstan de Souza from the Central Eastern Region, Confrère Michael Murphy from the South



Eastern Region, and Confrère Sean Parnell from the Northern Central Region as Aspirants to Profession.

Under the guidance of the Grand Prior of Naples, H.E. Fra' Nicolò Custozza de Cattani, and recent President of the US Federal Association, H.E. Fra' Thomas Mulligan, efforts are afoot to launch a Novitiate in Rome. The need for prayer and support continues.

Our members preparing for their Promise

During the next pilgrimage to Lourdes, H.E. The Grand Commander, Ven. Bailiff Fra' Emmanuel Rousseau will receive initial promises from Confrères John Murphy and Keiron Long and Consoeurs Mary Long and Lynne Yap, and a permanent promise from Consoeur Maria Randazzo. We continue to grow our members in Obedience as they provide leadership and nurture spirituality.

We were blessed to have H.E. Confrère Michael K Grace, Coordinator of the Second Class and Member of Sovereign Council, attend the Asia-Pacific Conference in Singapore in November to encourage members to consider the Promise of Obedience as a pathway to deeper spirituality, holiness and commitment to our Order, its charism and its works.

Members of our Foreign Delegations in South Korea and Thailand were encouraged to discern this vocation.

Subpriory Council

The activities of our Subpriory were guided throughout 2025 by the Subpriory Council, comprising Vice-Regent Confrère Damian Benson, Chancellor Consoeur Jennifer Dunlop, Hospitaller Confrère Daniel Kwok, Rosary Coordinator Confrère Anthony Gerada, and Councillor Consoeur Lilian Santonelli. We have been indebted to receive guidance from our Principal Chaplain, Most Rev Terence Curtin, and our Magistral Chaplains who led four annual retreats located in February in Melbourne, June in Brisbane, August at Varroville in NSW and Adelaide in October. Our Chaplains also continue to offer Saturday morning spiritual reflections, which are deeply appreciated by all members across Australia.

My deep gratitude is extended to all of the Councillors and members of our Subpriory for their spirit of fraternity, care and commitment to our Order as we strive to increase our works, deepen our spirituality, defend the faith and care for Our Lords, the Sick and the Poor. ✠

Above: Grand Prior of England Fra' Max Rumney, David Kissane and The Hon James Douglas.

Hospitaller Report

2025 ANNUAL REVIEW

Our new National Hospitaller, **Frank Testa KMG (Ob)** reflects on his first year in his new role offering insight into a period marked by growth, learning and renewed commitment to the Order's mission.



It is a great honour and privilege to be writing this report within my first year as National Hospitaller. Since succeeding our new President John Murphy as National Hospitaller, it has been a steep learning curve for me, and I thank John for his mentorship and support. The Order of Malta in Australia is in very competent hands with John as our Association's National President, and I am excited to be part of a National Executive team that has a focus on caring for the poor and sick and on encouraging the spiritual development of our members. I am also grateful to work with a team of committed Regional Hospitallers who are striving to deliver programs and services to the poor in their respective regions.

Asia Pacific Conference 2025 - Singapore
The Asia Pacific Conference at the end of 2025 in Singapore was a highlight of the

year for me. This conference was attended by members and executive officer bearers from the Australian, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines, Thailand, Korean and Lebanese Associations, as well as the Order's Ambassadors to Thailand, Micronesia and Nauru, Timor Leste and Cambodia. Representatives of Malteser International, the Prelate to the Order, and three chaplains were also in attendance. 62 delegates attending the conference, of which 17 were from the Australian Delegation. The formation of Malteser International Asia Pacific during the conference has been an amazing achievement for our Order in the Asia Pacific, and it will allow us to move forward in a collaborative effort with the other Associations in Asia for the benefit for the poor in our region.

The conference was attended by the Grand Hospitaller HE Josef Blotz, the Grand Chancellor HE Riccardo Paterno di Montecupo, and members of the Sovereign Council HE Michael Grace and the Grand Commander Fra' Emmanuel Rousseau via video link from Rome. I have made many new contacts with the Hospitallers of the Asia Pacific Associations, and we have already formed lines of communications and committed to work closer and support each other in times of natural disaster.

Philermos House

Congratulations to our Chaplain Fr Gerrard Morrow and our North Eastern Regional Hospitaller Danny Higgins on the commissioning of Philermos House in Southport. This centre will be the flagship project for the Order in Australia through 2026, and it is from their efforts with the support of our Chancellor Frank Zipfinger that this project has come to fruition. With a range of services available at this centre, I am excited to see how many poor and homeless people this project will help in the upcoming year.

Creating Leaders graduates in Timor Leste

The Order of Malta's 'Creating Leaders' scholarship program in Timor Leste is making a big difference by continuing to support underprivileged children, many of whom are orphans, to participate in formal education. The program aims to assist the scholarship children 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. Like many developing countries, Timor-Leste has high levels of poverty and low national human development. Education is an important vehicle to employment, independence, social and political empowerment and consequently, national development. However, a cycle of poverty often creates barriers to the children's participation in education. Some students took time out to write a message of thanks to their benefactors through the Order of Malta for the opportunities that were given to them over the course of their schooling and discussed their plans for the future.



"I would like to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to all donors and to the Ambassador of the Order of Malta for the financial support provided to my family. Thanks to this support, I was able to successfully complete my senior high school education at Canossa School. Once again, thank you very much.
Sincerely,
Faustina M. da Costa Araujo"

"By the grace of God, in my final year of secondary school, I received invaluable support from my class teacher, who worked closely with the school administration to help me access a study scholarship and merit support. This opportunity was made possible through the support of the Order of Malta. This assistance allowed me to regain stability and confidence in my learning process and to complete my final year with renewed motivation. As I await the announcement of the national examination results, which will be released in approximately one month, I am carefully considering my options for university studies. I am interested in pursuing studies in the fields of Health Sciences, Engineering, or Aeronautical Sciences. However, my strongest aspiration is to study in the health field, as I wish to become a healthcare professional in the future.
Sincerely,
Elixce Filomena P Soares

The Order of Malta and Australian Catholic University (ACU) Hub

'The Hub' partnership between the Order of Malta and the ACU continued to play a key role in fostering inclusive community development through meaningful engagement with disadvantaged

communities. Order of Malta members participate in programs where they assist in developing community relationships and help disadvantaged children with schooling needs. Some of the programs include:

- The Mobile Community Café – travelling to public housing estates, the Mobile Community Café provides a welcoming safe space for local residents to interact and connect with each other over a coffee and snack and develop friendships and support networks.
- The 'Read to Learn' program – Order members, ACU students and volunteers provide tutoring and mentorship to assist primary students from culturally diverse backgrounds to develop reading and literacy skills.
- Agg Street Community Garden – This community garden was established by The Hub to encourage community interaction and engagement. The Garden allows the local community to meet and work together by growing herbs and vegetables which are then consumed by the participants.
- Cooking and Connection Program – this program engages families from low socio-economic backgrounds to teach them how to prepare simple, cost effective, nutritious meals. The cooking groups allow the participants to engage and develop social connections whilst sharing and learning cooking tips from each other and then enjoying a meal together. The program is facilitated by ACU Master of Dietetic students and allows them to apply the knowledge that they obtain through their studies and share it with vulnerable communities.

Coats for the Homeless

Our national 'Coats for the Homeless' program continues to go from strength to strength. Homelessness and people who are 'sleeping rough' are unfortunately on the rise due to the pressures of the cost of living and the situation with public housing. Members and volunteers have distributed 4000 coats in 2025 in all the mainland states of Australia and have started to branch out to distribute coats in regional areas of NSW such as Newcastle and Wollongong, and we are currently exploring how we can distribute coats more extensively in Western Sydney and in our National Capital in the upcoming year. We have already planned and placed our order for more coats for 2026 so that we will be ready before the colder months arrive.

Lourdes Day Mass

Our Lourdes Day masses are continuing in each region and are very well attended

by the faithful seeking a special blessing for healing that is unique to our blessed mother of Lourdes. These masses provide an opportunity for the Order to bring a bit of Lourdes to the frail and elderly that are not physically able to make the long pilgrimage to this special part of France. Members involved in the distribution of Lourdes water engage in promotion of the faith in keeping to the charisma of our Order.

Volunteers

Our Volunteers will become a focus for our Order in the upcoming year. Many of our projects have attracted a high number of volunteers who are committed to assisting our members in their work, and caring for our growing army of volunteers is becoming a necessity. We thank the Order of Malta volunteers who all have a genuine interest in the works of our Order caring for the poor, sick and marginalised of our society.

I would also like to thank Ms. Michelle Rees for her tireless efforts in supporting our Association's Hospitaller works and her coordination of our fundraising efforts. Without her work in this area, many of our projects would not have the much-needed funds to sustain them. I would like to thank our many benefactors for without their support, many of our projects would be limited in their reach. We have had a record year for fundraising, and this has allowed our members to help more people than ever before. 🍷





North Eastern Region Hospitaller: Danny Higgins KMG (Ob)



The year 2025 has been a year of achievement, dedication and frustration as the North Eastern Region has had many successes while having to draw upon the Christian virtues of tolerance and patience regarding our flagship project, Philermos House.

Cyclone Alfred

Early March was a challenge for South East Queensland with the arrival of Cyclone Alfred. Members and volunteers were able to actively assist Emmanuel City Mission, supporting the homeless and disadvantaged of Brisbane, when the weather made rough sleeping untenable. The Order was a substantial contributor of food, cooks, serving staff and overnight supervision as ECM remained open 24 hours a day for six days, providing for the needs of those with nowhere else to go.

Philermos Roses in Toowoomba

The weekend of the 17th and 18th of May saw a new initiative with members travelling to St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, to sell the Order's signature "Our Lady of Philermos Rose". With strong support from Conventual Chaplain, Bishop Ken Howell, members spoke at the Cathedral Parish Masses about the history, spirituality and hospitaller works of our Order both in Australia and

throughout the world. This was well received by the congregation, with almost the full supply of roses sold, donations received, and tremendous interest in the Order in post-Mass conversations.

Coats for the Homeless

The Order's Coats for the Homeless campaign in the Region was once again received as a blessing by those in need and those who look after those in need. This year, distribution extended across much of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. This was directly a result of the Order's profile being more prominent because of members' direct involvement in these areas.

Member Recognition

2025 has seen members of the Region recognised for their contributions to the Order's charisms locally, nationally and internationally.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge retired from the role of National Chaplain in July. In recognition of his service, he was promoted to Conventual Chaplain ad Honorem Grand Cross.

Fr Gerard McMorrow was granted the honour of promotion to Conventual Chaplain ad Honorem, presented by the Prelate of the Order, Mons. Luis Manuel Cuna Ramos in Singapore in November.

This was in recognition of Fr. Gerard's deep commitment to the Order, its members' spiritual needs and the works of the Order, regionally, in Australia and internationally.

James Douglas KHD (Ob) retired from the role of National President in June after receiving a promotion to Knight of Honour and Devotion Grand Cross.

Anthony Gerard KMG (Ob) was awarded the Cross of Commander of the Order pro Merito Melitensi for his services to the Australian Association and the Subprior of the Immaculate Conception

In June, at the National Biennial held in Melbourne, the North Eastern Region welcomed its newest member, Rachel Pingel. Rachel is a second-generation member, being the daughter of Derek and Christine. Rachel brings years of experience working for the Order and as a full-time employee of the Diocese of Toowoomba, providing greater opportunities for the Order to grow in that Region.

R.I.P. Chris Muir

June saw the passing to eternal life of our much-respected and active member, Chris Muir. Chris and his wife Dymphna joined in 2007 and have both been active in supporting both the spiritual and hospitaller works throughout our Region

Conventual Chaplain ad Honorem, Bishop Ken Howell, led the members and volunteers in our Lourdes Healing Mass in August at St Mary's, South Brisbane. This was a standout liturgy supporting the faithful suffering from issues physically, mentally and spiritually.

Jubilee Year Service

Drs Zelle and Rob Hodge represented our Region and the Australian Association as volunteer medical personnel, manning the Order's first aid stations at the four basilicas in Rome for a week as part of the Jubilee Year. They had the honour of serving during the conclave that elected His Holiness, Pope Leo XIV. They were present when His Holiness toured the basilicas to claim them as the new Bishop of Rome.

Regional Retreat

Father Gerard McMorrow led a large group of members in a three-day retreat at Santa Theresa Spirituality Centre in Ormiston in September. Fr Gerard gave several thought-provoking presentations on well-known Gospel passages and the Hail Mary as a prayer.

In October, as a celebration of the Order of Malta Day, commemorating our founder, Blessed Gerard, members travelled to Southport Catholic Parish, participating in Parish Masses. Southport Parish was the obvious location this year as the Order and the Parish are nearing the opening of Philermos House as a centre to support disadvantaged people living on the periphery of the Gold Coast. Regional Hospitaller, Danny Higgins, spoke at each of the Masses, thanking the congregations for partnering with the Order in the soon-to-be-opened Philermos House.

Emmanuel City Mission

Throughout 2025, members and volunteers have served with enthusiasm on the second and fourth Sunday's of the month at Emmanuel City Mission. Providing cooks, food and barista service, it has been the personal interactions with some of Brisbane's most disadvantaged that have stood out, demonstrating the Order's commitment to supporting the poor and the sick. At every service, it is noted that someone will comment on how much the Order's presence is appreciated and how often a participant of the Order becomes that person someone in distress needed to open up to and share their burden. This is a position of honour and respect that is taken on with joy and humility.

The high point of our year's service to ECM came in November when, as is now a tradition, the Order laid on a special breakfast for the third Sunday in November, the Pontifical World Day for the Poor. Eighteen members and volunteers provided a fully cooked breakfast, pastries, fresh fruit and companionship. On a morning when the extra effort could not go unnoticed, participants spent much of the morning explaining what was so special, why the poor and the sick are the Order's focus and the joy our members receive in service.

Philermos House

A major milestone was November 13th with the incorporation of The Order of Malta Southport Care Limited (OMSCL). This is the subsidiary company of the Australian Association established to manage the affairs of Philermos House. The Board of OMSCL consists of four members of the Order, regional Hospitaller Danny Higgins as chairperson,

National President, John Murphy and North Eastern Region members Dr Eileen Burkett and Michael Rackemann. They are joined by Fr Gerard McMorrow as a representative of Southport Catholic Parish, Robyn Hunt representing Southport Catholic Parish Community Care (a dedicated funding trust) and Adam Morley representing the Archdiocese of Brisbane. OMSCL has the duty of administering the outreach project of Philermos House. Closely following the work and charism of Emmanuel City Mission, Philermos House will be providing food, showers, clothing, toiletries and laundry facilities to those living rough on the Gold Coast. Once established as a safe and welcoming place for people to come to, the aim is then to provide services that transform our guests' lives for the better and for the long term.

2025 had been the planned opening of Philermos House. However, regulatory requirements and the difficulty experienced in the building trades in timely access to tradesman has seen the opening delayed to the second quarter of 2026. The close of 2025 sees the building work well advanced and the necessary approvals in the final phases of completion. 🇻🇪



Above left: Members attending the North Eastern Region Advent Mass. Below: Volunteers preparing meals at Emmanuel City Mission Centre.



Central Eastern Region Hospitaller: Dr Stephen Christie KMG (Ob)



The Members of the Central Eastern Region (CER) went into 2025 full of energy and momentum following the hugely successful visit in the last quarter of 2024 of our Grand Master and Grand Chancellor to Sydney. Accordingly, CER went from strength to strength in 2025, remaining highly active meeting the needs of our Lords the Poor and Sick, which only continue to grow in New South Wales and the Australian Capital territory as housing becomes less affordable and so harder to obtain, and the cost of everyday items continues to climb out of the reach of our most vulnerable citizens.

Changing of the Guard

After a successful stint as Central Eastern Regional Hospitaller, Confrère Frank Testa was elevated to the role of National Hospitaller. Congratulations to Frank for both his new role and for the sterling job he did as Central Eastern Regional Hospitaller while in this role.

Charitable works

The Members of CER continued to run and volunteer in our now widely used charitable works.

The CER Community Care Vans continued to operate throughout all of 2025, both in the Sydney City and Parramatta areas. Our care packs remain in great demand, as cost of living concerns hurt our most vulnerable more than the more fortunate.

The Coats for the Homeless program



continued under the leadership of Confrère Tom Cutler. Thousands of coats were distributed throughout Sydney and other areas of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

The Bondi Community Care Kitchen (CCK) continues to be a leading project for the Order in Sydney. The CCK regularly hosts around 15-25 people for dinner every Wednesday night. Members and volunteers joyfully join Parish Priest Fr Robbie and his parishioners in serving our lords the poor & sick, who travel from all over Sydney to share in the special family environment the Order has created at the CCK.

Faith activities

Over recent years, like much of society, we have seen many activities expand into the digital world. These online activities include regular online Rosaries, reflection sessions from our Chaplains and Members accessing a wide range of online materials prepared by the Order both in Australia and internationally. Many Members of CER appear to have embraced this move into the virtual world with gusto.

In addition to the online activities, 'real world' faith activities continued for CER

Members throughout 2025, including our usual monthly member Masses, some faith formation sessions and retreats. Deepening and defending our Faith remain the key reasons for joining and remaining in the Order, so these activities are vital and inform and drive all our charitable works.

A particular liturgical highlight was on 6 December 2025, when Archbishop Fisher celebrated our annual Lourdes Day Mass, held at St Mary's Cathedral. A large group of Knights and Dames, volunteers and malades received the Archbishop's blessing along with blessed Lourdes water. A special thanks to Confrère Graham Beal for all he did during 2025 in organising the Lourdes Day Mass, along with all our other Masses during 2025. And of course, thanks to all our wonderful Chaplains for all they do for the Order. CER Members again participated in the Archdiocese of Sydney's Annual "Walk with Christ" procession through the streets of Sydney in June. The procession ended at St Mary's Cathedral, where worshippers took part in Benediction and Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

CER Members also again participated in the Archdiocese of Sydney's annual "Day of the Unborn Child" liturgical services and procession. This is the pre-eminent pro-life, anti-abortion event in New South Wales and we were proud to participate in it to give public witness against the evils of abortion.

Improved volunteers network

One of the highlights for CER in 2025 was to see the fine work of Confrère Ben Frasco come to fruition in a much more tightly organised and efficient approach to supporting our Volunteers in their desire to serve our Lords the Poor and the Sick.

By tightening up the administrative, operational and logistical aspects of our Volunteer Network – a thankless but vital piece of work – Confrère Frasco has allowed us to increase the efficiency and footprint of the delivery of our works within the Central Eastern Region. Further, due to the humble and Christ filled approach to all Confrère Frasco does, along with him organising Faith Formation sessions for our Volunteers, Confrère Frasco has attracted volunteers and future members of the Order of the calibre befitting the traditions of our Order.

It is with some sadness that I report that Confrère Frasco returns to his native United States of America to serve in their armed forces. Having taken an Australian wife, we are hopeful he will return safely to our shores in due course.



The Members of the Australian Capital Territory

Some of CER's longest serving Members reside in the Australian Capital Territory. So it was only fitting that two of CER's newest Chaplains were invested in Canberra in 2025:

- His Excellency Most Rev Charles Balvo, Apostolic Nuncio to Australia; and
- Rev Dr Gregory Morgan, currently Parish Priest St Catherine Laboure Parish, Gymea.

The ceremony was graciously hosted by Fr Paul Nully, Magistral Chaplain of the Order, at St Christopher's Cathedral.

We warmly welcome our newest Chaplains to the Order of Malta Australia and look forward to serving alongside them in our works and in the defence of the Faith. We also look to them to help us to deepen our Faith. Without good, active, orthodox and committed Chaplains we cannot achieve the purpose of the Order, namely "the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its Members". May God protect and richly bless all our Chaplains for all they do for us!

I feel safe in concluding that the active Members of CER enjoyed being involved with the Order and with our works during 2025, and that they grew as faithful Catholics as a result.

Left (top to bottom): Community Care Van at Central Station, volunteers in front of the Paramatta Van. Above: Volunteers preparing meals for those in need.



South Eastern Region Hospitaller: Paul Hoy AM KSG KGCMG



It has been a year of sustained commitment by members of the South Eastern Region (SER) to a wide variety of the Order's spiritual and hospitaller works. That sustained commitment represented a culmination of the region's work since the COVID pandemic to re-energise the place of the Order of Malta in members' lives, best exemplified by the success of the National Assembly.

National Assembly

In 2025, the SER hosted the Australian Association's National Assembly, with the theme Defending the Faith. More than 300 members, friends and family from across the country attended.

The success of the National Assembly will no doubt be addressed by others, but from the perspective of the SER, I would note in particular the following:

- The reception of His Grace Archbishop Peter Comensoli as a member of the Order of Malta;
• The many thoughtful presentations to attendees through the course of the Assembly;
• The comedic stylings of Sauro Antonelli and Timothy Gorton as the masters of ceremonies at the Gala Dinner; and
• The participation by members in the Corpus Christi march through the Melbourne CBD on the Sunday, which

culminated in an open Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at Federation Square.

The opportunity of a National Assembly to meet with other members of the Order from across the country, to hear from inspiring speakers and to reflect upon the place of the Order and its charism and community in our lives is never to be missed. In that regard, it was an even greater opportunity for the SER to showcase its own work in the life of the Order.

Lourdes Day Mass

The Lourdes Day Mass, which has now long been a fixture in the life of the Order in the SER, was celebrated on 8 February 2025, at St Patrick's Cathedral. We were grateful for Mass to be celebrated by Archbishop Peter Comensoli, and concelebrated by Chaplains

of the Order Bishops Terry Curtin and Anthony Ireland. Many people attended from all over Melbourne, a powerful reminder that the healing message of Lourdes resonates powerfully through the whole community.

One purpose of the Lourdes Day Mass has been to celebrate in Melbourne the experience of Lourdes that holds a special place in the heart of the international Order of Malta. After Mass, attendees gathered to be blessed with Lourdes water and Members of the Order, along with school student volunteers, distributed the gift packs, allowing attendees to return home with a piece of Lourdes.

My sincere thanks to Sauro Antonelli and the working party that he chairs, which ensured the smooth organisation and running of this important liturgical celebration.

Lourdes Masses in Aged Care

The Order continued its program of masses in aged care residences, bringing the experience to Lourdes to the people. In 2025, nine masses were held all across Melbourne. Through the celebration of Mass and the Blessing of the Sick, the Order seeks to share the experience of Lourdes with aged care residence, and also to bring members and chaplains of the Order to where Our Lords the Sick reside.

Many thanks are due to Gerard O'Donnell, who has worked for many years in organising these masses, and to the Order's chaplains.



Community Cafés and Read to Learn

In partnership with ACU, the Order continued community outreach activities, recognising that in its service the provision of social benefits by the Order is just as important as physical hospitaller works.

Across two community cafes for communities with high degrees of social exclusion, morning tea was provided weekly for residents alongside volunteers from ACU. Thanks are due to Mary Long for her co-ordination of these activities.

Coats for the Homeless

For many years now members of the Order of Malta and volunteers from Newman College have met with homeless men and women of Melbourne, distributing care packs and coats to those sleeping rough. This program, in which many members have participated, exemplifies the Order's charism that we serve the Poor and Sick by direct action.

Thanks are due to Gerard O'Donnell, who organised the Coats for the Homeless Program with Newman College, and also to Michael Murphy who undertook additional runs with the Community Care Van.

Day of Reflection and Liturgical Life of the Region

In October of 2025, the SER held its annual Day of Reflection, this year at Corpus Christi Seminary. We were blessed to have the instruction of Bishop Terry Curtin in our reflections, which were particularly affecting. It is a reminder of the wonderful talent that the Order has in its chaplains, and it is something for which the SER has been grateful for many years.

In addition to the Day of Reflection, members attended important services in the liturgical life of the Order. In particular this year were the Philermos Mass celebrated at Newman College, and the Mass for the Departed celebrated at the Carmelite Monastery in Kew. Both of these communities have been partners and friends of the Order for many years, and it is a particular consolation to be invited to participate with them in the celebration of the life of our own religious community.

Further, the SER continued its celebration of monthly Vigil Mass with the Carmelite Sisters at their Monastery, followed by a dinner for members, volunteers and guests. The continued success of the Vigil Mass allows the Region to gather as a community and for fellowship, and also serves as a wonderful introduction to the life of the Order for volunteers or new people interested in its works.

The Work of the Regional Council

With the National Assembly coinciding with the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist, the SER held its annual general meeting on 17 May 2025, at Caritas



Christi Hospice in Kew. For many years, Caritas Christi has served as an administrative home for the Order, and as a seat for its hospitaller works. Since the opening of its new buildings, however, the SER has been able to celebrate Mass in its chapel and meet in its function rooms, as we did in May.

Reports on the previous year were tabled, and elections were held for one half of the SER Regional Council. The terms of Sauro Antonelli, Gerard O'Donnell and Anthony Reeves came to an end, and they chose not to renominate; I am grateful for their past work and their continued work, as all continue to commit to the works of the Order. Mary Long, Michael Murphy and Alexander Ross were welcomed onto the Regional Council.

And the work of the Regional Council continued too. Six meetings were held through the course of year, assisting the Hospitaller in the carrying out his responsibilities, but also contributing individually and as a group in the organisation of the many other works of the Order.

Left (top to bottom): At the 2025 Melbourne Biennial Assembly Vigil Service at Corpus Christi, members celebrating Lourdes Day Mass. Above: Bishop Terry blessing Lady of Philermos rose garden at Newman College.



Southern Central Region Hospitaller: Noel Mifsud KMG

It is with gratitude and joy that we present the South Central Region's 2025 annual hospitaller report for the Order of Malta. This past year has been blessed by steadfast service, spiritual growth, and a deepening commitment to the charism of the Order "Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum".

We give thanks to God for the generosity of our members, the dedication of our volunteers, and the grace given to us by the sick and the poor that continues to guide our Order.

Spiritual activities

Lourdes Day Mass

The Lourdes Day Mass was held at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral on Saturday 8 February 2025 and celebrated by Fr Lancy D'silva together with our South Australian Chaplain Fr Allan Winter and priests of the Archdiocese of Adelaide. Over four hundred people attended Mass and anointing of the sick. Members of the Order of Malta in South Australia also attended Mass, distributed Holy Water, and spoke to parishioners about the work of the Order after Mass had ended.

SA Marian Procession

The 75th Marian Procession which began in 1949 and is the longest running consecutive Catholic event in Australia held on Pentecost Sunday. The procession is a wonderful opportunity to gather communities together and provide a prayerful experience with Mary as the focus. Members of the Order led the 1.5km procession, which included recitation of the rosary and benediction of the blessed sacrament.

Works of the Order

Winter Coats for Rough Sleepers

In 2025 young volunteers (university and school students) worked in teams and visited parks, alleyways, and shelters distributing over 250 coats to homeless people in the streets of Adelaide. This year we changed the approach and spread-out distribution twice weekly over a period of two months. Our aim was to be more fully present to the homeless; to enter more fully into the

lives and stories of those we visited on the streets. The Order of Malta winter coats ministry is a ministry of presence affirming the homeless that they are not invisible. Their stories matter. Their lives are sacred. 120 coats distributed in WA and managed by Confrère Andrew Cichy and volunteer Simon Dennerly.

2025 Christmas Care Packs

In December members distributed Christmas care packs to the homeless. The packs consist of socks, shampoos, wipes, dental hygiene equipment and a Christmas touch with foods and gifts provided by members of the Order in SA. We sincerely thank donors from across Australia whose generous donations will brighten the lives of those most in need.

WA in 2025 - Goody Bioethics Prize

WA Confrères Dr Michael Shanahan and Andrew Cichy once again assisted in the presentation of the 2025 Order of Malta and University of Notre Dame Goody Bioethics prize. This year's prize went to Braden Tonakie for his article Reproduction is a privilege, not a right.

Address to conference at the United Nations

On 23 September I gave a presentation to the United Nations Fringe Event Sustainable Goals Conference in New York. My paper was a personal and evocative reflection on the moral imperative of empathy in our increasingly disconnected world. I contended that the true enemies of religion are not other faiths, but injustice, poverty, and exploitation and framed interfaith dialogue not as a polite intellectual exchange, but as a sacred practice rooted in vulnerability, trust, and "prophecy of hope." I shared the works of the Order and provided a brief reflection on the Eucharistic moment of finding Christ in Our Lords the Poor and the Sick. The visit also included a visit to the Order of Malta Embassy warmly hosted by His Excellency Ambassador Beresford-Hill together with Grand Chancellor

The Grand Chancellor H.E. Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo warmly welcomed my delegation from the Australian Turkish Muslim community.



Membership

Conventual Chaplain ad honorem

We are pleased to announce that His Grace, the Most Reverend Patrick O'Regan, Archbishop of Adelaide, was appointed to the Order as Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem* in 2025. Archbishop O'Regan was solemnly installed as the Archbishop of Adelaide on 25 May 2020. We extend our heartfelt welcome to His Grace.

Visit by National Executive to SA on 9 July

On 9 July, President John Murphy, Immediate Past President James Douglas and Vice President Daniel Kwok visited Adelaide. The aim of the visit was for national leadership to engage with the works of the Order in South Australia, connect with members and candidates, and meet key stakeholders to support and further the Order's mission.

It was a rich program of events including:

- Meeting of the interim Malteser International Asia Pacific Board
- Visits to local homeless outreach partners Hutt Street Centre, Catherine House and Adelaide Day Centre
- Visit to the Archbishop of Adelaide
- Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral
- Civic reception with the Governor of SA
- Member and Partner Dinner at Naval and Military Club SA

Rest In Peace

Dr. Anthony Smith, KMG

SA Confrère Dr. Anthony Smith, Knight of Magistral Grace in the Sovereign Order of Malta, passed peacefully into God's care on 15 March 2025, at the age of eighty-five. Tony was invested as a Knight in the Order of Malta on 18 February 2011 and served with distinction until his passing. Together with Helen, he prepared and served meals to the homeless through the Adelaide Day Centre, and each Christmas they joyfully baked, packaged, and distributed Christmas cakes and hampers for those in need.

Rae Crafter

Rae Crafter wife of Confrère Greg Crafter passed away on 12 June 2025. All of us who knew Rae were moved by her gentleness, intelligence, and deep faith. We in the Order of Malta will miss Rae deeply. She was generous in opening her heart and home to members of our Order. May we in turn, be inspired, by her example, to open our hearts and homes to the poor and the sick.



Conclusion

I extend sincere gratitude to all members of the Order in the Southern Central Region for your generosity of spirit and faithful prayers. We also thank our 2025 National Presidents the Hon James Douglas KC and John Murphy and National Hospitaller Frank Testa and members of the National Executive for your friendship and prayerful support.

As we look ahead to 2026, we eagerly anticipate welcoming and deeply engaging our new volunteers and aspirants in both the hands-on mission and the spiritual life of the Order.

We hold in special prayer aspirant Jack Snelling, who is approaching the completion of his year of preparation and discernment, ready to embrace God's call to the Order. 🇻

Left: Visiting the Governor General's House alongside President John Murphy, The Hon James Douglas and Vice President Daniel Kwok. Above: At the Adelaide Catherine house for Women suffering domestic violence.



North Central Region Hospitaller: Dr Maria Randazzo DMG (Ob)



1 Introduction – Meeting Christ at the Edges

The Northern Territory is a land of ancient beauty and deep cultural belonging, yet it is also marked by profound inequality. Many of our brothers and sisters, especially those from First Nations communities, experience extreme material poverty, homelessness, and intergenerational trauma. This report offers a glimpse into the service of the Northern Central Region's of the Order of Malta in the Territory: the realities that we members and volunteers encounter, the service we provide and the partnerships that serve alongside us.

2. Homelessness and Outreach – Compassion Without Conditions

Homelessness remains one of the most urgent challenges in the Northern Territory. In Darwin, rates are significantly higher than the national average, with many people living without safety, stability, or belonging. Their lives are often shaped by trauma, chronic illness, and social isolation, further intensified by the Territory's harsh climate and limited services.

Each month, we visit in parks and public spaces more than eighty people experiencing homelessness, offering meals, conversation, and companionship. We go to them because many cannot come to us. For many, this

encounter is the only time they feel seen, respected, and valued. In Central Australia, including Alice Springs, Santa Teresa, and surrounding communities, our outreach service supports families in crisis through practical assistance such as blankets, clothing, and seasonal gifts. Across all the realities we serve, the guiding principle remains the same: to restore dignity through a service defined by unconditional love.

3. Journeying to Daly River and Emu Point

Service to remote communities is made possible through strong partnerships with parish priests, religious congregations, Catholic agencies, and local leaders. These journeys are moments of grace, where fraternity deepen.

On 3 May 2025, members of the Order travelled to Daly River–Naiyu in collaboration with the St Vincent de Paul Society (NT). Together, we distributed blankets, food, clothing, and essential supplies. The Sisters of Nazareth and members of the African Catholic community also joined, creating a powerful witness of unity. The visit culminated in Mass at St Mary's Cathedral with Fr Ched, bringing together volunteers, families, and community members in prayer and fellowship.

A return visit planned for November

was postponed due to cyclone-related road damage. Nevertheless, donated goods, including food, dignity packs, and school materials, were delivered in time for Christmas distribution.

These missions unfold as encounters that build trust, strengthen relationships, and nurture enduring friendships with First Nations communities.

4. International Fraternity – Dili Delegation Visit

On 9 November 2025, the Northern Territory welcomed members of the Order of Malta's Dili delegation en route to Timor-Leste, including Australian Association President John Murphy and Grand Hospitaller H.E. Josef Blotz.

Their visit was a powerful reminder of the Order's universal reach, fraternity and shared vocation to serve the vulnerable. It also exemplified a model of leadership rooted not in privilege, but in humility, service, and compassionate presence across diverse cultures and geographical borders.

5. Intergenerational Engagement – The Santa Teresa Sewing Project

In November 2025, the Intergenerational Sewing Project returned to the Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre for its second edition. Led by Dr Nicole Johnson and facilitated by Maree Slatter, the initiative brought together Arrernte women—elders and youth—in a shared space of learning, culture, and faith.

Building on the success of earlier workshops, the project fosters intergenerational connection, confidence, and practical skill development. Sewing becomes a medium through which cultural knowledge, stories, and values are passed from elders to younger generations.

Over one week, nineteen women participated, often attending long sessions and bringing younger family members. The environment was vibrant and supportive, filled with storytelling, encouragement, and shared purpose.

Participants developed practical skills such as using sewing machines, garment alteration, and design. Many created items

including clothing, bags, curtains, and household goods—products shaped by community needs. For some, the workshops rekindled skills learned from mothers, grandmothers, and the OLSH Sisters.

The impact has been significant. Beyond practical outcomes, the project strengthens identity, builds relationships, and fosters creativity and self-worth. Community interest has led to plans for a permanent sewing space at the local Aged Care Centre, ensuring continuity and expanded access.

Rooted in faith, culture, and partnership, this initiative reflects the Order's commitment to accompaniment, empowerment, and dignity.

6. Spiritual Formation – Retreats and Lourdes Masses

Spiritual formation remains central to our service. The annual retreat, led by Bishop Charles Gauci, focused on the theme "Connecting with Jesus in Our Life." Through prayer and reflection, participants were invited to encounter Christ both in contemplation and in daily acts of service.

The retreat emphasised that charitable works flow from a living relationship with Christ, nurtured through the Eucharist and expressed in service to the poor and vulnerable.

Looking ahead, the introduction of the first Lourdes Mass in the Northern Territory is planned for next year.

7. First Diocesan Eucharistic Procession

On 6 September 2025, the Northern Territory held its first Diocesan Eucharistic Procession as part of the Jubilee of Hope. Members of the Order joined hundreds of faithful in a public witness of faith, beginning with Mass at St Mary's Cathedral and concluding with Benediction.

The presence of clergy and the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Balvo, underscored the universal nature of the Church. The Order's participation reflected its enduring commitment to faith, charity, and communion with the wider Church.

8. Prison Visitation – A Ministry of Hope

The Region has also joined the Diocesan Prison Visitation Ministry under the guidance of Bishop Gauci and Fr Daniel Benedetti. Many of those visited are young Indigenous men facing complex histories of trauma and marginalisation.

The Order contributes through volunteer formation, governance development, and the creation of pastoral resources to ensure the ministry's sustainability. This work embodies a commitment to restoring dignity and offering hope to those often forgotten.



9. Fraternity Festival – Welcoming Newcomers

A Fraternity Festival planned for November 2025 in Darwin aimed to welcome refugee and newcomer families through a morning of hospitality and community-building. Developed in partnership with the St Vincent de Paul Society and CatholicCare NT, the initiative reflects a shared commitment to inclusion and support.

Due to Cyclone Fina, the event was postponed, with new dates currently under consideration. When held, it will offer a meaningful opportunity to accompany families beginning new lives in the Territory with friendship and care.

Conclusion – Hope at the Edges

The mission of the Order of Malta in the Northern Territory unfolds in a context of vast distances, deep need, and limited resources. Yet it is precisely here that the call of the Gospel is most urgent.

Our service is never done in isolation. The Diocese provides spiritual guidance, while partnerships with Catholic organisations extend our reach and deepen our impact.

Looking ahead, future initiatives are shaped by the communities themselves: a palliative care program in Darwin, a respite centre for grandmothers, and a youth centre in Central Australia offering meals, safety, and skills.

Our task is both simple and demanding: to listen, to plan wisely, and to act faithfully, so that, together, we may become the healing presence of Christ at the very edges of our Nation. ✝

Left: Mission at the Daly River and Emu Point. Above: Members attending the Eucharistic Procession.

**Order of Malta KOREA:
Hospitaller Veronica Kim DMG**



Growth, Membership, and Organisational Consolidation. The year 2025 marked a decisive milestone for Order of Malta Korea (OMK) as it celebrated the 10th anniversary since its inaugural Mass in 2015 and entered a new phase of maturity and structural clarity. As of November 2025, OMK consists of 19 members and one candidate, including a Cardinal, a Magistral Chaplain, eight Knights, and nine Dames, with an average age of 55.8. OMK was formally recognised as a Foreign Delegation in February 2025 under the Constitutional Charter of the Order—an important institutional step reflecting the Delegation’s stability, sound governance, and adherence to the Sovereign Council’s canonical oversight.

Membership expansion continued through disciplined formation, with clear processes led by an active Membership Committee and Education Team. The Board, composed of six officers on a three-year term, ensured continuity in governance and direction. The February

OMK Workshop, led by Confrère Daniel Kwok, Vice President of the Australian Association, reinforced both organisational clarity and spiritual purpose, building on the longstanding cooperation between OMK and Australia.

The year was symbolically crowned at the 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner on 1 November 2025, graced by the presence of H.E. John Murphy, President, who, as a representative of the Order’s leadership in the Asia-Pacific region, lent dignity and significance to the occasion. His attendance was a meaningful expression of the Australian Association’s longstanding and fraternal support for OMK—support that has accompanied our growth through the first decade with generosity, guidance, and sincere encouragement. With this backdrop, OMK introduced a concise vision aligned with the Order worldwide: (1) Accompanying migrant communities in faith; (2) Growing toward an Independent Association by 2030; and (3) Strengthening local and global collaboration.

Formation: Deepening Charism through Pilgrimage and Retreat

Formation remained the core driver of OMK’s internal development. Monthly Masses, biannual retreats, and structured education gatherings fostered communal identity and fidelity to the Order’s charism - *tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*. The June immersive Education Session, the annual Workshop, and Retreats led by the Chaplain were all directed toward internalising the Order’s charism rather than mere operational expansion.

The 2025 Lourdes Pilgrimage represented OMK’s most profound moment of grace in the year. It recorded the largest participation in OMK’s history, and for the first time included a malade who had received a heart transplant—an experience that symbolised new life and hope. The pilgrimage thus became not only a moment of devotion, but a living manifestation of the Order’s healing mission.

Domestic pilgrimages to martyrdom sites strengthened the continuity between Korea’s Catholic heritage and the Order’s tradition of witness and courage. Formation initiatives thus moved beyond instruction; they cultivated identity, discipline, and fraternity, reaffirming the Order’s core purpose and spiritual foundations.

Spirituality: Living a Faith-Centered Community

To sustain this inward growth, OMK emphasised spiritual life as the first foundation of membership. Monthly OMK Mass on the second Sunday gathered members, candidates, volunteers, and families, establishing a dependable rhythm of worship. Retreats, daily Gospel sharing in the members’ communication channels, and the practice of celebrating members’ feast days cultivated an atmosphere of fraternity, accountability, and pastoral presence.

This culture reflects the Order’s conviction that membership is primarily a vocation rather than a social credential. In Korea, where long workdays and limited personal time shape much of social life,

opportunities for faith practice and community involvement are often constrained, posing particular challenges for Catholic migrants seeking spiritual belonging.

In this environment, OMK placed renewed focus on lived faith, ensuring that service flows from prayer, formation, and community rather than preceding them. OMK holds that authentic service arises from a deepened spiritual life and is sustained by formation and shared prayer. In practice, this means cultivating service as an outcome of spirituality, grounded in community and oriented toward communion.

Activities: Walking with Migrants and Refugees in Korea

In service, OMK advanced its apostolate to migrant and refugee communities—one of the most marginalized and often unseen groups in Korean society. With over 2.5 million migrants representing roughly 5% of the national population, a demographic shift necessitates authentic accompaniment rather than temporary charity.

OMK responded through the following initiatives:

World Day of Migrants and Refugees (September 2025): OMK again served as a principal partner with the Migrant Pastoral Committee of Seoul Archdiocese, demonstrating steady commitment rather than ad-hoc participation.

Lourdes Mass for Migrants (October 2025): Held at the Jeoldusan Martyrs’ Shrine, the first Mass of its kind in the Korean Church, drawing faithful from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mexico, Spain, and Colombia. The distribution of Lourdes water symbolized solidarity with those unable to travel. Media coverage affirmed the event’s ecclesial significance.

Support for Bethany House: OMK aided the relocation of a migrant household shelter and continued providing essentials including food, daily necessities, and appliances, reflecting personal, relationship-based charity rather than institutional detachment.

Christmas outreach: OMK delivered food and snacks to migrant children and to a shelter for mothers and children affected by domestic violence, offering a humble presence in spaces where dignity and visibility are often lacking yet deeply needed.

Taken together, these initiatives demonstrate a shift from one-time charitable gestures to sustained relationships grounded in faith and expressed through a humble presence in places where dignity and visibility are deeply needed.

Looking Ahead: Responsible Growth and Regional Participation

As OMK enters its second decade, the focus turns to sustainability rather than scale. In addition to maintaining its existing commitments, OMK is preparing its first fundraising event with the modest aim of contributing to Malteser International Asia Pacific (MIAP) in a manner consistent with its resources and capacity. This reflects a responsible and proportionate approach to expanding support, ensuring that any fundraising efforts remain within OMK’s means and do not place undue burden on its members or operations.

OMK seeks to remain a small but faithful community, grounded in spiritual formation, humble service, and responsible governance. Growth will not be measured by numbers alone, but by fidelity to mission, communion with the Church, and authentic accompaniment of the poor and the sick. ✝

Left: Members attending the Lourdes Day Mass in Korea. Below: Members attending the Lourdes Pilgrimage in May 2025.





Order of Malta Thailand Hospitaller: Dr Anjarat Suthat na Ayuthya, Delegate of Communications

Go, and Do Thou Likewise as the Good Samaritan!

Each year passes swiftly. We continue to be committed and dedicated to the our service to the poor and the sick.

Thailand: A Land of High Social Inequality

“If we don’t see it with our own eyes, we may never really understand how hard life can be for others — or how lucky we are to have what we have today.”

Because we were not born the same, some people have no home — no one to care for them — living alone in deserted places, or tiny, cramped rooms, unable to go anywhere by themselves due to their health conditions. Some have been paralyzed for 15 years, lying in hot, dark, filthy rooms filled with unbearable smells. Even in such poor conditions, some have been forced out of their so called “Homes”.

And yet, despite it all, they are still blessed — because through St Mark’s Church, they have once again felt the love and hope that come from God.

Neighborhood care project: New phase

The “First Aid Room at St Mark’s Church,” is a significant extension of the Neighborhood Care Project

Since we started this project in 2023, we’ve had the opportunity to connect closely with the wonderful people in this community. We have witnessed the strength of the community leaders, the love, unity, and deep bond that the people here share with their church, and the pastors. Everyone has a volunteer spirit and is eager to carry on the mission that Fr Carlo Velardo and Fr Adriano Pelosin began with great dedication. This made us realise the importance of our work and reaffirmed that we are on the right track to help and support this neighborhood community to remain strong, self-reliant, and sustainable for years to come.

“The closer you look, the more problems you see”. Over time, we have come to realise the number of bedridden, elderly, and sick individuals increasing



each year. Many face physical challenges that make it difficult to travel to public hospitals for basic first aid. In response to this growing and inevitable need, Confrère Dr Anan Chonthaleong, hospitaller, with support of all parties involved, set up a First Aid Room within the premises of St Mark’s Church. This facility aims to serve as a local basic health support center for the community. In addition, the First Aid Room will also function as first aid equipment supplies center for community leaders and as a first aid station to help parishioners and youth experiencing health issues or injuries. The First Aid Room has now been completed, and an official opening ceremony was held on 15 November, 2025, the same day as the sixth occasion of the “Day of the Sick”

Providing tools alone may not be sufficient. Educating people on how to use those tools is just as important. In 2023, the first training session on CPR and proper wound dressing techniques was successfully conducted.

As the number of community leaders increased, along with the arrival of several deacons assisting in pastoral work, we organised another round of training called



“Rescue and Care” conducted by the Faculty of Nursing, St Theresa International University, led by Confrère Suwat Benjathamatorn and Consoeur Dr Piyada Wattanasan on October 25, 2025.

This intensive training focused on Basic Life Support (BSL) and First Aid including choking rescue (Heimlich maneuver), safe patient transfer techniques, wound care, basic injury management, bedridden pressure sore care & prevention, as well as safety measures and infection control. This enabled those responsible for caring for the bedridden, elderly, and people with disabilities to provide the necessary care.

The training was conducted by 13 volunteer nursing instructors from St Theresa International University, Faculty of Nursing Science, together with 6 volunteer nursing students, for 4 members and 2 staff, 70 community leaders and 30 children.

“Day of the Sick” at St Mark’s Church in Pathum Thani

Since 2023, members joined hands-on activities twice a year during the “Day of the Sick” events at St Mark’s Church in Pathum Thani Province. These activities became the foundation for the

“Neighborhood Care Project” which improve the health and well-being of the elderly and the sick within the church community. The project also helps build the knowledge and practical skills of community leaders who work directly with the sick and the poor.

The activities include haircuts, nail trimming, and health check-ups conducted by doctors and nurses from St Louis Hospital, followed by a Mass, the anointing of the sick, and the distribution of essential supplies as well as toys for children.

Wheelchair Project

Visiting the sick who are unable to attend our activities. This project was initiated in 2016, and it remains essential as there is a significant number of people with disabilities still in need of wheelchairs. In 2025, members and volunteers provided 100 wheelchairs to 7 dioceses nationwide and since 2016, the total of 541 wheelchairs have been provided.

Blanket Project

Although Thailand is a tropical country, some areas experience cool and even freezing weather during the winter season. Despite our earlier distributions, there are still many people who continue to struggle with the cold. Therefore, we remain committed to extending our support to those in need and yet in 2025, we provided 3,000 blankets to in the north and Northeastern part of Thailand.



Our goals for 2026

One of our goals for 2026 is certainly to continue prioritising the elderly, the sick, and people with disabilities, to help them achieve better living conditions. We also aim to support the communities by advancing the Neighborhood Care Project to foster a strong and self-reliant society.

Another initiative will be the “Cook & Care” Project, a hands-on program dedicated to supporting homeless individuals in Bangkok. ❖



Left: Volunteers helping with the Neighbourhood Care Project. Right: A look at the new First-Aid room, Vice President Daniel Kwok and medical staff assisting a man in need.



New Zealand Hospitaller: Bevan Killick KMG

“**H**e waka eke noa” translates from Te Reo Māori to English as “We are all in the same canoe”. This Whakataukī (proverb) emphasises the importance of unity and working together as a community.

In Aotearoa New Zealand and in Māori culture it is usual to start an address or an article with a Whakataukī (proverb). The Order, wherever we are, and the wider Catholic Community are all in the same canoe.

NZ Retreat and Investiture

Undoubtedly the highlight for the Order in New Zealand was our retreat and the investiture of Morgan O’Brien KMG. The retreat was held between Friday 3 October and Sunday 5 October at Te Punanga o Maria MacKillop (The Mary MacKillop Centre), Kohimarama, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland).

The Mary MacKillop Centre is a very scenic site of national historical significance. The location enjoys panoramic views over Waitamātā Harbour, Rangitoto Island and Takaparawhau Bastion Point.

Bastion Pastion Point was the site of protests in the late 1970s by Māori against forced land alienation by Pākehā (European settlers).



The retreat was brilliantly led by Coventual Chaplain *ad honorem* Fr Gerard McMorrow and has received wonderful feedback with the same venue now booked for Friday 2 October to Sunday 4 October 2026. We will seek to double capacity for 2026.

Morgan O’Brien was invested as a Knight of Magistral Grace at a Mass on the morning of Saturday 4 October. Attendees include Australian Association President John Murphy KMG, Vice Regent of the Sub-Priory of the Immaculate Conception Dr Damian Benson KGCMG (Ob), Venerable Order Chancellor John Whitehead CNZM KStJ CMInstD, Venerable Order Deputy Chancellor Major Brendan Wood KStJ DSD ED, Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre representative Colin Davis JP KCHS and Supreme Knight of the Knights of the Southern Cross Mathew Bland SK. I believe this to be the first time there has been a meeting of the four Orders.

With The Venerable Order being a recognised Order of St John with us and the other two being firmly Catholic, it follows that only good can come from closer fraternal relations. Morgan O’Brien has already represented us at an Equestrian Order investiture and the local heads have commenced a dialogue.

Flags for the Order of Malta in NZ



have been beautifully crafted by and gifted to the Order by Lieutenant Colonel Gerard Wood CStJ. These were blessed at the Investiture Mass. At the Investiture we had useful engagement with the newly appointed Cathedral Dean Fr Craig Dunford and his predecessor Monsignor Bernard Kiely VG.

Anzac Day

The Order is well represented in the Consular Corps with Belfiore Bologna representing Italy and Bevan Killick representing the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Wreaths were laid at the Anzac Dawn Service in Cathedral Square. The Honorary Consuls for Tanzania, the Netherlands, Poland, the UK, Denmark, Austria and Italy. Members and friends also attended the Requiem Mass for the late Pope at the Transitional Cathedral on Anzac Day.

Australian Association Biennial in Melbourne

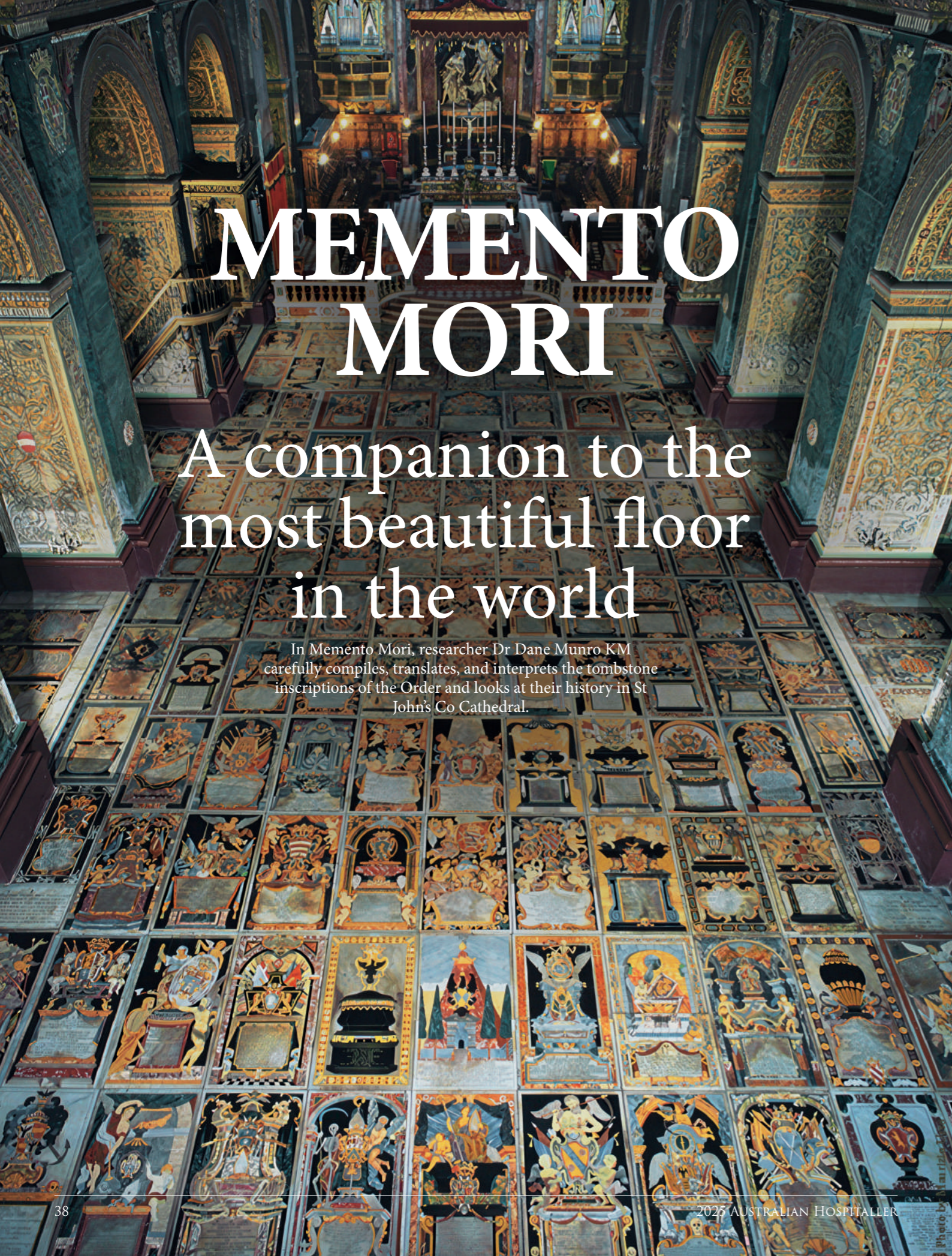
The Australian Biennial Assembly was hosted in Melbourne and New Zealand was represented by Abina Pope and myself. The visit was a useful opportunity to listen to some wonderful speakers including English Prior Fra’ Max Rumney and reconnect with friends from Australian association and also the Singapore Association who were visiting.

Night at the Conclave

Great friend of the Order in New Zealand His Eminence Emeritus Metropolitan Archbishop of Wellington John Cardinal Dew DD gave a talk regarding his time in Conclave on Friday 1 August. Members and Friends of the Order in Christchurch gathered for supper and fellowship before the talk from Cardinal John. Fellowship continued afterwards in “The Bog” Irish Bar. 🇮🇪

Members from the Australian Association joined for the Retreat and Investiture held in October.





MEMENTO MORI

A companion to the most beautiful floor in the world

In *Memento Mori*, researcher Dr Dane Munro KM carefully compiles, translates, and interprets the tombstone inscriptions of the Order and looks at their history in St John's Co Cathedral.

St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta Malta possesses an extraordinary wealth of artworks originating from the Order of St John, and St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, the former Conventual Church of the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta. St John's is undoubtedly a pearl of High Baroque. Its foundations were laid in 1571, just a few years after the Great Siege of Malta (1565). The church was constructed in a sober, military style, with a touch of Mannerism at the main entrance and consecrated in 1578. In the first 100 years of its existence, it remained a solemn, artless affair, not in the least because the financial strain of the Great Siege was still painfully present. Only with the advent of Baroque in Malta, matters of art started to take another perspective. The Order became, through its ambassadors in Rome, Florence and Bologna the most influential patron of the arts in Malta and the church became its aula heroum, hall of fame, place that grew from modest beginnings into a showcase of High Baroque in Malta.

The Order's victory, or more precisely its survival, during the Great Siege of 1565 brought it immense popularity throughout Europe. Consequently, the Order's victory was interpreted as a triumph of the Catholic faith over Islam, and the Order as Europe's shield. This swelled the Order's treasuries; its prestige led many noble families to offer it landed property as well as monetary gifts, and, more importantly, their sons as novices of the Order. The prospect that their children might become heroes greatly increased a family's status within its social stratum. The heroic deeds of the Great Siege became the benchmark for true heroism and valour and were emulated as an example by later generations of knights. These virtues were also frequent themes in the Order's triumphal artistic and architectural expression.

The conservation and maintenance of the Order of St John's memory culture during its stay in Malta (1530–1798) were of great importance for its reputation within the wider world of the Order. Everywhere in the co-cathedral one can find the art commissioned by the Order: on paintings, walls, silver objects, choir books, choir vestments, and sculptures; there is scarcely a place that is not adorned. Seemingly, the Order suffered from a condition called *horror vacui*, the fear of empty spaces. The question remains: was the floor crowded so densely because the Knights feared being forgotten even more than they feared death itself?

The Order's art and its religious, secular and commemorative character became an integral part of the Order's heritage, remaining long after the knights of the Order of St John were forced to leave Malta. In particular the floor of St John's Co-Cathedral is, in many respects, exceptional. It displays 407 polychrome marble intarsia sepulchral slabs and 23 monuments belonging to members of the Order. *Confrère* Nicholas de Piro has called this floor of floors 'the most beautiful floor in the world', as it is unrivalled in its thematic beauty, representing a large part of the Order's culture of memoria and self-image. Although all members of the Order had the right to be buried in the church, there

are at present only a small number interred in the main nave or the side aisles; most knights of lower rank or lesser significance were buried in the crypt of Bartolotta, a series of underground chambers beneath the church's Oratory.

Memento Mori

MEMENTO MORI primarily aims at recording and documenting the corpus of the inscribed texts and art found on the sepulchral slabs and monuments of the members of the Order of St John at St John's for aims of preservation. This book continues the work of illustrious predecessors, such as *Frà Paul Antoine de Viguier*, a member of the Order, who is mentioned twice in the corpus as a person who provided the finance to produce a slab and who wrote at least three panegyrics inscribed on sepulchral slabs of *Confrères*. The aim of a panegyric, chiselled on a tombstone, is to identify and identify with the deceased, whose mortal remains are reposing beneath. It needs to record information necessary for proper identification, such as the name in full, ancestry and coat of arms. There must be words of consolation and instruction, and words of praise for the deceased's achievements, but also of his relatives and dedicators are lauded, in the hope that their virtue will be an example for thousand others. He also produced a manuscript in 1754, in which he documented all the inscribed texts of the slabs and monuments available until then, 265 in total, and illustrated all entries with their coat of arms. *Viscount L.F. de Villeneuve Bargemont*, in his *Monumens des Grands-Maitres de l'Ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem, à Ptolémaïs, à Rhodes, à Malte, etc, accompagnés de notices historique* of 1829, gives a description and short history of all Grand Masters in successions. *Villeneuve Bargemont* starts thus with *Blessed Gerard* and follows the deeds of Grand Masters and their epitaphs from Jerusalem, Cyprus, Rhodes to Malta. All of the inscribed texts are rendered in French, rather than Latin or Greek, which opened the inscribed texts to a wider audience. The value of this book is not in rendering accurately historical or linguistic matter but in recording a powerful self-image of the Order. Remarkably enough, this book is mentioned in the corpus at St John's within the inscribed text of the sepulchral slab of *Frà Paolo de Bertis Portughes*:

'For *Frà Paolo de Bertis Portughes* of Malta, of the Priory of the Venerable Tongue of Italy, Commendator of Pisa who, with enormous effort gave an exact account of each cenotaph and the whole floor of this most magnificent church and greatly occupied himself to commit it to print, whose eulogy *Viscount L.F. de Villeneuve Bargemont* recalls in his work titled *The Monuments of the Grand Masters*, on pages 274 and 339. He lived for 85 years, 11 months and 10 days. He died on the 18th of July 1835. May his grave be at peace.'

A commendator, *Abbé de Bertis*, is indeed mentioned in the footnote of page 274 as a person qui a cherché à conserver les objets précieux qui se rattachaient à l'illustration de l'ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem, who sought to preserve the precious objects related to the illustration of the Order of St John of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, p. 339 is not related. I did not manage to find any manuscripts or published

Left: Top view of the floor of floors.

Images credit: MJ Publishers. Copyright all photographs: Maurizio Urso.

works by Frà Paolo de Bertis Portughes and I have an inkling that his transcriptions of the inscribed texts of the corpus might be living on anonymously in Pietro Paulo Caruana's publication, *Collezione di Monumenti e Lapidì Sepolcrali dei Militi Gerosolimitani nella Chiesa di San Giovanni in Malta* in three volumes between 1838 and 1840. Caruana was an artist, not a Latinist. The greatest value of De Viguier and Caruana is that they have preserved the inscribed text of slabs now illegible due to wear and tear. Both authors did not supply a translation of the inscribed texts.

Sir Hannibal Scicluna published a standard work on St John's, *The Church of St John in Valletta* in 1955 and included 407 inscribed texts and black & white photographs. By necessity, he had to follow the work of Caruana, as in 1955 many of the inscribed texts were already rubbed illegible by foot traffic. Scicluna did not provide any translations of the inscribed texts.

Nicholas de Piro, with his *The Temple of The Knights of Malta* (1999), wrote the first major work on St John's since Sir Hannibal Scicluna's tome of 1955. De Piro respected this publication and consequently filled in gaps and undertook new research. It adds a treatment of memory and memoria which De Viguier, Caruana and Scicluna lacked.

Finally, *Memento Mori* was produced in 2005, which filled a gap in the knowledge of Hospitaller memoria in Malta. It contains not only a diplomatic edition of all inscribed texts, accompanied by an apparatus criticus, but also, for the first time, a translation from Neo-Latin (evolved Latin, not Classical Latin) into English of each slab and monument. A list of more than 120 symbols and their possible meaning in the context of the sepulchral art at St John's was devised and categories of artistic tastes have been added. A colour photograph of each sepulchral slab and monument is included in *Memento Mori* (by photographer Maurizio Urso). The book represents a methodological breakthrough, a transition from mere transcription (de Viguier, de Bertis Portughes, Caruana & Scicluna) to a linguistic and iconographic analysis of the Order's culture of memoria. *Memento Mori* is a strict diplomatic edition which respects the authenticity and rich diversity of the inscriptions, and the *usus scribendi*, which represents contemporaneous opinions and tastes in writing Latin. It also respects the original spelling, word and line distribution as they are found in situ, and there is minimal intervention in order to maintain the integrity of the text. Only a small number of clear mistakes, which cannot pass as variants, either made by the author or the engraver, were corrected according to the proper methodology. On the other hand, most 'mistakes' are left on

purpose, as they are showing us living history, the *mise-en-valeur* of the original text is of critical importance. I must emphasise that there are few real mistakes, as most 'mistakes' are simply variations in morphology or orthography, often dictated by the writer's native language, influence of vernacular or of pronunciation and regional perceptions of writing Neo-Latin. The Latin of the corpus at St John's can be generally classified as Neo-Latin, which is firmly established as a phenomenon of its own. Any attempt to normalise the spelling of Neo-Latin into Classical standards, as up to the nineteenth century was practiced by austere Classicists, ought to be regarded as a grave mistake.

All the authors kept their own views of Latin, unwittingly preventing the corpus at St John's to acquire a boring uniformity. St John's definitely did not become a melting pot of late-European Latin. Although written for the same occasion, it forms, under one roof, a rare collection of the finest international panegyric occasional literature, chiselled on likewise unequalled marble art. When these tombstones are compared with similar works outside Malta, one may carefully conclude that the quality of the Latin is very high, but that the linguistic variants are comparable. Latin was not only the lingua franca that unified a linguistically diverse European Order, but also used in the context of the corpus to impress visiting dignitaries.

The origin of the floor and burials in the church and the Order's culture of memory

The larger churches of southern Christendom were generally richly furnished. St John's Conventual Church was no exception. Funerary art at St John's followed cultural patterns as they emerged in Europe in the fifteenth and consecutive centuries, and in that respect the iconography is similar in intention. At the General Chapter of 13 March 1603, Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt decided that each Langue would be responsible for the maintenance and embellishment of a side chapel in the Conventual Church of St John. Each chapel was dedicated to a principal saint. This decision also included the placement of grave slabs, and the same manuscript records the allocation to each Langue. It also regulates the number of Masses for the deceased. Thereafter the Langues were able to commission artworks specifically for their saint and dedicate them to him.

The public display of the memoria of deceased heroes and defenders of the Catholic faith created a kind of competition among the Langues. A corresponding trend aimed to draw the attention of worshippers to the grave slabs, encouraging more intense prayers for the souls of the departed.

The inscriptions of these sepulchral slabs and monuments are mostly in Neo-Latin and underline one's significance in remaining remembered as a member of the Order of St John. It was not only the knight as such who was commemorated, but also his genealogical descent, how he had lived, what he had achieved, and how he had died. The emphasis is on the masculin, as no women are buried and commemorated at St John's.

The extraordinary collection of memorial slabs and monuments has developed and changed over the centuries. Slabs were added, others removed, moved elsewhere, or repaired when worn, and many were entirely reworked. What did not change was the care devoted to the Order's art and its sense of collective identity. Its culture of remembrance spared the pavement of St John's the fate of so many other floors: complete destruction. The presence of the coats of arms renders all the lineages present on the floor as a clan of the unforgettable. The iconography of the funerary art may have followed main streams of the consecutive periods, but the intention and textual expression makes the Knights leaders in the field of applied memento mori. This Latin phrase means 'remember that you will die too', or 'remember thy death', a reminder that Death is inevitable, and that the Grim Reaper comes harvesting at random.

Purgatory and its circular argument of the living praying for the dead and the dead, once in Heaven, praying for the living, is a very strong and recurring aspect in the art at St John's. Those at prayer offered intercessions in the hope that the souls of their dead companions would be delivered more swiftly from Purgatory. Visitors perceived that where their colleagues now lay under this 'ice-cold marble', they themselves might soon lie beside them, awaiting their fulfilment and resurrection. The reference to 'ice-cold' marble appears several times on the memorial stones in St John's Co-Cathedral. Thus the slab of Joseph Béon du Casaus proclaims: *OSSA SUB HOC GELIDE MARMORE CLAUSA JACENT*, the bones [of Brother Joseph] lie enclosed beneath this ice-cold marble. The slab of Juan Garzes y Pueyo contains the same inscription. The allusion to ice-cold marble is used metaphorically: the grave slab is understood as a cold and slender cloth (like ice), separating the dark world of the dead below from the warm-blooded world of the living above. This poetic notion of ice-cold marble emphasises how a once warm, living person now lies in darkness and cold, awaiting fulfilment and resurrection.





A firm belief was held that the fate of one's soul was decided in one's last hour on one's last day, and in that hora mortis the Devil was up to many tricks. The cure against evil could be found in the inspiratio de fide, in which one should be firm in one's Faith, have hope, have patience in suffering, show humility, be generous. All these elements of inspiratio de fide can be found in the inscribed texts of the Knights' tombstones at St John's.

Inscribed texts of their funerary art witnesses a pride in informing the passer-by of their careful preparations for dying and their inspiratio de fide, in a language that reaches the heart and touches the soul. Fr. Jacques de Saint-Maur-Lordoues tombstone reminds the reader that he lives long who lives well and never ceases to live for eternity, DIU VIVIT QUI BENE VIVIT ET NUMQUAM DESINIT, ÆTERNITATI VICTURUS. Fr. Joachim de Challemaison states that he is here awaiting his resurrection since the 9th day of November 1667, HIC RESURRECTIONEM EXPECTAT, thereby answering to the opening line of the same text, in which the Lord is calling him 'I am awaiting you', EXPECTO TE. A slab is dedicated to the happy and sacred memory of Fr. Pompeo Rospigliosi, who lived well and died well. Fr. Agosto Sanz de la Llosa is aiming towards that last day and final hour, invites you hither to meditate on his last day besides, he engraved for himself while alive on this slab the last day, which he wished to have in mind. The text of Fr. Barthélemy de Bar opens with 'I have lifted my soul up to you'. Chevalier De Bar is obviously mindful of human transience, bearing in mind during his lifetime the Last Things. These Last Things referred to are the NOVISSIMA of line 25 of this inscription, which remind Catholics that they must face Death (the consequence of the original sin), Judgement (before God) Heaven (for those who died in the grace of God) or Hell (for those who died in sin.) The Last Things are mentioned in the Old Testament, the Book of Sirach Sir.(Ecli).7.40: In omnibus operibus tuis memorare novissima tua, et in aeternum non peccabis (in all your deeds remember your last things, and you shall never sin forever).

Through their religious vocation and the close ties of their Order with the Vatican, the Knights were, and still are, an integral part of the Catholic faith. Such an elevated position obliged the Order to provide a shining example in both religious and secular matters: Fr. Jean-Gabriel de Pollastron La Hillière Ledain was bearing most patiently the long-lasting pains of death, DIUTURNAS MORTUAS ANGSTIAS PATIENTISSIME TOLERANS. In the bitterest torments of a terminal illness, Fr. Antonio Manoel de Vilhena's utmost faith and patience shone forth, IN ACERRIMIS ULTIMI MORBI CRUCIATIBUS / SUMMA EJUS RELIGIO AC PATIENTIA EMICUERE. Fr. Giovan Battista Macedonio, truly with reliance on his Faith, offered his life in the decisive moment FIDELITER PRO FIDE IN DIS / CRIMINE VITAM ADDVXIT. Fr. Ramon Soler was living in order to die, in darkness I lay out my bed, and after the dark I hope for the light again when my chance comes on the Last Day, VIVVS MORITVRO, /IN TENEBRIS STRAVI LECTVLVM / MEVM, ET RVRSVM POST TENEBRAS /SPERO LVCEM QVANDO VENIET IMMV- /TATIO MEA IN

NOVISSIMO DIE. Fr. Paul de Félines de la Reneaudie shows his HUMILITATE, he was distinguished and clearly noted for the sanctity of his life, charity towards the sick, generosity towards the poor, humility and other virtues. VANÆ GLORIÆ CONTEMPTOR, reminds the passer-by that Fr. Carlo Francesco del Maro was a despiser of vainglory.

Conclusion

Although the Knights took the reminder of their mortality to heart, they did not accept Death as a triumphatrix. Death's role is simply as an active agent, unavoidable but necessary in pursuit of higher goals. Death frequently occurs in the texts as mors invida, jealous Death, or mors praematura, premature Death, but nowhere is it allowed to be victorious. Whereas elsewhere Death was feared for its ugly face, the Knights of the Order, at least as evidenced in marble, simply regarded Death as a temporary inconvenience, an obstacle in the way to their ideal of eternal life and Resurrection with Christ. Death was not the victor, but they, since Death has no access to Heaven. The eulogy of Fr. Joseph de Lango states that he, in his last action, on conquering the Algerian Flagship, was wounded, from which wounds he, the victor, died. Here he is not only victorious at sea, but also, as a martyr who died for his Faith, victorious over Death. Such a death in action was perceived to bring one directly, without further delay, to the desired place and time.

Ultimately, the floor of St John's Co-Cathedral functions as a paradox: a surface designed to be walked upon, worn down by the feet of the living, yet intended to elevate the names of the dead to the heavens and to battle oblivion. The Knights did not merely 'remember' death; they paved their way to eternity with it. By transforming the 'ice-cold marble' of the sepulchral slabs and monuments into a vibrant, polychrome narrative of valour, they ensured that while their bodies remained hidden, their collective identity, their memoria, would always remain visible. In this hall of fame, the Grim Reaper is not a harvester of souls, but a mere usher, opening the door to a triumph that marble, however beautiful, can only begin to describe. ❄️

Munro, Dane (2005) *Memento Mori, a companion to the most beautiful floor in the world*. MJ Publishers, Valletta.

Left: (L-R) The tombstones of Fr. Felix de Lande, a various arrangement of tombstones, Fr. Wolfgang Philip Gutenberg, Fr. Marcello Cavaniglia, Fr. Didace Mario Gargallo.



Going to Lourdes: A RECOUNT OF LOURDES PILGRIMAGE 2025

A volunteer for the Order finds herself Margaret Douglas recounts her time in Lourdes.

Going to Lourdes with the Order of Malta was not the experience I'd imagined. Photos don't say much and nor do chance remarks and the enthusiasm of those who've been before. It is a matter of going there yourself and being open to events during the annual week of pilgrimage. All you need is a willing heart, so it doesn't matter if you're apprehensive or reserved or uncertain about whether it's for you, because the secret of your experience – the lesson you later draw – is that you're not the focus of it. And you never could be. So here I try to write not about

me but about some significant encounters, which could be anyone's. They are small encounters, sometimes fleeting, that become upon reflection the moments you'll recall long after you've arrived back home in Land Normal.

In one of the members' favourite cafés right beside the river, a few tables away from where I was having lunch, there was a rather large table of jovial members from the French Association who accompanied a number of their malades and ministered to them. A beautiful young woman with profound problems was heavily rugged up against the chill in the air. One of the members poured her liquid meal straight into an opening in her side as she sat

immobile in her high-tech chair, listless. From time to time, though, perhaps for fifteen seconds, her face would light up with a smile of extravagant joy. One such time her eyes locked with mine and I beamed joy back at her. We shared something and it was profound, those few seconds. And I burned with admiration for the members who cared for her over their lunch.

Here is Gerard Manley Hopkins, from "As Kingfishers Catch Fire":

"Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his."

Attending mass at the grotto where Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, appeared regularly to fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous is a liminal experience. The reverence surrounding the ceremony in the crisp early morning air becomes embedded in memory. The celebration itself is the essence of simplicity. Weather-worn wooden seating faces a small altar that stands under the overhang of damp rock fed by the spring, the same spring that supplies water to the curative baths further along to the right. A few metres behind us the river Gave flows swift and deep from the Pyrénées, brimful of snowmelt.

At Lourdes you find yourself saying things you've come to know through personal reflection but have never said to anyone before. After mass at the grotto one day, I was walking back through the sanctuary with a new chaplain to the Order, Father Paul Nulley, and chatting about my spiritual reading, which he'd asked me about. But against that important part of my life, I added, was "the very big thing" that preoccupied me the rest of my time, trying to help a member of the family. At that coalface I was on my own, I said, and my spiritual life was of no avail; it had been going on for years and I was worn out. But then, I said, I came to realise my God was right there with me in the chaos of the everyday, the transgressions, the phone calls on long hold, the special pleading, the worrying to death - all of it. Father Paul flashed me a smile, nodded, and said something like, "That's faith coming to maturity!". I'd never thought about making progress in that way before, but I do now. I'm either going forward or I'm going back, and I'm more alert to the movement (in both directions).

One evening at an Order dinner in Rome, the guest to my left was from New York. We ended up speaking at length about the spirituality of St Francis of Assisi. He recommended a book, which I later ordered, and read. As a result of it I sensed my faith moving forward. You just know. The reason I mention this is because I ran into my dinner companion in Lourdes while walking down the middle of the street to the sanctuary with my husband James and hundreds of others for one of the ceremonies. We were proceeding at my weak-kneed pace, and as he overtook us, he paused for a few moments to greet us before surging ahead with the flow. And there went another inspiration of the God who guides me. You can never forget.

The sanctuary at Lourdes is a vast level area of fifty hectares where all of the Order's religious ceremonies take place during the week spanning



Top: Margeret Douglas searching for St Bernadette's house.

Bottom: Fr Paul Nulley, Fr Simon Kitimbo, Fr Gerard McMorrow.





April/May. These are attended en masse by all - members, volunteers, malades (the sick), and chaplains – and I’ll come to those iconic events below. Each country also has its own program which is organised in and around the major ceremonies, sometimes within the sanctuary and at other times without. The Australian branch devises an invigorating list of events that ensures we are never idle, such as the Stations of the Cross on the hill, known as the High Stations, the first mass on the evening of our arrival in the crypt of the basilica, the last mass at a little church in a village a few kilometres outside the township. These are highlights where prayer is shared and friendships are formed or refreshed. There is often something novel in the program, too, perhaps a hill walk, or a bus trip. But the tone has first been set ... each day begins quietly at dawn with the recitation of the Divine Office in a low-ceilinged room under the hotel.

No one needs to worry about fitting in and if you know no one on arrival, that will change in short order. “Free time” extends to random lunches in town and after-dinner get-togethers at the hotel over a glass. Everyone is different and everyone belongs: you can feel it and you reach for it. Volunteers, by the way, are unofficial honorary members for the week - same uniform, same program, same duties, same care shown and received. And when back in Land Normal, perhaps months later, you chance to meet someone from

your Lourdes trip, it’s like old home week: friends together after an absence. It’s different in quality from any other chance meeting: you’ve been marked by the experience of Lourdes somehow and words aren’t needed to know that.

The essence of going to Lourdes on pilgrimage, I believe, lies in the bigger context, when the Australian group gathers with members from over forty countries to pray and give homage to Our Lady of Lourdes in the sanctuary, her hallowed ground. There are two basilicas but only one is visible on the landscape. The second is underground, beneath the arena where the famous Marian procession takes place by candlelight.

It is to the underground crypt that the entire pilgrims’ assembly of about 8,000 souls led by the Grand Master, Fra’ John Dunlap, and High Charges, gathers on Sunday morning for the Pontifical mass to be celebrated by the Prelate of the Order. Hundreds of chaplains surround the altar in the centre of the vast space and, near them, more than a thousand malades, rugged up and comfortable in their two-wheeled conveyances known famously as voitures. The ceremony, so impressive and reverent as a spectacle, is also utterly humbling in the shared awareness of our poverty before God and humanity.

Another spiritual experience on the large scale is the evening when the Order of Malta leads the candlelight Marian procession, with malades in tow and up front. Each branch of the Order brings with them people who are sick and suffering to be prayed for and looked after as a priority - and to have the time of their lives. The way is crowded with onlookers who, like us, carry lighted candles. The procession follows the illuminated statue of the Virgin Mary in a glass case, borne on its long journey on members’ shoulders. Slowly it makes its way around the arena to its destination in front of the basilica, not far from the grotto. During the ninety-minute ceremony the rosary is recited by participants in their own languages, and after each decade the nineteenth century Lourdes pilgrim’s hymn, known in English as “Immaculate Mary”, is sung by all. At the refrain of “Ave Maria”, all candles are raised high in her honour. It is a triumphal simple gesture of song and salutation, beyond words to describe.

In prayer and contemplation each day, we walk alone with our God. To witness to our faith through the Order, its works, and its people builds a connection with the world. At Lourdes, the world is arrayed before us. Here once a year it’s as though we link arms and all walk together with our God. And that “all” of us is such a large number. You can never forget.

“As we grow in love and in unity with those who are loved by Christ we become more and more capable of apprehending and obscurely grasping something of the tremendous reality of Christ in the world, Christ in ourselves, and Christ in our fellow man.”

Thomas Merton, *“The Power and Meaning of Love”* in *The Power and Meaning of Love*, SPCK Classics, 2010, p. 27. ❖

Margaret Douglas has been a volunteer on three of the last four pilgrimages to Lourdes. She is now on the path to membership of the Order.



Top left: Flagbearers for Australia, Hong Kong SAR and South Korea leading Asia Pacific delegates to the Lourdes sanctuary.

Right: Dunstan de Souza, Alex Ross, David Macintosh, Hunter Mann, Grand Master Fra’ John Dunlap, Graham Beal, John Murphy





Lourdes Day MASSES

By Michelle Rees

Lourdes Day Mass Adelaide

On Saturday 8 February 2025, over 400 people attended the Order of Malta Australia Lourdes Mass held at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Adelaide. The Mass was celebrated by Fr Lancy D'silva together with Order's Chaplain Fr Allan Winter and priests of the Archdiocese of Adelaide. Members also attended to distribute Holy Water and speak to parishioners about works of the Order.

Regional Hospitaller, Confrère Noel Mifsud, was invited to speak to the congregation about the history and works of the Order, where he reflected on the words of our former Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto spoken in Lourdes in 2018: "We stand together here in Lourdes, which casts its own influence on us. We meditate on the miracle of Bernadette and the miracles that have been wrought here so many times over so many years. Since the wondrous apparition of Mary to the little 14-year-old in 1858, those experiences have had a profound impact on the world. We reflect on what a miracle is: It may not be a cure, but it may be a grace given to all pilgrims who come here—the miracle of serenity in the love of the Virgin Mary, the miracle of unconditional kindness to others, the miracle of tolerance, and the miracle that helps us understand that we are part of the same great spiritual family."

Lourdes Day Mass Brisbane

On Sunday 3 August 2025, members of the Order of Malta had the pleasure of hosting the Annual Lourdes Healing Mass at St Mary's Church, South Brisbane.

Conventional Chaplain ad honorem, Most Rev 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. 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 in each Region celebrates a Mass in the tradition of the Lourdes Pilgrimage. This year, Magistral Chaplain Fr Gerard McMorro 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 Luke and St John.

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

Lourdes Day Mass Melbourne

The Order of Malta's annual Lourdes Day Mass in Melbourne was celebrated on Saturday, 8 February 2025, at St Patrick's Cathedral. The Mass was presided over by Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli, and participants received blessings and Lourdes holy water.

Lourdes Day Mass Sydney

The Annual Lourdes Day Mass in Sydney on 5 December 2025 at St Mary's Cathedral was presided by Chief Chaplain Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP and concelebrated with Conventional Chaplain ad honorem Bishop Danny Meagher.

The Mass was attended by more than 500 worshippers and friends, including malades,

from the Sydney Archdiocese.

Lourdes Day Masses are organised by the Order of Malta and held at all capital cities in Australia, providing opportunities for anyone attending to receive a blessing from one of our chaplains and a take home a bottle of water from the Lourdes sanctuary. This is especially appreciated by people with health issues who are unable to make the 30-hour journey to Lourdes from Australia.

Lourdes Day Mass Korea

Order of Malta Korea celebrated its very first Lourdes Mass, presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung on Sunday, 12 October, at the Jeoldusan Shrine Church in Seoul, Korea.

Together with brothers and sisters from the Philippine, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Guadalupe, Mexican, Colombian, and Spanish communities, as well as the Sisters of Bethany House and the Friars Minor of St Francis, members and their families gathered with one heart of faith and gratitude.

In his homily on the day's Gospel (Luke 17:11-19), our Chaplain, Fr John the Apostle Ki-sok Park, beautifully reflected on the meaning of gratitude and healing—reminding us that true faith is born in the moment we return to give thanks. His words offered profound inspiration to all who were present.

We shared the holy water brought back from our pilgrimage to Lourdes last May, offering it in small bottles to about one hundred participants who joined us today.

May this first Lourdes Mass mark the beginning of a continuing journey of faith, compassion, and healing for our migrant brothers and sisters, under the loving gaze of Our Lady of Lourdes. ✠

Adelaide



Brisbane



Melbourne



Sydney



Korea





Malteser International

ASIA PACIFIC

Director of MIAP (Malteser International Asia Pacific), Noel Mifsud, reports on the new initiative serving vulnerable communities across diverse and geographical landscapes within the Asia Pacific region.



Malteser International Asia-Pacific (MIAP) is a newly established initiative under the Order of Malta.

MIAP is a collaboration between the Order's members in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand who are equal partners in its governance and strategic direction.

Rooted in the motto "*Tuſtio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*"—defense of the faith and service to the poor, MIAP embodies a spirituality that is both contemplative and active, deeply inspired by the Gospel of Matthew 25 where Christ's presence is manifest with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, and the sick. MIAP responds to God's to recognise and serve Him in the most vulnerable.

As part of Malteser International's humanitarian mission across the globe MIAP focuses the work, mission and spirituality in the Asia Pacific Region and provides a rich opportunity for identifying and responding to natural disasters, supporting refugees, or providing medical care in the Asia Pacific region.

MIAP began its formation in 2025 with the support of Grand Magistry and MI. It is designed to respond to a shift in the international humanitarian landscape. Conor Heathcote, MI's Head of Public Affairs and Communications elaborates:

Donor support from Western governments and individuals is declining. At the same time, the Asia-Pacific region is rising as a philanthropic force, and is one of the Order of Malta's most dynamic growth regions. This moment presents a timely and strategic opportunity for the Order to expand its humanitarian mission in a more coordinated and impactful way across Asia-Pacific through intensified cooperation. We want to build a locally led legacy based on more than twenty years of engagement by MI.

Entities of the Order of Malta in the Asia-Pacific region have a God-given opportunity to help shape its regional platform. By joining MIAP, they can:

- Multiply their impact through coordinated programming and shared resources.
- Amplify visibility and outreach of Order-led activities via regional branding and storytelling.
- Participate in structured volunteer and spiritual activities that build local capacity and deepen spiritual engagement.
- Influence the development of MIAP to reflect regional needs and cultural contexts.
- Unlock access to funding, partnerships, and institutional support through the MI global network.

The Order's clinic in Timor Leste is a ready-made launch project that demonstrates MIAP's potential. Serving over 80,000 patients since 2017, the clinic offers primary care with a focus on women and



children and maintains a close relationship with the Church. It is an ideal starting point for regional collaboration and spiritual witness. The next priority of MIAP will be to establish solid structures for supporting the member associations especially in emergency relief activities in the disaster-prone region.

Looking ahead, MIAP aims to double its footprint by 2030 and establish a self-sustaining model supported by diverse income streams. Finalisation of bylaws and structure planned for 2025, with an official launch at the Asia-Pacific Conference in Singapore in November 2025.

Launching MIAP at the Asia Pacific Conference resonates the aim of both the conference and MIAP to bringing together the delegation from Asia to increase cooperation and partnerships amongst member countries and to strengthen the role of the Order of Malta within the Asia Pacific region. 🇻🇪

Left (L-R): Daniel Kwok, Chavali Pamela Osathanugrah, Collin Yap, Daniel Mota, Josephine Bantug, Conor Heathcote, Grand Hospitaller Josef Blotz, Desirée Jebesen, Veronica Mihyun Kim, John Murphy, Lynne Yap.

Right: James Douglas signing MOU on behalf of Australian Association.

Malteser International: A CLEAR MISSION IN SPITE OF CHALLENGES

The world of humanitarian aid is changing rapidly. Ongoing conflicts and political barriers make it more difficult than ever for organisations to reach people in need. At the same time, the resources needed to help them grow scarcer, as governments around the world make deep cuts to their aid budgets. A steep cost in lives and livelihoods will be the inevitable result. *By Conor Heathcote*



As the international aid organisation of the Order, Malteser International is better positioned than many similar organisations to meet these challenges. We are in an ongoing phase of sensitive restructuring, but thanks to the Order, we have a clear mission and an unparalleled network that can help us to go to places that others cannot. This means we are also able to embrace positive new initiatives such as our “Malteser International Asia Pacific” joint venture with the Australian Association – intended to provide a platform for increased collaboration between the entities of the Order in the region.

One resource is coming increasingly under the spotlight: Our Emergency Relief Team is unique within the Order – a well-equipped and trained body of experts able to deploy anywhere in the world within hours to help during emergencies. During the past year, our “ERT” has been more active than ever before: working in countries including Sudan, Mozambique, and Burundi. The ERT always cooperates closely with the local entities of the Order. This winning combination can open doors – and means

that our teams are often able to go to places that others cannot reach.

Sudan: “We Need Peace.”

As a result of the conflict between the RSF paramilitaries and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), up to 80 percent of health facilities in Sudan are no longer functioning. Even hospitals are being attacked, and many organizations are unable to work in the country. Access is very difficult. “The situation in the health facilities is alarming,” said Edo Lihic, Emergency Response Coordinator at Malteser International (MI). “As more and more specialists leave the country because of the violence, hospitals are increasingly staffed with people who are not adequately trained for the work. To improve medical care for patients in Port Sudan in the future, our team trained around 200 people currently working in these facilities.” Overall, the humanitarian situation in Sudan is catastrophic. Around 30 million people – more than half of the population – currently depend on humanitarian assistance. In addition to emergency medical assistance, MI has been working together with local

partners since December 2025 to improve water, hygiene, and sanitation services in the southern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile State.

“The war started on a Saturday,” Layla Musa, 28, from Khartoum recalls. After that day, water, electricity, and food became scarce. She fled to Port Sudan, where she is learning to be a nurse and received training from MI. “Even when you are at home, you no longer feel safe,” she says. “You have to accept that a soldier can come at any moment. If you send your daughter to the market, she may not come back.” During the training, Layla stands out. Her dream is to work for a humanitarian organization one day to support her family and her community. She says: “I wish that people around the world would do something—anything—to help bring peace to Sudan. Because we are truly suffering. We need a lot of support. We need peace.”

Deployment in Mozambique

The MI Emergency Relief Team deployed again early in 2026. Heavy rainfall in December 2025 caused flooding that was



already thought to have affected more than 700,000 people in the country – destroying roads, homes, and critical infrastructure, when Cyclone Gezani hit the survivors a few weeks later. Improvised shelters, crops, and already damaged buildings stood no chance when faced with winds of up to 170 kmh.

Infectious diseases, such as cholera, are a major worry following flooding of any kind. But the situation is serious when so much medical infrastructure is no longer functioning. “The flooding has destroyed houses, fields, and crops. Many people have lost their livelihoods as a result. Vast areas are still under water,” said Jonas Jung, Emergency Relief Coordinator at Malteser International, who assessed the needs on site. “This is a breeding ground for pathogens. (A pathogen is any organism that causes disease. Viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites are all examples of pathogens.) Numerous hospitals are currently out of operation. An outbreak of cholera would be fatal right now.”

The MI team worked to restore access to water at the regional hospital in Chókwè district in Gaza province, helped with decontamination, and provided protective equipment to prepare local health staff for a possible cholera outbreak. Close cooperation with the local embassy of the Order was key to ensuring good coordination with local authorities during the deployment and easing the path of the team on the

ground. We will remain present as long as we are able to continue to help people in need and are actively exploring how we might be able to help those affected in neighboring countries.

Our Hospitaller DNA

Alongside the valuable work of our Emergency Relief Team, MI continues to work long-term in countries around the world with a focus on supporting the health of people in need – including by ensuring that they have access to good nutrition, and sanitation, as well as clean water. Our long-term work embraces the development of emergency medical services in Uganda, agro-humanitarian projects in Lebanon, and clinics for refugees in the world’s largest camp in Bangladesh, as well as dozens of other projects. This variety of activities is tied together by two things: our clearly Catholic approach, and our focus on health. Both together are a living modern expression of our hospitaller DNA. Whatever challenges the future may bring for humanitarian aid, we are confident that if we remain true to this core, then – with the help of your prayers – our work on behalf of the poor and the sick will continue to flourish. However the world may change around us, if we remain true to who and what we are, we cannot fail to be well prepared to meet it. ✝

Left: Layla Musa at the Training Port in Sudan. Above L-R: Malteser International volunteers at Chaquelane Camp, going inside the Chokwe Hospital.



Order of Malta Lebanon: A JOURNEY OF COMMITMENT to Humanity

Lebanon is a land of contrasts: beauty and struggle, resilience and hardship, faith and fragility. In the midst of economic instability, political turbulence, and regional tensions, the Lebanese people continue to endure with courage and hope. Standing at the heart of this resilient nation is the Order of Malta Lebanon (OML), whose mission goes beyond aid, becoming a living symbol of compassion, dialogue, and change.

By Oumayma Farah, Lebanese Association

OML's network of 60 projects and programs across the Lebanese territory, is a testament to its enduring role as an agent of peace in a country often challenged by division. From the crowded streets of Beirut to the remote villages of the South and the Bekaa Valley, OML's teams brought healthcare, social support, and agricultural empowerment to every corner of Lebanon, reaching 300,000 beneficiaries, guided by a simple but profound principle: "I ask not about your race, your color, nor your religion, but tell me what is your suffering."

"Lebanon continues to face unprecedented hardships, yet the resilience and strength of our people inspire us every day. It is this spirit that fuels our determination to serve and support our communities with unwavering dedication."

Marwan Sehanaoui, President of the Order of Malta Lebanon

Healing Bodies, Strengthening Communities

At the forefront of OML's mission is healthcare, a universal language that transcends religion, politics, and geography. In 2023, six of our 11 community healthcare centers earned accreditation, with a level of Excellence, from the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, reflecting our commitment to quality, governance, and transparency. These centers are complemented by seven Mobile Medical Units, one Mobile Medical Antenna and 4 Specialized Mobile Medical Units, reaching the most isolated communities, especially in South Lebanon, often under threat from conflict and insecurity.



Top right: President of the Order of Malta Lebanon, Mr. Marwan Sehanaoui
Bottom right: The Mobile Community Kitcehn addressing food concerns in Lebanon.



“Without OML’s mobile units, my village would have no access to doctors for months,” says **Manuel**, a resident of a small southern town. “They come to us, no matter the weather, no matter the danger.”

School Health Campaigns extended this care to the youngest members of society. Thousands of children received check-ups, vaccinations, and nutrition and hygiene education. Screening campaigns reached over 15,000 individuals for breast cancer, osteoporosis, and general health awareness, illustrating OML’s proactive approach to prevention and early intervention.

Through partnerships with local municipalities, religious institutions of all denominations, and international donors, OML ensures that healthcare is not just delivered, but sustained, inclusive, and impactful.

Nurturing Hope Through Social Care

Healthcare alone is not enough to foster peace and resilience. OML focuses on community, inclusion, and empowerment, healing the social fabric of Lebanon one person at a time.

The “Sharing Wheel” mobile community kitchen brings nutritious meals directly to the elderly, underprivileged children, and low-income families, transforming not just empty stomachs but lonely hearts.

“For the first time in weeks, my grandmother ate a warm meal,” recalls **Rana**, a young volunteer in Beirut. “OML doesn’t just feed people—they remind them they are part of a community.”

The Community Wellbeing Centers care for older people who are most of the time left alone, by offering beyond healthcare and food, a helping hand and a warm heart.

OML also empowers persons with special needs through initiatives like the “School of Love”, the now famous Chabrouh Camps, celebrating 27 years nurturing differently-abled individuals with love, joy, and inclusion.

Youth sports initiatives, teach teamwork, perseverance, and self-confidence. Young participants, often marginalised in their communities, discover that they can dream, achieve, and belong.

Through these programs, OML fosters social cohesion, building bridges across faiths, regions, and generations, demonstrating that humanitarian work is also a form of peacebuilding.

Empowering Through Agriculture: Seeds of Change

OML’s Agro-Humanitarian centers are a living example of how practical support can transform lives while fostering social stability. Six centers opened across Lebanon offering training, technical support, seedlings, and food processing facilities to small-scale farmers.

“The training gave me new ways to improve my farm,” says **Ali**, a farmer in Akkar. “I can provide for my family, even in hard times. OML showed us that our work matters.”

By helping communities cultivate food, OML promotes self-reliance, stability, and resilience. These centers are not just agricultural hubs, they are spaces of collaboration, where people of different faiths, backgrounds, and generations come together, working toward shared prosperity.

The Order’s international partners, as well as local religious institutions across all denominations, amplify these efforts. Together, they strengthen Lebanon’s capacity to endure crisis while fostering unity through practical, tangible impact.



Spirituality: Healing Hearts and Minds

Peace is not only physical or social, it is profoundly spiritual. At the heart of OML lies the guiding principle of the Sovereign Order of Malta: *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*, a mission that has inspired the Order’s work since its foundation. Spirituality is the compass of the Order’s work, reminding us that true humanitarian action flows from the heart as much as from hands and resources.

In August 2025, the global family of the Order of Malta mourned the loss of Fra’ Jean-Louis Mainguy, whose decades of dedication shaped OML’s spiritual life and inspired generations of members, staff, and volunteers. Fra’ Mainguy believed in walking alongside those in need and finding beauty in every act of service, teaching that true change grows from compassion, presence, and humility. His guidance ensured that faith, reflection, and solidarity remained at the core of every mission, making spirituality inseparable from service.

Even in his absence, Fra’ Mainguy’s legacy continues to guide the Order. Every act of service is infused with a spiritual dimension, a living reminder that protecting faith and serving humanity are intertwined, and that building peace begins in the spirit of those who dedicate themselves to others.

OML AHEAD Program: An Agent of Peace in the Land of Christ

Across its healthcare, social, agro-humanitarian, and spiritual programs, OML acts as a bridge-builder, uniting 18 different religious denominations, fostering hope, and providing stability in a fragile environment. By collaborating with all religious denominations, working alongside the Lebanese Army, the General Security, local municipalities, and receiving support from global donors, OML ensures that its work is inclusive, effective, and transformative.

“OML never asked about my faith or where I live,” says **Maya**, a beneficiary in the South. “They asked only how they could help. And they did.”



Every healthcare facility, every meal and every seedling, is a step toward a Lebanon where hope thrives, and humanity unites. In a land historically marked by division and strife, the Order of Malta Lebanon remains a living testament to the power of compassion, collaboration, and peace.

In Lebanon, the only country in the Holy Land where Christians still play a vital role, OML continues to heal, nurture, and empower, proving that even in the most challenging circumstances, change is possible when humanity leads the way. 🇱🇧



Left (top to bottom): Medical Day in Aitaroun, social worker during a home visit. Top right: The OML yearly sports Tournament and our active volunteers.



XIIIth Asia Pacific Conference: SINGAPORE 2-5 NOVEMBER 2025

The Asia Pacific Conference was held in Singapore with a theme on “Anchored in Faith, Ablaze with Hope, Serve with Love”.

The XIIIth Asia Pacific Conference of the Order of Malta 2025 was hosted by the Singapore Association, bringing together representatives from the members of the Grand Magistry, Prelate, various national associations, delegations and the Order’s Ambassadors on two continents. The three-day event, entitled “Anchored in Faith, Ablaze with Hope, Serve with Love” included informative sessions on the growth of activities in the different countries, spiritual formation, fundraising for projects with an international focus, and a session on communications.

In attendance from Australia, we had President, John Murphy, Vice President, Daniel Kwok, Frank Testa, Neville Zammit, The Hon James Douglas, Margaret Douglas, Dunstan de Souza, Sean Parnell, Stephen Gatt, Alastair Furnival, Paul Maher, Danny Higgins, Loretta Higgins, Keiron Long, Mary Long and Father Gerard McMorrow.

Grand Chancellor Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo’s opening remarks outlined the



important commitment of the Order of Malta in some of the world’s most disadvantaged regions: Africa, Lebanon, Palestine, Timor-Leste – and in areas of emergency such as Gaza and Ukraine: “The true force of the Order is embodied in the universality of our presence, and even where we do not run an excellent hospital like the one in Bethlehem,

we must still commit to serious, structured and ongoing projects. Everywhere we are present in the world we are close to those who suffer and it is there that our flag flies.” He noted the support of the Grand Magistry through the Order of Malta Donors for Projects (OMDP), a foundation dedicated to financing medium and small projects promoted by the Order’s entities around the world.

Grand Hospitaller Dr Josef D. Blotz listed the principal projects of the Order of Malta, noting especially the crisis situations in Gaza and in Ukraine. In the Asia Pacific region, he praised particularly the untiring work carried out by the staff and volunteers in the Order’s clinics in Dili and Timor-Leste, which each year provide essential healthcare to thousands of patients. “The clinic stands as a beacon of hope and stability, offering not only treatment but dignity and compassion to those who come through its doors. In a country that has known hardship and reconstruction, the clinic represents the tangible expression of

our faith in action.” In this context, through Malteser International Asia Pacific (a new joint venture with the Order’s entities in Asia Pacific) and the collaboration of humanitarian organisations in the region, there are proposals in hand to expand healthcare activities to reach out to even the most remote and poorest communities.

The morning was primarily dedicated to country reports from the Presidents and Hospitallers, including the Australian delegation which was presented by John Murphy and Frank Testa. They spoke about milestone achievements and our national priorities as well as the works of all our different regions and how we contribute to the Order’s charism. It was a valuable opportunity to brief the international representatives on Australia’s national priorities, particularly in the areas of membership development and fundraising initiatives.

During the afternoon session, the Grand Commander and Grand Chancellor delivered presentations which provided significant insights into the broader direction and priorities of the Order. The day concluded with a Welcome Dinner at the conference venue, offering an excellent occasion for networking and informal discussions.

On the second day, we began the morning by presenting Fr Gerard McMorrow with his promotion to Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem* by Prelate Mons Luis Manuel Cuña Ramos and President John Murphy, for his extraordinary services and commitment to the Order. Fr Gerard has been an outstanding example of dedication to the mission of the Order through his leadership in volunteer initiatives, spiritual reflections and retreats, and his guidance to members and Lourdes pilgrims.

The morning session focused on the International Works of the Order, beginning with a presentation on the Timor-Leste Clinic and MIAP, delivered by our own Alastair Furnival. This was followed by an update from Malteser International on their ongoing global initiatives. We heard from the representatives of Malteser International about International Works of the Order.

The afternoon session was a panel with Presidents from Australia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore focusing on funding and fundraising within the Order. This was a great opportunity to highlight the



strategies being implemented here in Australia.

On the third and last day of the conference, we looked at the relevance of communication and specifically around the Order of Malta’s intranet and social media. This was presented by the international Head of Communications, Martina D’Onfrio. The next session included Daniel Kwok on the panel which was focused on the role and impact of communication in the national association. After the session was finished, we broke out into groups to go through everyone’s top takeaways from the conference.

We ended the conference with a wonderful gala dinner celebrating the achievements and collaboration fostered throughout the event. During the dinner, Alastair Furnival was awarded with the Silver Medal of Malteser International by the Grand Hospitaller.

It was a fitting conclusion to a productive and inspiring Asia Pacific Conference 2025.

The next Asia Pacific Conference will be held in Manila in 2027. 🇵🇭

Left (top to bottom): Josephine Bantug, Thom Sirisant, Rose Lu, Desirée Jebesen, Veronica Mihyun Kim, Prelate Mons Luis Manuel Cuña Ramos.

Top: Veronica Mihyun Kim presenting, Grand Hospitaller Dr Josef Blotz.



Did You Know?

The Uniform of the Order: Tradition Worn in Service

The uniform of the Order is not simply ceremonial dress; it is tradition made visible, reminding us that the mission of the Order is carried forward not only through symbols and ceremonies, but through the works of faith and charity they represent.

The uniform of the Order of Malta is one of the most visible expressions of belonging to an institution whose history spans nearly a thousand years. While today it is worn primarily on ceremonial occasions, its origins lie in the practical clothing of the lay religious and knights who served pilgrims in Jerusalem and later defended Christian territories in the Mediterranean.

In the medieval period, members of the Order wore armour in battle marked with the white cross of Saint John, often over a red surcoat or cape. This combination of red field and white cross, symbolising sacrifice and faith, became one of the enduring visual identities of the Order. Over time, as the Order's military role diminished and its hospitaller mission once again became central, these practical garments gradually evolved into the ceremonial uniforms and religious habits familiar today.

By the nineteenth century, the Order had developed a highly structured system of uniforms reflecting the hierarchy of its membership. The formal dress associated with the Order, including the scarlet tunic, gold embroidery, black bicorne hat with plumes, sword belt, and distinctive crosses worn at the neck, drew inspiration from European court and military dress of the period, while preserving older symbolic clothing such as the eight-pointed cross and the religious mantle of professed knights.

Each grade of membership retained distinctive features, with differences in hat plumes, embroidery, facings, and ribbands ensured that rank within the Order could be recognised immediately. Although details of the uniform have evolved over time, including colours, tailoring styles, and regional variations, the essential symbolism has remained unchanged: membership in a religious order dedicated to the defence of the faith and service to Our Lords the poor and the sick.

Because of this significance, the use of the uniform has always been carefully regulated. In 2017, the Lieutenant of the Grand Master, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, issued a decree reaffirming the proper use of the Order's uniforms and the need to protect the traditions and dignity associated with them.

The decree provides that the uniform of the Order may be worn only during institutional ceremonies of the Government of the Order or ceremonies organised by Grand Priors, Sub-Priors, and National Associations, while use on private occasions requires personal authorisation from the Grand Master or the Lieutenant of the Grand Master. 🇻🇪



The black jacket collar here denotes the grade of Knight of Honour and Devotion, Knight of Grace and Devotion and Knight of Magistral Grace. A white jacket collar denotes a Knight of Justice and a red one the Prince and Grand Master.

Sacramentals of the Order's church robe and cape

To observers and members, the Order's church robe and cape signify membership in the Order of Malta. That is a limited perspective. There is much beyond that as they signify a deeper spiritual meaning.

Drawing from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, what we wear at the Order's Masses and processions such as on the Feast of Corpus Christi or in the various events during the international Lourdes pilgrimage, they are sacramentals. Sacramentals "are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them, men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1667).

Furthermore, blessed sacramentals are regarded by the Church as highly important.

"Among sacramentals blessings (of persons, meals, objects, and places) come first. Every blessing praises God and prays for his gifts. In Christ, Christians are blessed by God the Father 'with every spiritual blessing'" (CCC, No. 1671) and "Certain blessings have a lasting importance because they...reserve objects...for liturgical use" (CCC, No.1672).

The Knight's robe and Dame's cape, blessed at the vigil prior to investiture, are religious habits, signifying several spiritual values.

Being new coverings over our bodies, we re-express a dedication to our Baptismal vows, remembering what St Paul's writes about being "clothed in Christ" and "putting on a new self".

"But now that faith has come we are no longer under a slave looking after us; for all of you are the children of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus, since every one of you that has been baptised has been clothed in Christ" (Gal 3:25-27).

"Your mind was to be renewed in spirit so that you could put on the New Man that has been created on God's principles, in the uprightness and holiness of the truth. So, from now on, there must be no more lies. Speak the truth to one another, since we are all parts of one another" (Eph 4:23-25).



A Knight and Dame of Magistral Grace in their respective liturgical robe and cape.

"... You have stripped off your old behaviour with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its Creator" (Col 3:9-10).

As the chosen of God, then, the holy people whom he loves, you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience" (Col 3:12)

The robe and cape also show that we are consecrated to Christ, belonging to a spiritual community.

They hide the self so that Christ may be seen in the one who serves. This contrasts with the erroneous view that members "dress up" to enhance their ego.

These blessed sacramentals protect, remind, mark and strengthen their wearer.

The white Eight-Pointed Cross, dominating the robe and cape, points to the saving power of the Cross, and the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, justice) and the Eight Beatitudes. These virtues and what Christ preached in His sermon are what which we strive to order our life upon.

As we hear during our investiture, "The Cross is white as a symbol of purity. Wear it over your heart with courage." 🇻🇪

Prayer whilst putting on robes and capes

Clothe me, Lord with the robe of salvation and may I wear the mantle of justice in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen.

Prayer whilst removing robes and capes

Lord God, giver of peace, and lover of charity, grant us true submission to Thy will, and fill our hearts with fraternal love.

Between Caritas and Militia:

HOW THE HOSPITALITALLERS WERE BORN IN JERUSALEM

How did a hospital dedicated to the poor become a military order, and how did it do so without abandoning the spiritual logic that had first given it life? Professor Darius von Güttner Sporzyński KGD explains how arms had entered the Order's life out of necessity but were never allowed to define its meaning.

Jerusalem in the late eleventh century was not yet a crusader capital. Around 1080, the city stood under Muslim rule, governed within the rhythms of an eastern Mediterranean world shaped by pilgrimage, trade, and overlapping religious communities. Christians of several rites lived and worshipped there, often quietly, sometimes precariously, but not without institutions of their own. Among these was a modest Latin foundation attached to the Benedictine abbey of St Mary of the Latins, close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Its purpose was practical and unassuming. It offered shelter and care to Western pilgrims

who arrived ill, exhausted, or injured after long journeys.

This hospice was not conceived as a political statement or a martial outpost. It existed to meet a need that was both bodily and spiritual. Pilgrims fell sick in Jerusalem in large numbers, and many died there. The hospice received them, fed them, washed them, and, when necessary, buried them. Those who served there formed a small brotherhood of laymen living under religious discipline. They prayed together, worked together, and understood their service in explicitly theological terms. The sick poor were not treated as objects of charity but as

their 'lords.' In tending broken bodies, the brothers believed they were tending Christ himself. Nothing in this arrangement presupposed crusade or conquest. The hospice predated the events of 1099 and survived them. Its routines of care continued with remarkable continuity before and after the city changed hands. The brotherhood did not arise from a call to arms, nor from princely patronage, but from a long-standing Christian tradition of hospitality.

And yet, within a century, this same community would field armed brothers, hold castles, and fight on the front lines of war. How did a hospital dedicated to the poor become a military order, and how did it do so without abandoning the spiritual logic that had first given it life?

The capture of Jerusalem by Latin forces in July 1099 transformed the city's political order, but it did not create the Hospital of St John. For the brothers who served the sick there, the conquest marked a turning point rather than a beginning. The hospice attached to St Mary of the Latins survived the violence of the siege and the upheavals that followed. Its work continued, now within a newly established Latin Christian regime, but its purpose remained unchanged. The care of pilgrims, the sick, and the dying was not a response to crusade, but a continuation of an older religious vocation.

At the centre of this community stood Gerard of Jerusalem, remembered in later tradition as its first rector. Very little is known of him with certainty, but

Krak des Chevaliers, Syria. Major fortified complex held by the Order of the Hospital from 1142 until 1271, dominating the Homs Gap and the routes linking the coast with the interior. The castle illustrates the scale of military and logistical responsibilities assumed by the Hospitallers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Its development reflects the later phase of the Order's history, when defence of territory and protection of communications were integrated, often uneasily, with its continuing religious vocation of caring for the sick and poor.



the picture that emerges from early sources is not that of a warrior or organiser of armies. Gerard appears instead as the head of a small group of lay religious, men who had committed themselves to a disciplined life of service. Their practices were likely shaped by the Benedictine milieu of St Mary of the Latins: regular prayer, obedience to a superior, communal living, and the performance of humble tasks as acts of devotion. They were not monks in the technical sense, but neither were they casual volunteers. They understood themselves as brothers bound together by profession and purpose. This way

of life received formal recognition from the papacy in 1113, when Pope Paschal II issued a bull placing the Hospital under apostolic protection. The document did not invent the community; it acknowledged it. The brothers were recognised as professed religious, free to elect their own head and to live according to their established customs. What the papacy confirmed was an existing reality: a religious brotherhood devoted to hospitality, prayer, and care for the poor.

Arms played no role in this early self-understanding. What defined the Hospital in these years was not warfare, but vows, liturgy,

and discipline. The brothers prayed the offices, served at the altar, and ordered their days around the needs of the sick. Long before they became known as soldiers, they were known, to themselves and to the Church, as servants of Christ present in the poor.

At the heart of the Hospital's identity lay a spiritual conviction expressed with striking clarity in its earliest legislation. The Rule instructed the brothers to see Christ himself in those whom they served. The sick poor were not beneficiaries of generosity but living icons of the suffering Christ. In the Order's own language, they were the brothers' 'lords', while the Hospitallers described themselves as their servants and even their slaves. This reversal of status was not rhetorical. It structured the entire religious life of the community. Care for the sick was therefore not an optional work alongside prayer. It was prayer made visible. The brothers' daily routine joined liturgical observance to practical service. They washed bodies weakened by illness, prepared and served food, changed bedding, and tended wounds. They carried the dying to their beds and, when death came, ensured burial with dignity and prayer. These tasks were regulated with care, not left to personal inclination. Charity was practised as obedience, performed according to rule and under authority, rather than as spontaneous kindness.

The hospital in Jerusalem functioned as a religious house as much as a place of treatment. It stood close to the Holy Sepulchre, the spiritual centre of the Latin city, and its rhythm was shaped by prayer as well as by need. Masses were said daily, offices observed, and intercessory prayer offered for benefactors, patients, and the dead. The brothers understood their work in sacramental terms. To touch the sick was to touch Christ; to serve them was to participate in his Passion. The hospital ward was thus both infirmary and devotional space. One of the most striking features of the Jerusalem hospital was the breadth of its admission. The poor were received without regard to origin, language, or belief. Statutes provided for dietary adjustments where necessary, allowing alternatives to pork or wine. Jewish and Muslim patients were accepted alongside Christians. This practice was exceptional within Latin Christendom and reveals how seriously the brothers took their calling. Care was offered not as a reward for faith, but as a response to human need.

Such service required discipline. The Rule set standards for diet, cleanliness, staffing, and conduct. The aim was not efficiency alone, but faithfulness. In this world, charity was not an emotion but a rule of life, enacted day after day in labour that was physically demanding and spiritually exacting. It was this disciplined mercy that gave the Hospital its distinctive religious character and sustained its vocation



Left: Godfrey of Bouillon at the assault on Jerusalem, 15 July 1099. Later medieval miniature depicting Godfrey in a siege tower during the final attack on the city, from a fourteenth-century manuscript tradition. Produced long after the events it portrays, the image reflects retrospective crusading memory rather than eyewitness record, emphasising martial leadership and conquest. In the context of Jerusalem's capture, it marks the political rupture of 1099, against which older institutions such as the Hospital of St John continued and adapted their pre-existing religious and charitable practices.

long before arms entered the brothers' hands.

The introduction of arms into the life of the Hospital was neither sudden nor foreordained. It emerged from circumstance rather than doctrine. As the Latin settlements of the Holy Land took shape after 1099, pilgrims continued to arrive in large numbers, often travelling along exposed roads or settling temporarily in frontier zones. By the 1120s and 1130s, violence along these routes had become a persistent danger. Banditry, local conflict, and raids placed pilgrims and the Hospital's own personnel at risk. The brothers could not ignore these conditions without failing in their duty of care. It is in this context that the first references to armed Hospitallers appear. These notices do not speak of a new calling or a revised profession. They point instead to practical measures taken to safeguard pilgrims, convoys, and property essential to the Hospital's work. Some brothers bore arms; others oversaw escorts or garrisons. The aim was protection, not conquest. The brothers acted to ensure that the sick could reach Jerusalem and that supplies could reach the hospital.

This development differed in kind from that of the Templars. The Temple arose from a fraternity of knights who embraced a penitential military vocation from the outset. Warfare was written into their purpose and shaped their rule. The Hospitallers followed a different path. Their vows remained those of poverty, chastity, obedience, and service to the sick. No promise to fight was ever added to their profession. Arms entered their practice, but not their defining texts. The distinction mattered. For the Hospital, military activity was justified only as far as it enabled charity to continue. Defence was an extension of care, not its replacement. The brothers did not abandon the wards for the battlefield. Even as armed service expanded, the hospital in Jerusalem remained the centre of their life and identity.

This balance was not without tension, and it would later provoke debate within the Order. Yet at its outset, the bearing of arms was understood as a reluctant necessity. The Hospitallers did not become soldiers who happened to run a hospital. They remained servants of the sick who took up weapons when charity itself required protection.

By the 1170s the careful balance between care and defence came under severe strain. The Hospital had acquired major castles, accepted extensive military responsibilities, and invested heavily in fortification and campaigning. Under the energetic leadership of Master Gilbert of Assailly these commitments expanded rapidly. The Order supported ambitious operations in Egypt, undertook costly building programmes, and assumed responsibility for frontier strongholds damaged by war and earthquake. The scale of these obligations soon outpaced available resources. The result was a crisis that threatened the Order's survival. Revenues from the West failed to meet expectations, debts accumulated, and confidence in the master's judgement collapsed. Gilbert resigned his office and withdrew from public life. What followed was not merely a change of leadership, but a searching examination of what the Hospital was meant to be. The brothers in Jerusalem asserted their right to collective decision-making and demanded limits on future military and financial commitments. The question at stake was whether the Order had drifted too far from its founding purpose.

Papal intervention sharpened this debate. Pope Alexander III reminded the Hospital that it had been established for the care of the poor and the sick. Armed activity was permitted, but only in exceptional circumstances and never as an end in itself. In one letter, the pope stated plainly that the poor were better defended by love and mercy than by force of arms.



Previous page: Idealised plan of Jerusalem, c. 1200. Schematic representation of the city enclosed by walls and structured around a central street cross, derived from antique urban models rather than direct survey. Produced in the twelfth century, during the period of Latin Christian rule, the plan privileges sacred geography and pilgrimage routes over topographical precision. It situates the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Latin quarter associated with St Mary of the Latins within a symbolic devotional framework, the urban setting in which the Hospital of St John emerged as a place of organised care for pilgrims and the sick.

Image credit: The Hague, KB, National Library of the Netherlands + shelf mark.

The Tower of David (Citadel), Jerusalem. Fortified complex at the western approach to the Old City, incorporating structures from the Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and crusader periods. Known in the Latin Middle Ages as the Turris David, the citadel formed a key defensive and symbolic landmark in Jerusalem during the twelfth century, standing close to the principal routes used by pilgrims arriving at the Holy Sepulchre and the adjacent Latin institutions, including the Hospital of St John.



At the same time, the papacy acknowledged that the realities of the Holy Land required a degree of military engagement. The challenge was not to choose between charity and defence, but to order them rightly. The settlement that emerged reaffirmed the Hospital's original vocation. Warfare was allowed, but charity was declared primary. This was expressed not only in words but in practice. The Order's standard, already used to cover the bodies of deceased brothers, was also to cover the dead poor. When transport animals were scarce, wounded pilgrims were to take precedence over armed men. These gestures were deliberate and symbolic. They marked a conscious decision to bind military action to the service of the sick. In resolving this crisis, the Hospitallers defined their identity. They chose not to abandon arms, but they refused to let arms redefine them.

The Hospitallers' understanding of themselves as servants of the sick was not a private fiction. It was widely recognised by contemporaries who encountered their work at first hand. Pilgrims who passed through Jerusalem and, after 1187, Acre repeatedly remarked on the scale and seriousness of the Hospital's care. Kings and princes who visited the Holy Land or supported the crusading effort praised the brothers not only for their military service but for their devotion to the poor, the dying, and the wounded. Clergy, too, acknowledged the Hospital as a place where Christian charity was practised with rare consistency. After the loss of Jerusalem in 1187, the Order re-established its central hospital in Acre. This new foundation did not represent a departure from earlier practice but a continuation under altered conditions. The hospital in Acre rivalled its predecessor in size and reputation. It admitted the sick poor, provided burial for the dead, and maintained a rhythm of prayer that linked care of the body to care of the soul. Even as the city became increasingly militarised, the Hospital remained a recognised centre of mercy.

The clearest indication of how the Hospitallers were perceived comes from the events of 1198. When German crusaders sought papal approval for a new order, they asked that it be modelled on the Hospital of St John in its care for the poor and the sick. Pope Innocent III agreed. The founders of what became the Teutonic Order explicitly cited the Hospitallers as their example in charitable service. This was no empty compliment. It reflected a shared understanding that the Hospital had defined a distinctive religious vocation. Such recognition matters. It shows that the Hospitallers' charitable identity was not a retrospective construction imposed by later historians. Medieval observers knew the Order as a community that healed, buried, and prayed. Its military role was visible and sometimes controversial, but it did not eclipse the reputation on which the Hospital had first been built.

What set the Hospitallers apart from other military orders was not simply what they did, but how they understood why they did it. Comparison with the Templars is instructive, provided it is made without caricature. The Templars emerged from a group of knights who adopted a penitential life centred on warfare. Their vows and rule assumed fighting as their defining task. Poverty was expressed through the



Remains of Sainte-Marie-la-Grande (St Mary of the Latins), Jerusalem. Nineteenth-century photograph by Auguste Salzmänn showing architectural remains of the eleventh-century Latin church of St Mary of the Latins in the Christian Quarter. The surviving staircase and window fragments, later incorporated into the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer and adjacent buildings, mark the site of the Benedictine complex from which the hospice that became the Hospital of St John originally developed. The image documents the physical continuity of a religious and charitable presence that long predated the crusader conquest of 1099.

renunciation of personal property to serve a collective martial purpose. The Hospitallers followed a different trajectory. Their origins lay in a charitable confraternity, not a knightly band. Their vows bound them to poverty, chastity, and obedience in the service of the sick. Warfare never formed part of their profession. When they fought, they did so as an extension of care, not as the fulfilment of a primary calling. Poverty, for them, was enacted through service to the poor rather than through the symbolism of martial austerity.

This difference shaped the Order's internal life. The Hospitallers developed as a multi-functional religious community that combined prayer, nursing, administration, and defence. Alongside brother knights and sergeants stood priests responsible for liturgy, sisters engaged in care and domestic labour, and a wide body of lay servants. The Order's identity was therefore broader and more inclusive than that of a warrior elite. It was this capacity to hold together diverse forms of service within a single religious framework that gave the Hospital its distinctive place in medieval Christianity.

The fall of Acre in 1291 brought the Hospitallers' long residence in the Holy Land to an end, but it did not mark the collapse of their vocation. The loss of the last Latin stronghold was a political and military defeat, yet it did not invalidate the purpose for which the Hospital had first been formed. What ended was a territorial presence, not a religious calling. In the years that followed, the Order carried its traditions elsewhere. Hospitals were established in Limassol on Cyprus, then on Rhodes after 1309, and later on Malta. In each new setting, care for the sick remained a visible and organised activity. Buildings changed, political circumstances shifted, and military demands grew, but the practice of nursing, feeding, and sheltering the vulnerable continued. Even when the Order ruled territory and commanded fleets, it never ceased to identify itself as a religious community bound to works of mercy.

This continuity points back to the Hospital's origins in Jerusalem. Arms had entered its life out of necessity, but they were never allowed to define its meaning. Care remained the measure against which all other activities were judged. That principle enabled adaptation across centuries of upheaval. The Hospitallers endured not because they were the most successful soldiers, but because they were able to carry a religious vision into changing worlds. Their history begins and ends not with power, but with service. ✘



Dedication miniature from Gestorum Rhodie obsidionis commentarii, c. 1483-1484. Illumination showing Guillaume Caoursin presenting his account of the Ottoman siege of Rhodes to Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson. Produced in the late fifteenth century, the image exemplifies the Hospitallers' later self-representation as defenders of Christendom and rulers of fortified territory. It reflects a phase in which military leadership and political authority were foregrounded, standing in contrast to the Order's earlier Jerusalemite origins as a religious community centred on hospitality and care for the sick.

Medical clinics VOLUNTEER WEEK in the four Basilicas in Rome

From 17th to 24th May, Associations around the globe had the opportunity to have teams work as First Aid volunteers and medical staff during the 2025 Jubilee at the Vatican. Dr Rob and Dr Zelle Hodge, Sean Parnell and Alexander Ross represented Australia and Dr Zelle Hodge AM DMG shares her experience.

We were fortunate enough to be in Rome for a week of volunteering from the 17th – 24th May 2025.

The week involved doing a daily six-hour shift in each of the four Vatican Basilicas. The clinics were manned from 7.30am to 7.30pm so each shift was either morning (7.30am to 1.30pm) or afternoon (1.30pm to 7.30pm). The roster had a system whereby each team did an afternoon shift followed by a morning shift at each Basilica and then moved on to the next Basilica. It was a great experience overall, particularly with the events in Rome at that time.

On Saturday 17th May, we were issued with our security passes, metro passes, Order of Malta armband and Jubilee tie for men and neck scarf for women. The Order of Malta armband was definitely the most recognised and enabled our passage easily through the security points at each Basilica.

Our first rostered shift was on the Saturday afternoon at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. When we arrived, we were able (with our Order of Malta armband) to move past the line of pilgrims waiting to queue to the tomb of Pope Francis. We usually took a taxi together to and from each Basilica and had the opportunity for many shared meals.

On the Sunday morning of the 18th May it was the morning for the Inauguration of Pope Leo at St Peter's Square. As we were leaving from our accommodation, we saw the barricades up and the faithful beginning to arrive at St Peter's. The Irish team, who were rostered on for St Peter's, had been instructed to arrive at 5:15am.

Probably because of the early hour but also no doubt due to the Inauguration at St Peter's, the Basilica of St Mary Major was



very quiet with few there when we arrived unlike the previous afternoon. It gave us the opportunity to walk around peacefully and pray at Pope Francis' tomb and marvel at the beauty of the Basilica. The story is that Christopher Columbus brought back gold from the New World and gave it to the King and Queen of Spain who gave it to the Pope to decorate the Basilica. It is indeed very beautiful.

The morning shifts starting early at each Basilica meant that we could enjoy the beauty and peace of the Basilica when there were few people around.

Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning

we were stationed at St Paul's Outside the Walls. Tuesday afternoon we went to the Villa Magistrale, located on the Aventine Hill for a ceremony in the Chapel and then a presentation of medals by the Grand Commander followed by afternoon tea.

We then made our way back to St Paul's Outside the Walls as Pope Leo was to be there at 5pm for a service to claim the Basilica. Our Order of Malta Armbands were invaluable in enabling us to bypass the rest of the queue of faithful going through security. It was very, very special to be able to see Pope Leo at such close range and attend the service.

Wednesday afternoon and Thursday



morning we were at St Peter's Basilica and again the armbands enabled us to bypass queues to go into St Peter's. The altar, seating and barricades were still up from the morning general Papal audience. As we had the experience the previous afternoon at St Paul's when Pope Leo came there, we did not need to go with the crowds on the Wednesday morning for the Papal audience. The Irish team that had been on for the morning told us the main problems they had related to the rush of people once they were allowed in. There were a few injuries.

Thursday afternoon we had been invited to afternoon tea with the Australian Ambassador, Keith Pitt. He was appointed only a couple of months earlier and told us when the Conclave was on, they had a telescope set up in the room we were in as it looked straight across to the chimney on the Sistine Chapel. When the white smoke went up the Ambassador and staff hurried down to St Peter's Square to be there when Pope Leo came out. The Ambassador was very pleased that he was able to organize for Anthony Albanese to meet with Pope Leo. He also told us of how there was concern that the Governor General had not been allocated a seat when she arrived at the ceremony thus requiring some quick negotiation. I think Keith Pitt realized that he was very fortunate to have arrived just prior to all the Rome events.

Madonna, his assistant, had been with the Embassy since 2008 when Tim Fischer was appointed as the first permanent resident ambassador to the Holy See. She was most interested to know of the Australian Order of Malta sending volunteers over to Rome. We told her we thought possibly this was the first occasion that this had occurred.

Friday afternoon we were rostered on at St John Lateran. This was our last shift. Alex kindly offered to return our four armbands and metro passes on the Saturday morning to be given to the next week of volunteers.

The clinics were equipped very well but fortunately we had few patients requiring our medical skill. Although when a father brought in a child with fever and an earache we did realise that despite all the extensive array of medical equipment and drugs there was no otoscope to look in the child's ear.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to

spend this week as we did in Rome. Not only was it particularly special because of the events happening but it enabled the work of the Order to be profiled. We also had the experience of being able to spend time in the four Basilicas and enter the Jubilee Door in each.

As our patients were few, one of the great aspects of it all was sitting together being able to chat and share of our life and views with the other three members of the team.

As a result of information Rob and I obtained from one of the doctors with one of the early British teams that went to Rome, we did not take up the offer of free accommodation provided to Jubilee Volunteers at Domus Spei. Sean and Alex and Rob and I booked accommodation through Airbnb near to the Vatican. Our apartments were very close to each other which meant that we could travel and often share our meals together.

The only sadness was that not more Australian members of the Order were able to participate. I understand that twenty-one members of the Order expressed a desire to volunteer. The Irish had two teams there and more to come later in the year. I will separately make some suggestions with regard to this in case there is a future similar opportunity. 🇮🇪

Left: (L-R) Alex Ross, Madonna Noonan, Seán Parnell, Dr Zelle Hodge, Dr Paul Hodge, HE Keith Pitt Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Dr Robert Hodge.

Top: Dr Zelle and Robert Hodge alongside other Australian volunteers, the Basilica of St Paul's outside the wall.



The Changing FUNDRAISING LANDSCAPE

By Michelle Rees

In recent years, religious humanitarian and relief-oriented charities have faced a dramatic shift in the funding landscape. As government budgets tighten and official aid flows decline, charities across the globe that have previously relied on these sources are having to adapt to survive.

At the same time, the scale and complexity of need both locally and globally continues to rise. Whether because of natural disasters, cost-of-living pressures, or displacement caused by conflict, the need for humanitarian, health, and social support has never been greater. Yet, the cost of delivering services is also increasing, driven by inflation, supply challenges, and the frequency of crises.

While in Australia and New Zealand the

charitable works of the Order of Malta are funded entirely by private donations, many other organisations that have previously relied on institutional or government support are now moving into the private fundraising space. The result is a far more competitive environment, where charities are vying for a finite pool of donor support.

This competition coincides with a period of rapid growth for the Australian Association of the Order of Malta. We are helping more people than ever before, with new projects on the horizon and existing works expanding to meet growing need. This success brings with it both opportunity and responsibility — to ensure that our capacity to serve is matched by a sustainable, forward-looking approach to fundraising.

The question for us, and indeed for every charity operating in this new environment, is clear:

How do we not just survive, but thrive, in this changing and competitive landscape?

Fundraising: Administrative Cost or a Revenue Generator?

In every other sector, investment in sales and marketing is viewed as an essential engine of growth. The same principle applies to the charitable sector. Yet, fundraising expenses are often viewed with scepticism, as if every dollar not spent directly on service delivery is a dollar lost.

In reality, fundraising is not an administrative cost - it is a revenue generator. When executed strategically, it fuels income

growth. A 2023 report by the Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) found that for every \$1 invested in fundraising, charities typically generate between \$4 and \$7 in returns over time - and sometimes significantly more through planned giving or bequest programs. These returns compound, enabling more stable funding for programs that change lives.

Of course, charities must remain vigilant about costs and maintain transparency. However, failing or delaying investment strategically in fundraising can mean missed opportunities - not only in donations, but also in brand awareness, partnerships, advocacy reach, and - most importantly - long-term sustainability.

Viewing fundraising as an integral part of mission delivery rather than a necessary overhead, is essential for the Australian Association to grow and maintain its activities that serve those in greatest need.

3. Growing competition

With more than 60,000 registered charities in Australia, standing out requires more than relying on donors simply supporting organisations that align with their values. Donors want to connect with causes that demonstrate measurable impact, strong governance, and authentic community relationships. Strategic branding, consistent communication, and data-driven engagement are now essential.

Keeping the Mission Moving Forward: Our Future Funding Strategy

Despite the challenges, the outlook for mission-driven fundraising in Australia remains full of potential. For the Australian Association of the Order of Malta, this changing environment is an opportunity to strengthen our foundations and deepen our impact.

Our strategy focuses on several key priorities:

Diversifying funding sources - Reliance on any single income stream is a risk. A balanced approach, combining private philanthropy, individual giving, corporate partnerships, and community-led initiatives, helps ensure resilience in an uncertain funding climate. This diversity will enable the Order's charitable works to remain viable, flexible, and responsive to emerging needs.

Greater focus on impact and storytelling - Donors today expect to see the tangible results of their generosity. Demonstrating impact through storytelling - from families supported, to meals served, to homeless clothed - builds trust and emotional connection. Our commitment is to communicate not just what we do, but why it matters.

Empowering local and grassroots engagement - As global aid flows tighten, there is growing recognition of the importance of locally led solutions. The Order of Malta's presence in local communities provides a natural foundation for this approach. By engaging parishes, community groups, schools and universities, and local businesses, we strengthen both our projects and our relationships with those we serve.

Building long-term sustainability - Through initiatives such as regular giving programs, bequest campaigns, and partnerships with parishes and community groups, we are laying the groundwork for enduring financial stability. These efforts ensure that the Order can continue to expand its works without compromising its mission or values.

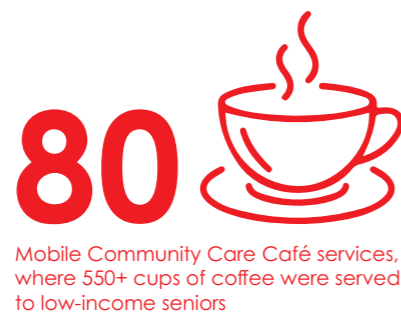
Continuing Our 900-Year Legacy of Service

For more than 900 years, the Order of Malta has remained steadfast in its mission: to care for the sick and the poor, and to uphold the dignity of every person. That mission has endured wars, political change, and social upheaval — and it continues today through the dedication of our members, volunteers, and supporters.

As we look to the future, one truth is clear:

Sustainable fundraising is not separate from our mission — it is what enables it. To ensure that the Order of Malta's legacy continues, we must invest wisely, tell our story powerfully, and nurture the relationships that make our work possible. The question, then, is not simply "can we afford to invest?" but rather — Can we afford not to? ❖

Donation Impact: Our work in 2025





The meaning

OF MEMBERSHIP

Daniel Kwok KGCMG (Ob) Vice President and Coordinator for Formation

The dismissal at the end of Mass: “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life” sums up concisely the purpose statement of the Order.

When Members understand and live the Order’s purpose, we act in accord with God’s will, and are a means for spreading God’s love to people far beyond our membership.

The Order’s purpose is ultimately to promote God’s glory through the sanctification of its Members and expressed in witnessing the faith as servants of the poor and sick.

Why does promoting God’s glory stand at the summit of the Order’s purpose?

We say in the Nicene Creed that we believe “God is the maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.” He made us for His purpose. We belong to Him. That would be the prime, if not the only reason, why we glorify Him.

We say in the Gloria at Mass as did angels when Jesus came to be one of us: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you; we bless you; we adore you; we glorify you; we give you thanks for your great glory.”

Indeed, St John emphasises that God is the only worthy recipient and owner of glory because He is the creator of all things: “Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honour, and power: because Thou hast created all things; and for Thy will they were and have been created.” (Rev 4:11)

Living for God’s glory, not ours

Yes, we say words to glorify our creator. How do we follow through by how we live?

Sadly, we know that God is often denied the glory that belongs to Him in favour of the alternative – us. It is one or the other. We attribute often as a default our successes to

ourselves – our status, skills and even virtues! We tend also to let others know about them.

We forget God, the master and creator of all. We lose sense of His presence in the busyness of the day. Sometimes for years when captured by self-obsession or sin.

The Call to Sanctification

That will continue to be so until we, in obedience to God, seek sanctification. When He directed Moses to tell the Israelites: “Be holy as I am holy” (Lev 19:2), the message is also for us. And again, in the sermon on the mount, Jesus says, “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

St Peter picks up on both later in his letter: “...as obedient children, be yourselves holy in all your activity, after the model of the Holy One who calls us, since scripture says, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’ (1 Pet 1:13-16).

St Pope Paul VI invites us “to strive for holiness” and “let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches...hinder them in their quest for perfect love.... for this world, as we see it, is passing away.” Lumen Gentium 5: 41,42

Our sanctification, as St Paul says, “is the will of God” (1 Th 4:3).

Striving for holiness/sanctification is not a mere suggestion from our Lord. It is a divine calling and a necessity, one that places spiritual pursuits over worldly ones. What desires drive our thoughts, words and deeds? In God or in the world that is passing away? Is love for God ultimately the reason for who we are, what we do and what we have? Are our worldly goals subsumed into our spiritual ones? Or are we anchored to a worldly life with the Four Last Things beyond our radar?

Sanctification as friendship with Christ

One chaplain says that it is hard to imagine oneself a saint, as we see saints as someone canonised. It might be easier to understand sanctification as growing in our friendship with God, and the transformation that comes as it grows.

It is by God’s grace, not by personal merit for that to happen. We begin by being open to Christ’s invitation to be His friend. “You are my friends if you do what I command you... My command to you is to love one another... If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you do not belong to the world, because my choice of you has drawn you out of the world.” (John 15:14-18)

This friendship grows and deepens with time, nourished by a program of spiritual practices. Members seeking sanctification would have in their routine: daily prayer, frequent Masses, nightly examination of conscience, regular Confession, scripture study, spiritual exercises, and retreats. Discipline and patience are essential in this “rule of life”. Having a spiritual director is also immensely helpful.

Transformation to a new life

Jesus will draw us out of the world, where reign desires for pleasure, honour, power, and wealth, when we reach out to His hand of friendship. As that happens, we experience transformation to a new self – with God as friend. “You were to put aside your old self, which belongs to your old way of life and is corrupted by following illusory desires. Your mind was to be renewed in spirit so that you could put on the New Man that has been created on God’s principles, in the uprightness and holiness of the truth”. (Ep 4:22-24)



When we are drawn out of this world, we unite with God as a dwelling place for Him. Whoever keeps His commandments remains in God, and God in him” 1 Jn 3:24. There will be crosses to bear, as we continue to live in the world, but struggle to be not of the world.

Moreover, while very few will be asked to “lay down our lives for our brothers” 1 Jn 3:16, in the Order, we are asked to go out of our way, re-prioritise our time, to serve the poor and the sick, often at an inconvenience. But when we do, we do what Jesus says are the two greatest commandments. “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself... There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mk 12:30-31)

We therefore see our faith made perfect with works, as we read in the letter of St James: “How does it help, my brothers, when someone who has never done a single good act claims to have faith? Will that faith bring salvation? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, ‘I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty,’ without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? In the same way faith, if good deeds do not go with it, is quite dead.” (Jm 2:14-17)

There are many ways to serve those in need, but Jesus asks us to do so eye-to-eye. He gives concrete examples of what we might do. They don’t include sitting on committees.

“Then he will say to those on his left hand, “Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink, I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me...in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.” (Mt 25:41-46).

Similarly, Jesus warns us of the consequences the rich man in purple robes (ours are black) faced for ignoring Lazarus. Even a dog cared more (Lk 16:19-31). The chasm created between ourselves and those in need will persist into eternity, except that it will be too late for to be closed.

Jesus also teaches how the Good Samaritan interrupted his homeward schedule to take full care of a victim of brutality, generously underwriting all expenses (Lk 10:30-37). Do we spend our time and assets such that none is left for neighbours in need? Is God relegated to a compartment in our busy life?

What is the meaning of membership in the Order of Malta?

In the Order’s Code (2022), we read the obligations of membership. But they should be more appropriately regarded as what God calls us to do, especially when being in the Order is a vocation and not a matter of having a title.

Pursue his or her sanctification as a layperson.... drawing inspiration from the ideals and the spiritual discipline of the Order. For love of God, they serve Christ in our lords the poor and must always be His true testimonies in truth and in charity, according to the teachings of the Church. They follow the guidance of the Superiors and respect them (Article 82 § 2)

Give Christian example in their private as well as in their public life, practicing and defending the Catholic religion, exercising charity towards the poor and the sick, especially in the Order’s hospitaller, social and humanitarian relief works (Article 88 § 1)

So, what does membership in the Order of Malta mean? It might be seen as fully practicing our Catholic faith, seeking God’s sanctifying grace, living a life loving God with everything we have by loving our neighbours, especially the poor and the sick. Would such a life glorify our Lord? 🇻

BOOK REVIEW



The Siege of Malta 1565
Matteo Perez d'Aleccio's
frescoes at the Grand
Master's Palace, Valetta

The Siege of Malta 1565 focuses on one of the most important military and religious conflicts of the 16th century and its artistic representation through the famous frescoes painted by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio. Rather than being a traditional narrative history book, it explores how art was used to record, glorify, and preserve the events of the Great Siege through visual storytelling.

The book explains the background and meaning of the fresco cycle painted by d'Aleccio, which covers the walls of the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta. These large water paintings depict key moments of the Great Siege of Malta, when the Ottoman Empire attempted to conquer the island from the Knights of St John. Through detailed descriptions and analysis, the book shows how each scene represents stages of the battle, from the Ottoman landing to the final victory of the Knights.

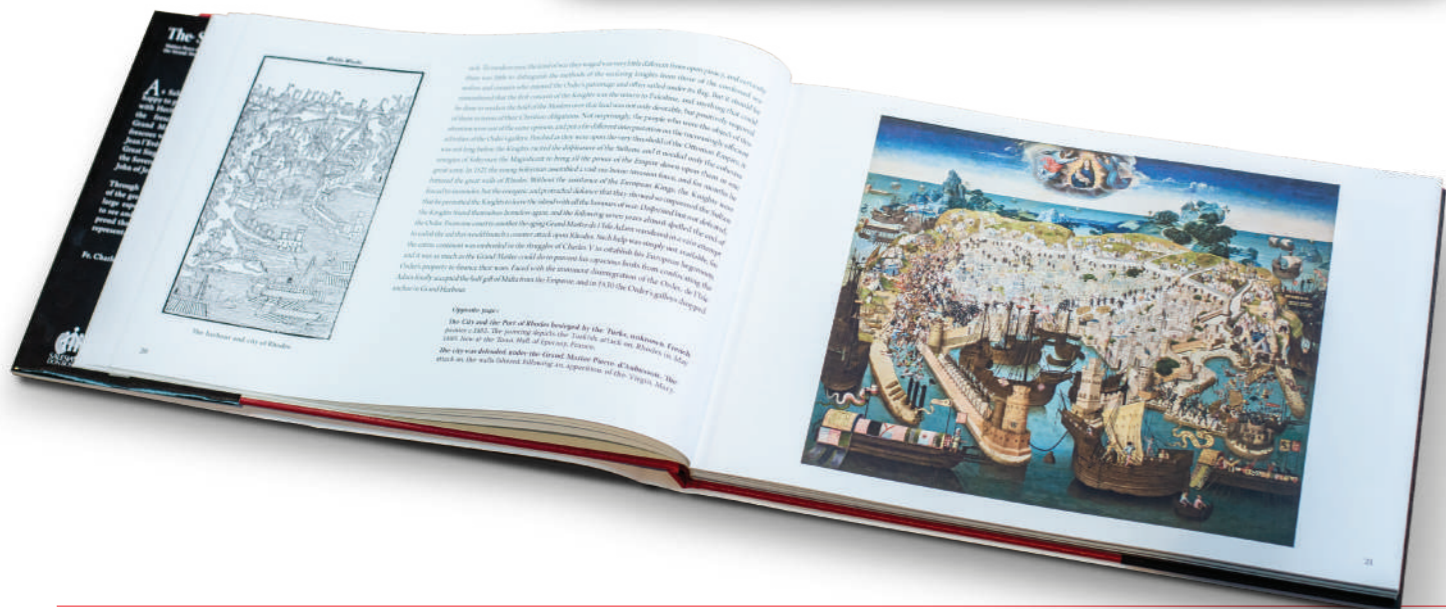
Historically, the Siege of Malta in 1565 was a major turning point in the struggle between Christian Europe and the

expanding Ottoman Empire. Led by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottomans aimed to take Malta as a strategic base in the Mediterranean. The Knights of St John, under Grand Master Jean de Valette, were heavily outnumbered but managed to resist the siege for several months. Their eventual victory was celebrated across Europe and helped stop further Ottoman expansion westward.

The book also highlights how Matteo Perez d'Aleccio's frescoes were not just works of art but powerful tools of propaganda. They were designed to

emphasize the heroism, discipline, and divine support of the Knights while portraying the Ottomans as a formidable but ultimately defeated enemy. The detailed landscapes and fortifications also provide valuable insight into 16th-century military architecture and warfare.

"We are grateful to the author Ian C. Lochead for his account of the epic deeds of the great Siege and to the photographer Daniel Cilia whose meticulous and scientific approach brings out all of the colourful and animated frescoes." Said the Editor, Fr. Charles Cini SDB.



OBITUARIES

Over 2025, the Australian Association mourned the loss of three members.

We record the life stories of those members: **Dr Anthony Smith, Patrick John Godfrey and Dr Christopher Muir.**

DR ANTHONY SMITH, (1940 – 2025)



Confrère Dr Anthony Smith, Knight of Magistral Grace in the Sovereign Order of Malta, passed peacefully into God's care on 15 March 2025, at the age of 85.

Born in the coastal town of Streaky Bay, South Australia, Tony was educated at Rostrevor and Sacred Heart Colleges, where the seeds of his lifelong faith and service were first sown. In 1966, the same year he graduated from medical school, Tony married his beloved Helen Oswald. Their union became a radiant example of shared devotion—to each other, to their community, and to the Gospel call to serve.

Tony was invested as a Knight of Magistral Grace in the Order of Malta on 18 February 2011 and served with distinction until his passing. His commitment to the Order's charism mission – Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum (defending the faith and serving the poor)—was evident in every aspect of his life. Together with Helen, he prepared and served meals to the homeless through the Adelaide Day Centre, and each Christmas they joyfully baked, packaged, and distributed Christmas cakes and hampers for those in need.

A man of quiet strength and unwavering

our unofficial photographer and always loved to share his mobile phone pictures after every event we shared.

Tony's vocation as a medical doctor was inseparable from his faith. He practiced with compassion and integrity, serving as club doctor for the Woodville Football Club and tending to the medical needs of the Dominican Sisters.

In a tribute published by The Southern Cross, Tony was remembered as "the backbone of the Order in South Australia", a man whose faith informed every decision and whose service uplifted countless lives.

The Order of Malta and the Woodville Football Club both honoured him with heartfelt memorials, reflecting the breadth of his impact.

Tony lived the Gospel with humility and joy. His life echoes the words of Christ in Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

He is survived by his wife Helen, his partner in grace and service, and by all those whose lives were touched by his kindness. May he rest in God's gentle embrace.

*Written by Noel Mifsud KMG,
Southern Central Hospitaller*



PATRICK JOHN GODFREY (1942 – 2025)

Patrick John Godfrey was the youngest of four children born to Jo and Paddy Godfrey, on the 7th of October 1942. The family lived on a farm in Diggora, Victoria.

Pat and his siblings, Marie, Brian and Mick, went to a tiny one-room primary school there. They were all active in farm life – helping with the milking and the sheep – and were surrounded by a close extended family.

After his secondary school as boarder at St Vincents in Junortoun (now Catherine McCauley College, Pat began work at the Commonwealth Banking Corporation in Elmore before being transferred to the Kyabram branch in 1962. Pat's years in Kyabram were fruitful.

Tom Tehan tapped Pat on the shoulder one day and invited him to join his law firm. Tom was a great mentor to Pat, and this is where his career really began. Over the years, due to his hard work and dedication he progressed through to senior management. He was loved and respected by so many of his colleagues.

In 1968, married now to Helen and with a young family coming along, Pat completed his accountancy degree at nighttime, always achieving high marks. He came top of his year.

Pat took on several extra jobs, such as fruit picking, to supplement the family income so a house could be built. Family life began but so too did his commitment to Kyabram. Here is a brief list of some other things that Pat was involved in:

- After family, the Catholic Church was a major priority in Pat's life, and he took on many pro bono roles, mainly on the finance committees.
- He was on the board of the Sandhurst Diocesan Development Fund.
- He was an initiator of the Kyabram Credit Union.
- He did a stint as a member of the Kyabram Hospital board.
- He was invited to join the Knights of the Southern Cross.
- He was officially recognised as a member of the Friends of the Augustinians.
- He was invited to become a member of the Order of Malta.
- Whenever he could he made large donations to many town appeals, always anonymously.

Pat had a highly successful career in finance and made some truly great friends along the way. He was Chairman of Insurance House and a major shareholder. With Pat's financial

expertise, Insurance House, grew to become a major player in the insurance broker industry.

When Insurance House was sold, Pat and Liz realised a significant financial windfall which they felt they did not need. Instead, with great vision, they decided to form the Godfrey Go Well Charitable Trust to use the funds for people less fortunate than his family. The family will continue this work as his legacy. Pat's development of an impressive share portfolio has also resulted in an important source of funds for the Trust. The focus of the Trust has been families who are struggling to meet their commitments, including single parents of young children. Healthcare is also an important priority, along with support for homeless people and local food-share initiatives.

Pat was admitted to the Order of Malta in 1995 and had been a generous supporter of the Order's works of charity with the poor and the sick. He and his wife Liz joined the Order's global annual pilgrimage in 2008.

Patrick John Godfrey passed away peacefully at Bendigo at the age of 83. He is survived by Liz, and their children Celia,



Nadia, and Christian, daughter-in-law of Fiona and grandchildren James and Josh. Rest peacefully with our Lord, Paddy.

Written by Liz Godfrey, Daniel Kwok KGCMG (Ob)



DR CHRISTOPHER MUIR (1951 – 2025)

Chris was the eldest of five children. He attended Marist College Ashgrove from Year 4 to 12 and continued his association with the Marist community after he completed his schooling through the past Ashgrovians and also when both his sons attended Marist Ashgrove. Chris was a significant and vital member of his local parish and church.

As an Oral and Maxillofacial surgeon, who practiced in Brisbane and also fortnightly travelled to Bundaberg to ensure that the Bundaberg community had access to specialist services, his skill and care was greatly valued.

Chris graduated in Dentistry from the University of Queensland in 1973 with First Class Honours and was awarded a University Medal. He then went on to be awarded an FDSRCS (Eng) 1977, FRACDS (1979), Dip. Oral Surgery RACDS and MDS Adelaide University (1982).

Chris was calm and patient, was extraordinarily generous, someone who always paid attention to people, never said a negative word about anyone, had great leadership skills, committed to his patients and provided friendship, assistance and advice to many. His generosity and commitment to the service of others across so many facets of his life was inspiring. He was indeed a Good Man. He and his wife, Dymphna, through their lives exemplified the charism of the Order of Malta which they were both made members of in 2007.

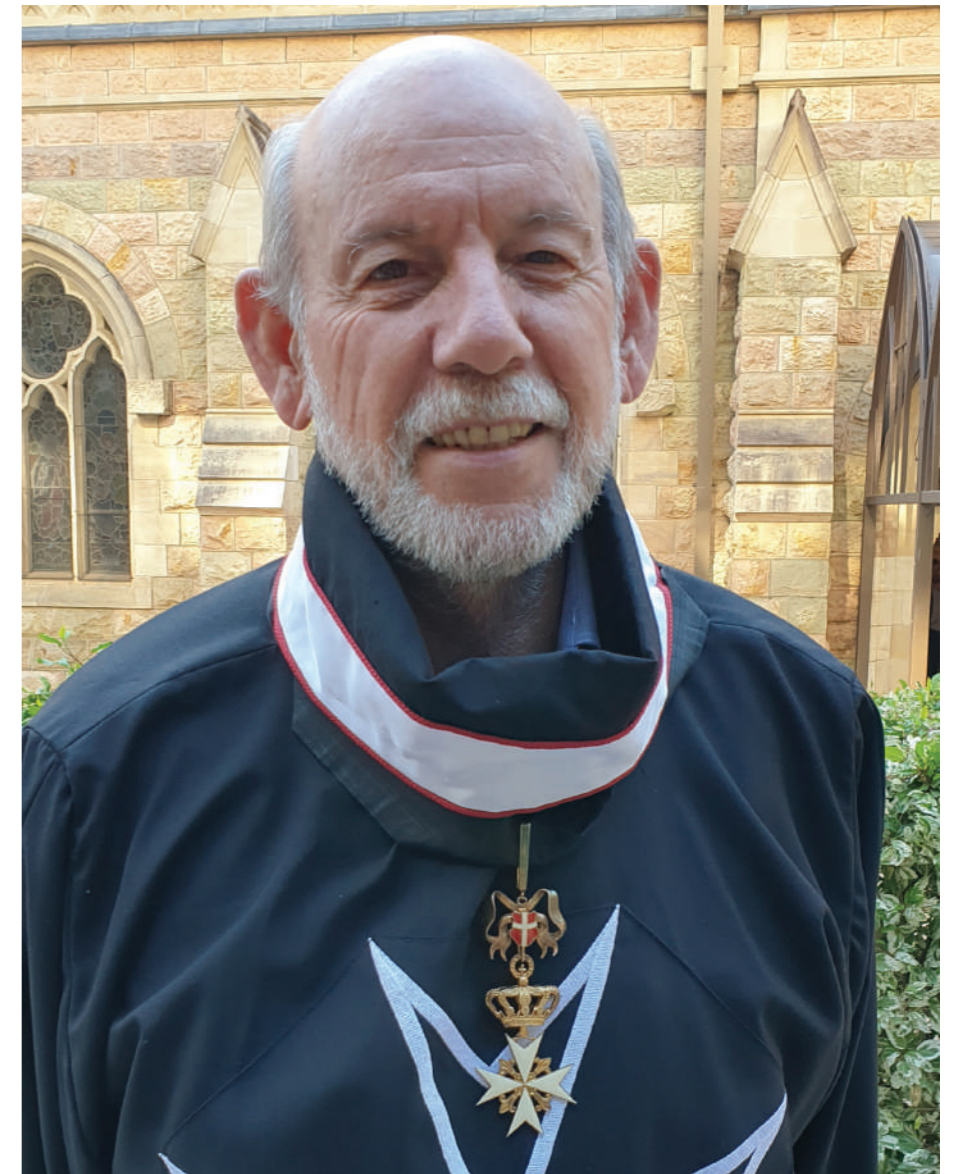
Chris' commitment to the service of others encompassed many organizations. He did not ever seek power but because of his leadership skills and ability to inspire others he was an obvious person to whom to offer leadership which was always calm, measured and inclusive.

The Downs and West Community Support Committee, is a ministry of the Sisters of Charity. Chris volunteered and then went on to Chair the Committee which provides support for farmers and their rural community. The Ministry sees its Mission as being extensively useful in the service of the poor.

Chris was a member of the Alumni Friends of the University of Queensland and as its President helped raise millions of dollars for scholarships and research funding.

As a member of the Rotary Club of Brisbane for over 32 years, Chris exemplified Rotary's ideal of "Service above Self" in every facet of his life, leaving a lasting impact on his community.

His generosity and commitment to others was recognized in 2024 as a nominee



for the Queensland Philanthropist of the Year.

Chris and Dymphna have three children, Elspeth, Patrick and Alexander and four grandchildren who are much loved. After the enormous sadness of the death of their youngest son, Alexander, they endowed scholarships at Marist College Ashgrove and at the Queensland University of Technology to ensure education for others.

When the Order of Malta organised the Camp for the Disabled at the Gold Coast, Chris provided significant assistance. He also volunteered at Emmanuel City Mission in the provision of meals for the homeless.

Chris was very good 'on the dishes'

On a personal level we had the

wonderful experience in 2012 of sharing with Chris and Dymphna, Danny and Loretta Higgins and Eileen Burkett and her sister Cathy a month immersed in the Order and its history and charism from Lourdes to Malta, Rhodes, Rome and the Holy Land. Rob and Chris, as ardent fisherman, have spent much time on the Swains off Gladstone and sometimes in the Cape. The friendship offered by the Muirs was extraordinarily special.

Chris Muir with the unwavering support of his wife, Dymphna, has left a legacy that will long live on, not only with the tangible benefits of what he gave but through his example, friendship and kindness to many.

Written by Dr Zelle Hodge AM KMG



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The Order's website in Australia: www.orderofmalta.org.au



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The Order's international website: www.orderofmalta.int

The Malteser International website: www.malteser-international.org