



# Order of Malta American Association Missouri Area NEWSLETTER March, 2023

## Chaplain's Column

### *Defense of the Faith*

*Be it mine to practice and defend the Catholic, the Apostolic, the Roman faith against the sacrilege.*

This line from the Daily Prayer of the Order is a clear reference to one of the two charisms of the Order, the defense of the faith (“tuitio fidei”). This charism might not be as well-known as our works of charity. Malta’s service to the poor and the sick is easy to see, and takes many forms: e.g., bringing malades to Lourdes, ministering to the sick, prison ministry, assistance to the poor through St. Patrick’s Center, as well as those in impoverished areas in St. Louis, providing medical care for the poor and sick in Haiti; the list goes on and on. Defending the faith is no less important today, though not as easily seen.

At the Order’s beginning in the middle ages, defense of the faith literally meant the defending of Christians by the sword from enemy threats to life. In his book *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Volunteers*, Msgr. John Dimech describes what defense of the faith means today:

*“Nowadays the members are no longer called upon to bear arms in defense of the faith but they should be*

*prepared to defend the teachings of the Church, especially the sanctity of human life, by personal testimony and living witness. Today this too requires considerable courage because one encounters strong opposition when one defends Christian values and takes a stand on moral issues” (27).*



**Msgr. Vernon Gardin, Ch.M.**

A secular environment in our country may support works of charity, but not the practice of the Christian faith. Recent sociological studies have shown a serious decline in the number of Americans belonging to any organized religion, nearly 20 per cent. The growth of a secular culture is alarming, especially when the practice of the Catholic faith is actually threatened, not simply tolerated.

Practically, for ourselves as members of Malta, as well as for all Catholics, defense of the faith means

prayer, striving to lead a holy life, continual study of the faith, giving personal testimony to others when possible. All of us have the explicit mission from Christ to teach and baptize all nations. (Matthew 28:19-20) May we never tire or become disheartened in bringing His love, grace, and salvation to the world!

Msgr. Vernon Gardin

## “I Was Hungry...”

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Math. 25:35 – 36)*

The Lenten season is a time to slow down, be more prayerful and incorporate changes in your daily life that strengthen your relationship with God. As an Order we are called to the defense of our faith while serving our Lords the sick and poor. Our hands on works bring the face of God to those we serve. May we never take this lightly. We are so grateful for the unique light each of you bring to the St Louis area and the world.

We are pleased to share that Msgr. Ramacciotti was approved by the Board of Councilors in February to be invested as a Deputy Chaplain of the Order of Malta. Msgr. Ramacciotti will be invested at the November 2023 investiture in New York. A Deputy Chaplain is approved for a three-year term to serve the Order. We thank Archbishop Rozanski and Msgr. Gardin for their guidance and support of a Missouri Area Deputy Chaplain. We are grateful that Msgr. Gardin continues as our Magistral Chaplain which is a life-long term in the Order of Malta. Msgr. Gardin and Msgr. Ramacciotti will work together to ensure the continued spiritual growth of our area members. Please welcome Msgr. Ramacciotti when you see him at one of our 2023 events.

Speaking of area member spiritual growth, it was wonderful to see so many members at the Lenten mass and reflection. We are thankful to Father Sam Conedera for his insightful reflection on the history of the Order's spirituality. A perfect topic to guide us on our Lenten journey!

The 2024 formation class process opens on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Please contact Chris Winkelmann ([chris\\_winkelmann@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_winkelmann@hotmail.com)) if you know of strong Catholics that might be interested in learning more about the Or-

der of Malta.

We look forward to seeing each of you at our annual meeting on April 22 at the Missouri Athletic Club West. Please join us for an update on the American Association and our local area. A member reception will follow our annual meeting. Invitations for this special gathering will be mailed mid-March.

We, along with five area members, will join the Order of Malta for our annual Lourdes Pilgrimage May 2 – 9. It is with joy that we return to Lourdes after three years of being away due to COVID. We are pleased to share that the malade we recommended from our area has been approved by the American Association Medical Committee. Please pray

for all the malades and caregivers that will travel with the Order to Lourdes. Our Lady of Lourdes protect and guide all that will attend the 2023 pilgrimage.

Our area Hospitallers, Pat and Ron Hofmeister, continue to guide our quarterly service projects. This year we will focus on including additional hands-on service opportunities as part of our quarterly service projects now that we have emerged from COVID. We continue to be humbled by the generosity and commitment of our members to serve those in need in our area. **Thank you!**

As previously communicated, on January 1, 2023, we entered our sixth and final year as your area co-chairs. Our second term will end on December 31, 2023. We are actively engaged with our successors, Mike and Helen McCadden, to ensure the transition goes as smooth as possible. We are grateful for Mike and Helen for their willingness to serve as area co-chairs commencing on January 1, 2024.

We will gather with Holy Sepulchre members for a joint mass and dinner in June. We hope you can join us. Please refer to the 2023 calendar emailed to all members in late 2022 for a full listing of 2023 area service works opportunities, masses and dinners.



**Kathy & Greg Gantz**

Congratulations Brian Abel Ragen for being honored as Catholic Man of the Year based on his service to Our Church and Community. Congratulations to Peggy Forrest for being selected as the keynote speaker for Archbishop Rozanski's Gospel of Life prayer breakfast in April due her service to Our Church and Community. Thank you both for showing us what it means to live our charism each day.

Finally, the **Called to Serve** capital campaign entered the open phase for all Order members last fall. The capital campaign update at the most recent Board of Councillors meeting confirmed the continued commitment and generosity of our members to securing the legacy

of our primary and signature works for generations to come. We have achieved \$18 million of our original \$20 million goal. For those that have contributed... **thank you!** For those discerning their capital campaign commitment, all gifts are accepted with gratitude.

We wish you and those you love a peace filled Lenten season and joyous Easter. May we give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading each of us according to his will.

With gratitude and prayers,

Greg and Kathy Gantz  
Missouri Malta Area Co-Chairs

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## Serving the Sick and the Poor

### ***Christmas Service Project***

The Missouri Area's Christmas service project helped three organizations that serve our most vulnerable neighbors: Marygrove, which provides care for mentally disturbed children, young adults, and their families; Our Lady's Inn, which provides a home and care of many kinds for women facing crisis pregnancies, and the Queen of Peace Center, which provides behavioral healthcare for women, children, and families.

Under the leadership of our area hospitallers, Pat and Ron Hofmeister, members in our area gathered items from the organizations' wish lists—which included

### ***Feeding the Hungry***

On November 19, 2022, Malta Mobile Ministries (St. Louis) delivered approximately 350 grocery bags of canned goods and shelf-stable foods to Our Lady of Guadeloupe (OLG) parish food pantry. The OLG food pantry distributes food to lower-income individuals and families in Ferguson, Cool Valley, and surrounding municipalities. The Malta Mobile Ministries driver and an OLG volunteer picked up the supplies at All Saints Parish in St. Peters, where they'd been gathered by parish's Boy Scouts in their annual Scouting for Food Drive. The generous donation—which completely covered the floor of the van, stacked several layers tall – came at a doubly fortunate time. Not only was it the week before Thanksgiving, but also the “cupboards were bare” at the food pantry due to loss of a key sponsor.

—Christopher Winkelmann

things ranging from toiletries to bedding to children's toys. By the time Genie Wilhelm drove the Malta Mobile Ministry van to deliver the items just before Christmas, those donations filled over eighty large boxes. The organizations also received checks, which together totaled \$2,300. Those funds will be used to purchase items such as infant car seats.

The leadership at the three organizations were enthusiastic in their thanks, and we can be sure that our gifts brightened the lives of the people they serve.



**All Saints Contributions**



## Malta Mobile Ministry

Malta Mobile Ministry served many clients during the last few months, including the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Criminal Justice Ministry, and Cardinal Ritter Senior Services. The loads transported range from hospital beds that make life easier for a homebound senior to groceries that will feed many families, to furniture that will begin to make a recently homeless family or a

recently released convict feel that they have a home in the community. Besides aiding those in need, Malta Mobile Ministry provides the means for those that feel called to help their neighbor. Often a simple lack of transportation makes that impossible, and that is where Malta Mobile Ministry finds its role. The photos here show some of the people and causes we have served.



**Our Lady of Guadalupe Food Bank and Souting for Food**



**With the "Holy Haulers" of St. Vincent de Paul for Criminal Justice Ministry**

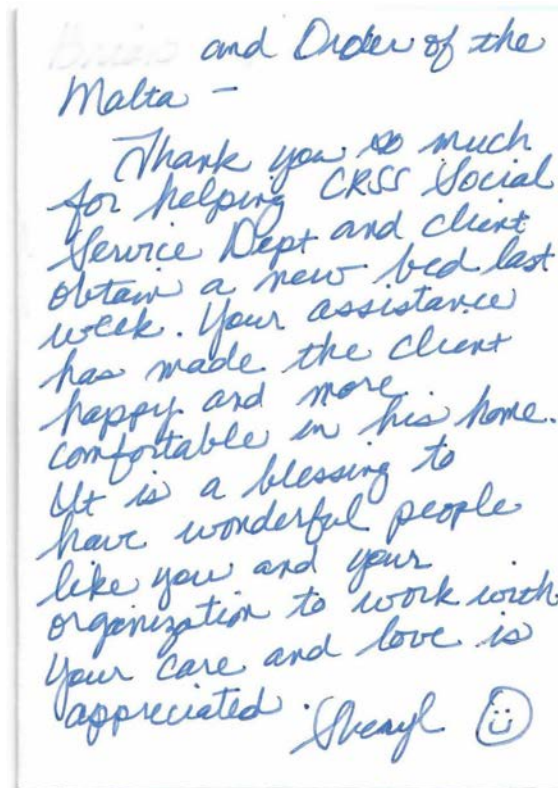


### Warmth Collected and Delivered

The homeless have a great but often forgotten need. The need clean, sturdy socks. Working with several parishes, the St. Patrick Center has worked to supply that need, and for a second year Malta Mobile Ministries have help, by collecting the socks from St. Richard Catholic Church and delivering them to the St. Patrick Center downtown. The people of St. Richard and

others had collected over 6,000 pairs of socks, all new, in various sizes. Socks appropriate for special needs, such as compression socks, were also included. They filled the van, and have doubtless helped some men and women in dire circumstances live in great comfort and perhaps avoid the serious illnesses that can arise from neglected feet.

### A Note of Thanks





# Prayer and Fellowship

## *World Day of the Sick*

To mark the World Day of the Sick and the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (February 11), members of the Missouri area joined the members of Immacolata parish for a mass celebrated by Area Chaplain, Msgr. Vernon Gardin. Msgr. Gardin's homily

focused on the many kinds of sickness, both physical and spiritual, that our order seeks to heal. After mass, members gathered for brunch at a local restaurant to discuss our upcoming projects and enjoy the company of their fellow Knights, Dames, and Affiliates.



**Msgr. Gardin with Mike Roth Serving**



**Greg Gantz Leads Prayer of the Order**



**Members Sharing Breakfast after Mass**

## ***Lenten Day of Reflection***

On the first Saturday of Lent, the Order of Malta returned to the Immacolata Catholic Church for its Lenten Mass and Morning of Reflection. Mass was concelebrated by Msgr. Gardin and Fr. Sam Zeno Conedera, S.J. Fr. Conedera is assistant professor of history at Saint Louis University and the author of *Ecclesiastical Knights: The Military Orders in Castile, 1150-1330*. After mass, members gathered in the parish school for a Lenten reflection. After an invocation by Msgr. Gardin, Mike Roth introduced Fr. Conedera, who drew on his research to remind the Knights, Dames, and Affiliates of what makes their calling in the Order of Malta unique. While other military religious orders were

primarily martial in their origins, what would become the Order of Malta was hospitaller from its very origins. Our charism has been to serve the poor and the sick from the beginning. While other military religious orders withered or were suppressed when their military role disappeared, the Order of Malta has continued through the centuries because the poor and sick are with us always, and if we make their care our focus, the world still needs us. Fr. Conedera's talk included fascinating insights into all the military religious orders, and was followed by a discussion that showed how deeply some members have studied the history of our order.



**Fr. Conedera Preaching**



**Mike Albers as Lector**



**Mike Roth**



**Msgr. Gardin**



**Fr. Conedera Teaching**



# Investiture in New York

Five St Louis new Knights and Dames joined their investiture class of seventy new Knights and Dames in New York City on November 18th for their investiture at St. Patrick Cathedral. His Beatitude, Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM, the Latin Patriarch of Jeru-

salem, homily message focused on what distinguishes the Order of Malta from other religious orders. It is that Knights and Dames embrace the world; they do not step away, avoid the harsh realities of the world or the evil within it. His Beatitude spoke of choosing the more



**Kathy Gantz as Lector**



**The Newly Invested**



**Fra' John's Greeting**



**Those from Our Region**



dangerous path. His message was clear, “Go into the life of the world, which is risky with a lot of danger.” The Beatitude went on to provide the frame of mind in which to enter into the world, “... you have to go there but with faith” in Jesus...”don’t be afraid, take courage.” His Beatitude finished by telling the Knights and Dames, “All of what you are doing must be according to the will of God.” Then you will have nothing to fear. This year’s events provided members with the special opportunity to see and hear Fra John Dunlap, Lieutenant of the Grand Master. Fra’ John Dunlap invested the members of the order and also spoke at the annual dinner. We welcome Joaquin Alarcon, Tim Gamma, Phyllis Heck, Jonathan Klimpel and Larry Koesterer to the Malta family!



**With Cardinal Dolan**



**With Archbishop Rozanski**



### **The Lieutenant of the Grand Master and the Sub-Priory of Lourdes**

Until recently, the Sub-Priory of Lourdes was made of of Member of the First and Second Classes in the American and Federal Associations of the Order of Malta. Recent changes had made all member of whatever classes member of the sub-priory. On the day after the investiture, the sub-priory gathered for mass at the Church of St. Francis of Asissi in New York. The presence of Fra' John Dunlap, both old friend and new superior, made the event especially joyful.

Earlier in the day, many members, malades from previous pilgrimages to Lourdes, and their families, gathered at St. Patrick Cathedral for a Mass for the Intention of Living and Deceased Malades. Mass was follow by a luncheon in support of the Holy Family Hospital in Jerusalem, where members both learn about the needs of the hospital and enjoyed joyful reunions with their fellow pilgrims.



### **Lunch for Holy Family Hospital amid Reminders of its Work**



## ***Advent Mass and Dinner***

Area members gathered for our Advent mass on December 14th at St. Clare of Assisi parish and then Bellerive Country Club for our advent dinner. It was a festive and beautiful gathering that was enjoyed by all. Sister Mary Rachel, internist and executive director of the Rural Parish Workers Mobile Medical and Dental clinic, discussed the history of this important ministry to bring quality medical care to the uninsured within the rural counties of the Diocese. Sister Mary Rachel explained that many of the clinic patients have never received dental or medical care. The access to free care can change the course of someones' life by improving their nutrition and helping them gain a new confidence in themselves. Sister also discussed volunteer opportunities for our members and thanked the current area members that volunteer as medical physicians and board members.

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# Missouri Area Leadership

**Area Co-Chairs: Kathy and Greg Gantz**

**Area Chaplin: Msgr. Vernon Gardin**

**Hospitallers: Pat and Ron Hofmeister**

**Membership: Chris Winkelmann**

**Treasurer: Bill Guyol**

**Affiliate Coordinators (Associates and Auxiliary): Genie and John Wilhelm**

**Communications: Brian Abel Ragen**

**Malta Masses: Donna and Mike Roth**

**Prison Ministry: Pat Hofmeister (Women's) and Mike Mooney (Men's)**

**Grant Committee: Tyler Bender, Don Gunn, Carole Less, and Jack Pohrer**

**Malta Rosary (first Wednesday): Donna and Mike Albers**

**Daily Missal Mailings: Carole Less**

## **MALTA MOBILE MINISTRY—ST. LOUIS**

**Director: Randy Weber**

**Finance and Operations Coordinator: Jim Bick**

**Program and Services Coordinator: Chris Winkelmann**

**Volunteer Driver Coordinator: Mike Roth**

**Vehicle Maintenance Coordinators: John and Genie Wilhelm**

**Communications: Brian Abel Ragen**