



ORDER OF MALTA®

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA®



NEW JERSEY AREA NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2011

From the Area Chair...

Dear Confreres and Consoires,

Welcome to the newly re-inaugurated New Jersey Area Newsletter highlighting some of the many activities involving our New Jersey members. As this is not an annual report, I want to highlight three topics – Membership, the Order of Malta as a Religious Community and the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

The New Jersey Area continues to attract new members. Fifteen new members were invested in 2010 and we welcomed Bishop Paul Bootkoski of the Metuchen Diocese as Conventual Chaplain ad Honorem. For the upcoming 2011 investiture, we have ten candidates in their year of preparation. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

Growth in membership is important not only for the continuation of the Order of Malta, but because new members bring new ideas and a fresh approach to how we carry out our mission to our Lords, the Sick and our Lords, the Poor. Since membership is by invitation, it is dependent upon all of us to identify potential candidates. Sue and Bob Sameth chair membership in New Jersey. They are willing to provide guidance to anyone who has questions and I encourage anyone who thinks they might have identified a candidate to contact them.

The Order of Malta is a religious order created for the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, service to the faith and to the Holy Father and assistance to one's neighbor. This aspect of Malta as a religious order has always been apparent in Europe by tradition, but the concept is still taking hold in the U.S. However, we are seeing an increased interest in the First and Second classes, the Knights of Justice and the Magistral Knights and Dames in Obedience.

Becoming a religious community is certainly not limited to members of our Sub Priory. It is incumbent upon us all to further develop our religious community in New Jersey. The New Jersey Area is administered through five Hospitaller local areas mirroring the five New Jersey Dioceses. Small regular masses and dinner meetings are becoming popular in many Areas of the Association. They strengthen community and confraternal bonds and help generate new ideas for ministries. Two such groups now meet on a regular basis in North Arlington and Peapack and more groups are certainly encouraged. Your Hospitallers and I are happy to help develop these meetings with you.

Our primary annual gathering as an Order centers on the Feast of St. John the Baptist where all members are required to gather for Mass. The New Jersey Area will gather in Spring Lake on June 26. Please join us. If you need transportation assistance, contact me or another member to arrange for you to attend this great celebration.

My final comments are concerning the Lourdes Pilgrimage. The Lourdes pilgrimage is one of the three primary works of the Order of Malta. All members of the Order in the American Association are asked to make at least one pilgrimage. Personally, I encourage you to participate in our Lourdes Pilgrimage if you have not already done so. If you do, you will see the Order of Malta in a very different light. You will also see the Catholic Faith alive in a very special way and I truly think your life will be changed. Thank you to those who attended this year.

Let us all keep one another in our prayers.

Confraternally yours,

James Hamerschlag, KM



Our Lenten Day of Reflection in April led by Most Reverend John M. Smith, Bishop Emeritus of Newark, with Robert Tanzola, Karen Tanzola, Trenton Area Hospitaller, Jim Hamerschlag, NJ Area Chair and Bob Frederick, former NJ Area Chair, at the Shrine of St. Joseph in Sterling, NJ. "Life is wonderful," said Bishop Smith. He said his motto is "Serve the Lord with Gladness."

Photo: Bob Reers, KM



These two words “Mysteries and Miracles” sum up the unfathomable experience of a pilgrimage to Lourdes. This Spring, over 25 Knights and Dames of Malta and their guests traveled to this sacred place seeking the grace and spirit of the Blessed Mother.

The 2011 trip was prefaced by a Mass and luncheon on April 10 at Queen of Peace Church in North Arlington. Msgr. William Fadrowski celebrated the Mass which was followed by a luncheon at the Forest Hill Field Club in Bloomfield. The event gave Knights and Dames who were going to Lourdes a chance to meet the Malades from New Jersey who had been selected to go as guests, as well as those who had been to Lourdes in years past. On April 28 the New Jersey contingent gathered at Newark airport for their journey to Lourdes.

Most participants, when asked to comment, could not put into words what the trip meant to them. One guest said, “It was a beautiful, Holy place. I felt close to God, to Jesus, to the Holy Mother. I felt close to the stranger standing next to me. I felt blessed and loved but I just can’t put it into words.”

“The truly amazing thing about a pilgrimage to Lourdes is that it touches you in unexpected ways,” said one participant. “Being in that Holy place changes people, heals hearts, opens minds, and probably much more. I can’t say I understand it but I am so grateful for having been a part of it”, she said. “I found myself to be more patient. I felt happy, almost exhilarated to be a part of something so vast, so beautiful. A very tangible example of that would be the candlelight procession through the domaine (the Holy ground located within the city of Lourdes) with hundreds of people, strangers, singing and walking side by side, pulling voitures or pushing litters carrying the sick and disabled. It was beautiful.”

St. Theresa of Avila is credited with saying, “Christ has no body now but yours.” Nowhere is that more evident than during a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Though some go to be healed and some go to offer their help, all become Christ’s face when we smile a welcome to a stranger, Christ’s hands when we hold the hand of the lonely or comfort a child, Christ’s feet when we pull a voiture or push a wheel chair.

Early in the pilgrimage someone said that everyone on the trip was there, not by personal decision, but because the Blessed Mother had asked Jesus to invite us. The amazing thing is almost everyone on the trip had their own story about the twists and turns of events which brought them to Lourdes. One member of the auxiliary said, “I was pretty sure I couldn’t make it. Friends had encouraged me to come for years but I was too busy and I truly believed that, up until the moment I stepped on that plane I wouldn’t make it this year.”

Karen Lang, a guest of the New Jersey delegation in 2010, traveled with her mother on the pilgrimage and found where we went. I couldn’t pick out a favorite part of the trip but being with and talking to other malades created an unimaginable closeness which isn’t something that happens regularly in everyday life,” she said. “Of course I went to Lourdes to be healed. I would love to be healed but, having had that experience I can honestly say I want to be able to take others to Lourdes so they can have the experience.”

Picking up on the theme of fellowship, Dr. Howard Elder, who accompanied José Dos Santos in 2010, noticed a difference from visiting Lourdes as solitary pilgrims versus making the pilgrimage with the Knights and Dames of Malta. “When José and I visited Malta a year ago, we were aware of the many other pilgrims around us, but they were moving separately on their own paths, so that the contact, the ‘communion’ was only brief between us and other people.

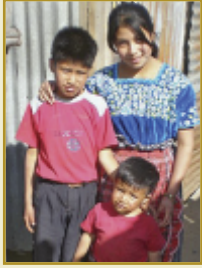
“This time we...grew to know each other...you knew who the sick were, who their caregivers were; who the support persons were; who the priests and brothers were; who the medical personnel were. There grew to be a strong sense of the prayer and spiritual response of the GROUP, not just you individually. This seemed to amplify the effect, so that the whole was greater than the sum of the individuals,” he said. In short, the power of prayer lifted all of us.

José Dos Santos explained the miracle of Lourdes as a focus away from self to others and ultimately God. “For me, everyday that is good (when I can walk, eat, drive, work) gives me a miracle, because every day I see God working in my life. At Lourdes, when I pass the gate, entering the Domaine, I have a big, positive, energy. I confess and cry every minute I remain there because in the Grotto you feel Jesus and the Blessed Mother’s presence...I saw the sick people looking for God’s help. I saw the babies, the young, teenagers and the sick adults and my heart cried for them in prayer. Then I tell myself, my problem is small.”

Sister Theresa Chiappa remembers that as she experienced the waters in the baths she could hear the voice of the Holy Mother saying, ‘I know what you have been through. You have never been alone, nor will you ever be alone.’ “I’ve been in pain all my life and when I heard that I could not stop crying. I am still trying to absorb what happened there in the baths,” she said.

Our Area Chair Jim Hamerschlag returned this year after a nine year hiatus. “I think the real miracles at Lourdes are when individuals leave with a heartfelt understanding of the Blessed Mother’s words at the time of the Annunciation: ‘Let it be done according to your will.’ Sometimes the Lord asks us to be an example of Faith and when one sees the pilgrims who visit Lourdes, one certainly sees the Faith very much alive.” ❖

From Houses to Homes



"We can tell you that there is nothing more rewarding than seeing a family move from a cornstalk enclosure with a dirt floor and a scrap metal roof to a solid, roofed structure with a cement floor and a door that locks. Nothing is more rewarding than giving children a bed of their own, even though they must share it with a sibling. Nothing is more rewarding than sharing a meal with that family on the last day of the job. For Guatemala, families are its future. Only with programs such as these can families stay together."



-- Karl and Linda Meister

"From Houses to Homes" is a Ministry sponsored by the New Jersey Area. For more information visit the website at www.fromhousestohomes.org.



Sokolowski joins Malta Board

Dr. Joseph Sokolowski, hospitaller for the Diocese of Camden, was elected to the American Association Board of Councillors for a term ending in 2013. He joins fellow New Jersey members Peter Muratore and Justice Marie Garibaldi on the governing board of the association. Justice Garibaldi serves as secretary.



Dr. Joseph Sokolowski, KM

Dr. Sokolowski actively participates in Malta Prison Ministry in a program designed to mentor children of the incarcerated. "We are always desperately in need of mentors for these youths," he said, "and would welcome any qualified volunteers to the program. The doctor is also a veteran of the Lourdes Pilgrimage having served as a member of the medical team for the past nine years."

Mark Your Calendar

- July 9, Saturday** - Day of Recollection with Order of the Holy Sepulcher - Mendham, NJ
- August 7, Sunday** - Sixth Annual Day at the Races - Monmouth Park, Oceanport, NJ
- October 1, Saturday** - New Jersey Annual Dinner - Echo Lake Country Club, Westfield, NJ
- October 15, Saturday** - Mass of the Anointing of the Sick - St. Cecilia Church, Pennsauken, NJ
- November 10, Thursday** - New Member Orientation - Waldorf~Astoria, NYC
- November 11-12, Friday/Saturday** - Annual Meeting and Investiture of New Members - Waldorf~Astoria, NYC
- November 11, Friday** - Annual Dinner - Waldorf~Astoria, NYC
- December 3 - Saturday** - Advent Day of Recollection
- December 18 - Sunday** - Christmas Mass and Reception

For details of each event, see the calendar listed on the Order of Malta Website at www.maltausa.org.



Bon Voyage! Peter Muratore (left) gathered together many New Jersey malades, caregivers, Knights, Dames and auxiliary members for a group photograph at the departure gate of American Airline's terminal prior to departing for AA-SMOM'S 25th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Lourdes on April 27th.



Patricia Murphy, DM with her daughter, newly invested Dame of Malta, Karen, and her niece Kate Stuebe prepare to board the Malta charter plane to Lourdes, France. It was Pat's 25th Malta Lourdes' pilgrimage.

Metuchen Diocese Area Sponsors Mass of the Anointing

Knights and Dames in the Metuchen Diocese will again be sponsoring a Mass of the Anointing of the Sick at St. Francis Cathedral in Metuchen on Saturday, June 25. This is the third year they will provide this very special opportunity for those in the community who suffer from poor health. Last year over 200 malades were anointed by several priests with the help of volunteers from the order. Dame Nancy Higgins who volunteered last year noted it was “one of the closest reminders of Lourdes she has ever seen here at home.”

Five new members from the Metuchen Diocese were inducted into the Order at the November 2010 Annual Induction Mass and included Beth Hamerschlag, Edward Hartnett, Michael Ligorano, Karen Murphy, and John Spinello. In addition Bishop Paul Bootkoski was inducted into the Association as a Conventual Chaplain. Both Mary Hartnett and John Sweska, active provisional members look forward to being inducted in November 2012.

Finally the Metuchen contingent which numbers approximately 20 has begun sponsoring monthly Rosary, Mass and dinner. The Very Rev. Sylvester Cronin, deputy chaplain, celebrates the Masses at St. Brigid's Church in Peapack. ❖

Newark Group Staffs Soup Kitchen; Explores Prison Ministry

Association members in the Newark Diocese have been working to establish two new ministries in which the group as a whole can participate.

On a quarterly basis Knights and Dames are responsible for preparing and serving meals and cleaning up a St. Ann's kitchen for the homeless. Volunteers are very visible wearing red Malta aprons and black caps! All New Jersey members are invited to help at the kitchen.

Bill Benedict, KM has established a relationship between the prison ministry and the Beth Miriam House in Jersey City, a shelter which provides housing and programs for women recently released from prison. Carol Wilson, DM volunteered to work on the project to ensure the provision of appropriate services. ❖

Trenton Diocese Knights and Dames Celebrate World Day of the Sick

Members of the Order of Malta participated in the celebration of the World Day of the Sick and the Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes with Bishop Davis O'Connell. The day started with a Blessing of the Hands service for health care providers at Centra State Medical Center. The Bishop also visited patients in the hospital. Later in the day, a Mass and Blessing of the Hands was held at St. Robert Bellamine Church in Freehold. Over 600 people, mostly doctors, nurses, healthcare providers and caregivers, attended the Mass.

A buffet dinner, sponsored by the NJ area of the Order of Malta, followed the second Mass and was well attended. Twelve Knights and Dames attended including Area Chair Jim Hamerschlag, Peter and Pat Muratore, Bob and Karen Tanzola, Kathy Suplee, Mike Ligorano, Charlotte Ross, Marina Perna and John Jennings. Bob and Karen Tanzola participated in events throughout the day and saw it as “...enacting what we do as an order.” Bob Tanzola said he thought all the events which were organized by the diocesan Office of Pastoral Care were very well done. “This kind of event is a spiritual healing and that's what World Day of the Sick is all about,” he said. ❖

Bishop Smith leads Lenten Day of Reflection

“What distinguishes a Christian from members of other religions?” asked Bishop Smith in his first presentation of the Lenten Day of Reflection. “What is unique about being a Christian?”

The answer and the subsequent theme of the day was: our belief in Jesus Christ, the Lord, our Lord. The Bishop talked about the role Jesus assumes in our lives. “Jesus is at the center of all we believe and the center of each and every Christian's life,” he said. “The encounter with the living Jesus is the source of the church and an expectation which has made a difference to each one of us every day.” He said that we each walk with the living Jesus every day. He touches our lives daily and this journey we make in this world is made with Jesus the living Christ. He encouraged all to “live with, pray to and talk to” Jesus as we make our journey.

Bishop Smith recommended two books: “*Jesus of Nazareth*” by Pope Benedict XVI, and “*Many Ways to Pray*”, which is a Malta Publication.

Almost 50 Knights, Dames and guests attended the Day of Reflection on April 9 at the Shrine of St. Joseph in Sterling, NJ. After the opening talk, the Bishop celebrated Mass, which was followed by a luncheon and an afternoon program. ❖

**American Association of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order
of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta**

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