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**SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF  
 JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA™**  
 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, U.S.A.

# HOSPITALLERS

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## The Pilgrimage for Life A Sacred Journey

Gregory Oussani and Nancy Graebe

Some people may have gotten the mistaken notion that the Pro-Life movement would go away when the infamous 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2022. Nancy Graebe, Chair of the American Association's Annual Pilgrimage for Life, along with her Co-Chairs Dr. Robert Graebe and Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky, know that the movement is just getting its second wind. Buoyed by the joy and gratitude that followed the reversal, some have commented that the real work on the ground, state by state, is still in its infancy.

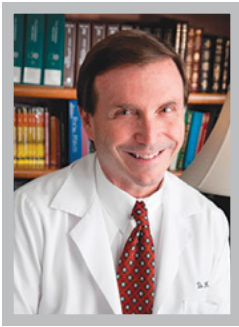
The American Association's 2023 Pilgrimage for Life took place on January 19th and 20th, in coordination with the 50th anniversary of the March for Life. This annual pilgrimage puts Knights and Dames in the midst of tens of thousands of supporters from around the country who gather in the nation's capital each year to raise a cry, a song and a prayer for the unborn whose voices would be unheard, and snuffed out in a society that has lost its way, having evolved into a culture of death.

*(continued on page 6)*

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Please visit our website at:  
**orderofmaltaamerican.org** to find the latest information about the American Association, our local Areas, and the Order of Malta. Links are also available to other Association websites and the Sovereign Magistracy in the "About the Order" section.

Download our mobile app for spiritual resources, news, calendar of events, member directory, and new push notifications. The app is available for Android and iOS devices in the app store when you search "Order of Malta, American Association."



I JUST RETURNED FROM OUR BOARD MEETING in Lutz, Florida, at one of the most beautiful retreat centers I have seen. We were blessed with 80-degree weather and sunny skies and enjoyed a wonderful retreat after the meeting.

This is the first time we have combined our Board meeting with a retreat and based on the feedback, it will not be our last. It is not only more economical, but it provides us with an opportunity to grow spiritually as leaders.

Tonight, I will participate in a Zoom call with the Lourdes committee. We are excited to be returning to Lourdes after three years and look forward to being with other members of the Order from around the world.

The week before the Pilgrimage, I will be traveling to Rome to elect a new Grand Master of the Order. We are all praying that it will be Frá John Dunlap. He has been doing a great job as Lieutenant of the Grand Master, uniting us and completing the renewal process and we are hopeful he will continue to lead us during these changing times.

In April, we will have a combined Chaplain and Area Leadership meeting at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception on Long Island. This is an opportunity for the leadership of our Areas to share best practices and to share with our chaplains the challenges of growing an Area. The Chaplains will also have a separate time to discuss their role in the Order. Please keep them in your prayers.

This summer, we are having our first retreat in Wisconsin — it is being held in community with the Norbertine Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin, (just outside Green Bay) and will include time at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. It is being organized by our Northeast Wisconsin Area and will be open to all members of the three U.S. Associations. Please see our weekly Spirituality in Action email for more details.

Shortly after you receive this newsletter, the Admissions process for the class of 2024 will open. Each member has the responsibility and the opportunity to identify and sponsor candidates who would benefit from pursuing their spiritual growth on the path of Blessed Gerard. Look in your family, in your parish, in your place of employment and at the people who join you in your works and ministries. Sharing the unique charism of the Order opens the door for other like-minded Catholics to experience the spiritual benefits that Knights and Dames already enjoy.

The Area grants program will be closing for 2023 at the end of April; Area Leaders have been working through the process to provide financial support to organizations where you and members from your Area are actively engaged in hands-on work serving the sick and the poor. The American Association receives most of its grant program funding from the Malta Human Services Foundation.

Finally, our successful Capital Campaign is now beginning its planned giving phase. You will have received a letter from me by the time this newsletter is printed. Please consider the many ways you can support our ministries for years to come.

Thank you for all you do.

Peter J. Kelly, MD, GCM  
President

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## Lourdes 2023 A Time of Renewal

We are excited, blessed, and thankful that we are returning to Lourdes — the Grotto, Candlelight Procession, spectacular Masses, and of course, our beloved Malades. It is stunning to think that a once small, rural town is now an international destination for pilgrims to pray, process, and experience this most extraordinary place where The Blessed Mother appeared to a poor, peasant girl so many years ago.

The universal theme for our pilgrimage this year, “...that a chapel should be built here...” is the second of the trilogy presented by the Lourdes Sanctuary that breaks the Blessed Mother’s words into three parts. In 2022, the theme was: “Go and tell the priests ...”; the message continues in the theme for 2023: “... to build here a chapel here. ...”; and the message will be completed in 2024: “... and that people should come in procession.”

For the pilgrims travelling with the American Association, the chapels are part of the rhythm of the Pilgrimage as they provide the settings for many of the core activities of the Pilgrimage. Thursday’s opening Mass takes place in the Rosary Basilica, an artistic tribute to the most powerful prayer after the Mass for all Catholics. The original fifteen decades of the Rosary are depicted on

the interior walls of the Basilica while the Luminous mysteries are depicted on its exterior.

Saint Bernadette’s Chapel is a contrast to the Rosary Basilica for its simplicity of art and its stark architecture. It is well-suited to reflection, contrition, and Eucharistic adoration. What happens in Lourdes is powerful and for many is life changing. The opportunity to hear the Friday morning’s reflections and go to confession with the most compassionate priests can create a defining moment and a turning point.

The Association’s pilgrims gather for Mass at the Salle Notre Dame on Friday afternoon — it could be a chapel in a farming village — with the river churning outside its open windows, providing a unique reminder of the power and symbolism of water in the lives of Christians through- *(continued on page 4)*



out the 2,000 years of the Church's existence. The power of the Sacrament of the Sick is externally symbolized by the anointing with Holy Oil. Malades, their Caregivers, Knights, Dames, and Volunteers bring their infirmities to God and lay them in His loving hands. While physical cures do happen, acceptance brings peace to those whose hearts are open to God's will.

Nowhere is the sacred more obvious in the Sanctuary than at the Grotto, a church nestled in a cave, an underground stream exposed and gurgling past an altar as a reminder of Mary's instruction to Bernadette to wash there. The waters draw out the faith of the hundreds of millions who have knelt there over the decades, from Popes to Peasants, the sick in body and the sick in spirit. People of many faiths come to this sacred place each year, to be where Mary stood, in the hope that

While physical cures do happen, acceptance brings peace to those whose hearts are open to God's will.

her shadow and her gaze will fall upon them. With the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes looking over the plaza from the opening in the rock wall, each pilgrim is reminded that Heaven and earth came together in a special way for a young peasant girl and for each of those who kneel in faith, and as they walk through the Grotto and reach out to touch the walls in hopes of capturing the miracle. The three Associations join together for

the Mass here on Saturday morning — voices rise in song and sermons move hearts at this very special liturgy. Jesus told us that faith can move mountains; here, many find that a nondescript cave in the side of a hill can bring that faith to life, to see it shine and to help each pilgrim find his or her way.

Each place of worship on the Pilgrimage brings the chance for special gifts. Sunday provides a unique experience that shines a light on the global reach of the Order of Malta and the universal nature of the Catholic Church. The underground Basilica of Pius X is the scene for one of the largest underground Masses anyone would ever attend. It is not unusual for twenty-five thousand pilgrims, including hundreds of Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, to gather under one roof on Sunday for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. The procession into the Mass includes contingents from





You should have recently received a mailing related to our upcoming Pilgrimage to Lourdes. This year, each Malade and their Caregiver will require combined funding of approximately \$8,000. Costs, primarily for the charter plane, have risen significantly since our last pilgrimage in 2019, and due to Covid-related restrictions, registrations are lower than normal.

Our Called to Serve capital campaign has been raising funds to endow future pilgrimages in perpetuity, but unfortunately payment schedules for commitments to this campaign run up to five years, and our present needs for this year's pilgrimage are immediate.

Please consider providing a cash gift to underwrite the operational costs of the Pilgrimage Foundation, which includes the 2023 Pilgrimage. Go to <https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/LP2023>, or contact Fr. David Sellery, our Director of Development and Membership Engagement, at 646-661-4975 or [dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org](mailto:dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org), to make your donation today.

around the world. Flags remind the pilgrims that the Church is made of many parts and reaches into the four corners of the earth.

The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (often referred to as the Upper Basilica), is the setting for what is called the Closing Mass on Monday. It is the oldest Basilica in the Sanctuary. Consecrated in 1876, it is graced with stained glass windows depicting the apparitions of Mary to Bernadette. While it is not the end of the pilgrimage, it will be the last celebration of the Eucharist for the 2023 American Association's Lourdes Pilgrimage. The small plaza in front of the third chapel provides a panoramic view of the Sanctuary. Inside, the small church is usually packed. It provides a liturgical culmination of a spiritual journey and is often a time of joy and sadness as the pilgrimage is nearing its end.

These are not the only spiri-

tual activities in the Pilgrimage. The Candlelight procession is a gathering of pilgrims for a journey of prayer and light that moves through the Sanctuary as the backdrop to Mary's prayer, the Rosary. Above the doors of the Rosary Basilica is a depiction of the Blessed Mother giving the Rosary to Saint Dominic. There is something very moving about the sound of thousands of people saying the prayer that has been the source of grace and strength for over eight hundred years.

Many miracles have been reported during the Eucharistic Adoration and Procession that travels through the Sanctuary and ends with Benediction, as the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a source of special graces for all.

The baths have changed in their process but remain true to the Blessed Mother's request that people come and wash from the water of the spring that

Bernadette uncovered and still flows today. The outdoor Stations of the Cross provide a hilltop view of Lourdes and a reminder of the hill of Calvary.

In addition, many private and small group visits to the Grotto fill in the time and space between planned activities. There are also special reflection groups and the opportunity for (early) morning prayer at the hotel. Priests are available daily for private consultation and confession.

The pilgrims have been waiting; the pilgrimage has been too long unmade; the time for standing and waiting is almost over. Mary's call to come in procession is fast approaching.

Our Lady of Lourdes, Pray for us!  
Saint Bernadette, Pray for us!

*This article was contributed by Missy and Tom Reedy, Co-Hosts for the 2023 American Association Pilgrimage to Lourdes, May 2nd through May 9th.*



## The Pilgrimage for Life A Sacred Journey

*(continued from cover)*

The American Association's direct involvement in the March for Life was initiated by the late Karen Dutkowsky and Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky in 2013. Blizzards and pandemics have created challenges over the years but the commitment to be there is strong in the hearts of those who recognize the truth and need to be there to speak for those millions of unheard voices.

This year, more than fifty Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, Year of Formation Candidates and Staff participated in the two-day event that has become more than a tradition and more than a March; it continues to be a spiritual exercise. Many long-time pro-life advocates know that Roe was overturned by prayer and prayer is needed to continue the transformation at the state levels where the battles will be fought. Sometimes, the best and only real weapon that people of good will have is prayer.

This year's Pilgrimage for Life had a number of key elements that combined to create a two-day 'prayer service' for the unborn, those whose lives were cut short by abortion and the future unborn whose existence continues to be at risk.

On Thursday morning, hosted by the Franciscan Sisters at their Washington, DC, Retreat House, a reflection was presented by the Sisters of Life. These presentations have become a mainstay in the Association's Pilgrimage for Life. At the Thursday morning reflection, Sr. Catherine of the Sisters of Life asked the pilgrims to consider what occasion or event in their own past brought them to become actively pro-life. A brief discussion with the person sitting next to them helped to focus on that past trigger that planted a seed in each heart that needed expression and moved them to participate in the Pilgrimage for Life. Sister Catherine recalled events in her own life and spoke about Cardinal O'Connor's realization at Dachau that the inhumanity he saw at the camp was the same as the evil of abortion. This insight inspired him to create the community of the Sisters of Life, whose mission is dedicated to protecting all human life.

After lunch at the retreat house, the pilgrims proceeded to the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception to prepare for the Vigil Mass, which was filled to capacity by people from all around the

country. The Order of Malta had the privilege of assisting those with disabilities, ushering them into the Basilica, and escorting them to reserved seating upfront. Mrs. Graebe was assigned to choose two couples from among them to present the gifts. Mr. Oussani had the opportunity to meet both couples and said their stories would bring tears of joy to those blessed to hear them!

The Vigil Mass for Life on Thursday evening at the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception was inspiring by the numbers, by the enthusiasm and by the reverent commitment to the liturgy. The Mass was concelebrated by several hundred bishops and priests, including two Cardinals and the Apostolic Nuncio, Christophe Pierre. The main celebrant was Bishop Michael Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, the chair of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

In his homily, Bishop Burbidge made several important points that those who care need to reflect on and direct their prayers and their energy toward to continue to make a difference. He noted that the overturning of Roe was not the end but the beginning. He said that we must now work to defund abortion nationally and globally, work to end home abortions and to make abortion unthinkable and illegal. He went on to say that we must learn to communicate with love and with respectful discussion to convert hearts, not to cancel them. Out of charity and with clarity, Bishop Burbidge said that we must hold those in public office who support abortion accountable for their views. He reminded us that we will be held accountable for what we did and did not do to protect the child in the womb, whom Bishop Burbidge called, "God's child." And lastly, quoting Pope Francis, he said that God's love must fill the empty spaces of evil — the empty spaces of abortion — through prayer.

On Friday morning, the day started with Mass for the Pilgrimage attendees at Saint Patrick's Church. The celebrant was Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, ChC, a chaplain from Albany. Monsignor Frank Caldwell, ChM, a chaplain from Long Island, concelebrated. Bishop Scharfenberger has become a familiar face to the Pilgrimage for Life participants over the years with his support for the event and his steadfast commitment to pro-life activities.

In the afternoon, the Pilgrimage participants attended the rally at the Mall, and then joined the tens of thousands from all



around the country and beyond who came to the nation's capital to participate in the March for Life. The Association's flag bearer for the March this year was Michael Marino, a Knight from the New Jersey Area, taking the place of the late Kenn Sapeta, who for years was our flag bearer with honor. Our group was joined by members of the Federal and Western Associations.

The group was led by the Association's 15-foot wide banner, carried by several of the Dames. A beautiful icon of an Our Lady of Philermo, mounted on a wooden platform, was carried, in turn, by Knights and by priests and seminarians from the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri in Red Bank, New Jersey. The Association's pilgrims were at the very front of the March, and at the end, they stopped to pray a decade of the Rosary in thanksgiving for the overturn of Roe and for our Blessed Mother's intercession to gird them for the work ahead.

On Friday evening, many of the participants attended the Annual Rose Dinner, sponsored by March for Life, with over 1,000 like-minded people; it is the largest pro-life dinner in the world!

The Order of Malta belongs at the March for Life to reinforce its commitment to build a culture of life, to give witness to our faith, to serve our lords through their difficulties, to embrace and defend life against forces committed to destroying it, and to join fellow Knights and Dames in prayer, camaraderie and encouragement.

The Pilgrimage for Life in 2024 is scheduled for Thursday, January 18th and Friday, January 19th. As Bishop Scharfenberger and many others have noted, "The work has just begun!"

*"When the time comes, as it surely will, when we face that awesome moment, the final judgment, I've often thought, as Fulton Sheen wrote, that it is a terrible moment of loneliness. You have no advocates, you are there alone standing before God — and a terror will rip your soul like nothing you can imagine. But I really think that those in the pro-life movement will not be alone. I think there'll be a chorus of voices that have never been heard in this world but are heard beautifully and clearly in the next world — and they will plead for everyone who has been in this movement. They will say to God, "Spare him, because he loved us," — and God will look at you and say not, "Did you succeed?" but "Did you try?"*  
 — Henry Hyde

*"The harvest is great, but the laborers are few."*

**Here are just a few activities you could get involved in to support a culture of life:**

- Become a volunteer at a pro-life organization such as pregnancy help and life centers and homes for pregnant mothers. You can also be involved as a benefactor or on the boards of these same organizations.
- Pray at abortion clinics in your city. Participate in the major movement known as "40 Days for Life" that is in many cities around the country and now around the world, that aims to have someone praying outside of an abortion clinic during every hour that it is open.
- Many know the battle is not solely at the national level — it is intensifying at the state and even local level. Let your representatives know that you support pro-life legislation. Find out the positions of candidates and choose life.
- Support the work being done to outlaw home abortions and help to promote awareness of the growing use of chemicals to kill a baby in the womb at home.
- Get involved in supporting pregnant mothers by helping them to find employment.
- Regardless of your own situation, you can deploy the most effective tool known to humanity — prayer. Pray for the unborn, for women with challenging pregnancies, for parents who have chosen life for their child, for the medical community that they may stand up for the right to life in the midst of a society that wants to force them to participate in the evils of abortion, assisted suicide and other attacks on life.



## My Week at the Ukrainian Border: January 2023

Along the border with Hungary, and just north of Romania, is the small Ukrainian city of Beregov. At the beginning of January, I spent a week with the Order of Malta's team stationed there. Having flown into Budapest airport and then made my way down to the border, I was dropped off at the crossing point to then walk the rest by foot. After 4 stages of passport control, where the incredibly short hair I had at the time of my passport being issued led to queries that I was the same person as in my documents, I made it through. Both Tünde and Janos collected me from the other side of the crossing and drove me to the camp. The residence they accommodate you in is a small, partly converted bungalow situated near the Order of Malta's office.

To put it into context, the Order of Malta's team in Beregov consists of a small, dedicated cohort of fulltime staff supported by an energetic team of volunteers. The size of this team is even more impressive when one begins to understand the colossal scale of work that is being achieved here. The warehouse where we spent much of our time was 5 minutes down the road by car and should be described as more of a compound setting with multiple buildings connected. Our mornings, as volunteers, would start by coming together at the office and getting briefed on the priorities of the day. Depending on what was going to be dispatched and received at the compound, we would most likely start our day by riffling through the countless pallettes of donations that had made it there, ready for distribution. Whilst all the donations given cover a wide range of needs, the vast majority of inventory can be divided into three categories; food; clothing; hygiene. Not

only was I blown away by the size of the operation that is run so efficiently by a handful of individuals, I was also astounded by the international scale of where these donations were coming from, and from the number of organisations too.

The majority of my time spent there was simply working in the warehouse with the reorganisation of incoming stock and thus its repackaging for distribution. I also spent one morning loading over 20 pallettes of wooden briquettes, each weighing a tonne, that are used to heat all of the Order of Malta's buildings across Hungary. Each day was hard work and very important. Any other box that we would rifle through and repackage only helped to speed the process up and alleviate more work for the team out there that continue to juggle multiple tasks.

Overall, my experience was a very interesting one to be a part of. But in all honesty, having only spent a week there myself, I feel very strongly that this article should serve more as recognition of the endless achievements made by such a small team at such a critical time. Although I will try, words cannot describe the impressive leadership and teamwork that is required by the small number of individuals driving such a massive change. On my last day with the team, I sat down with Tünde and Janos to get an idea of the other work the Order carries out here. This was initially going to be a 15-minute discussion but soon led to over an hour of copious amounts of notes being written (enough for a book).

As we all know, since February 24th, 2022, the people of Ukraine have continued to be filled with endless uncertainty, fear and distress. In moments like these, the importance of protection and aid cannot be underestimated. For nearly 1000 years, the Order of Malta has promoted fundamental human rights and worked tirelessly towards the







care and support of the less fortunate. This work remains true to this day and can certainly be found in Beregov.

Since the invasion, the team has been unable to find any time to rest. The moment the war began, their response was immediate and has since continued to command much of their attention, often at great personal sacrifice. Janos, upon hearing the news, was in Hungary caring for his family and son. When most people were seeking to leave Ukraine, he did the complete opposite. He crossed back over from Hungary with multiple jerry cans full of petrol and an idea of how they could respond. Similarly, Tünde, who was caring for her newborn baby, could have quite easily crossed over into Hungary and washed her hands of the whole situation, yet she decided to stay. By the time both reconvened, the size of the team had gone from 11 strong to just the pair of them. Instantly, they called upon their networks of family and friends and started to look for volunteers. By February 25th, recognising that a major concern would be the welfare of refugees travelling without any long term plans, they took a tent and camped at the border. Upon their arrival, the queue to cross was 4 km long with a waiting time of 10-12 hours. Out of this tent, they provided snacks, fruit, diapers, and hot drinks. It didn't take long for all other aid agencies and charities working alongside the Hungarian-Ukrainian border to decide that the best approach would be for each individual charity to be solely responsible for a specific border crossing. With this, the Beregunsay border officially became the core focus for the Order based in Beregov. Both Tünde and Janos, who hadn't left the border since, upgraded from a small, non-insulated tent on the side of

a road to a much more substantial booth. By now, it was the end of February and with the help of volunteers (who were continuing to work full-time jobs alongside volunteering) they manned the border 24/7 working in 6 hour shifts of 2 volunteers. Even as I made my own crossing, there is still much evidence of the Order's presence in the form of information posters and signs.

As well as offering food and drinks and comfort and support, Tünde and Janos thought well ahead and worked on creating information packs for people making the crossing. With the pair of them speaking both languages, they figured out where refugees wanted to go/what their status was/what specific needs they have and then wrote these down on both sides of the pack, one side in Ukrainian, one side in Hungarian. Needless to say, this certainly provided a feeling of security at a moment when the refugees needed it most. When speaking to them both, they expressed just how sad it was witnessing men being forced to leave their families, with some unable to look back at their wives and children. This work continued non-stop for 2 more months.

Whilst at the border, donations started to be made from different subsidiaries of the Order as well as from individual donors too. They recalled how a man from Germany donated countless homemade survival kits for refugees and a woman from France who gave 4 trucks, 4 minibuses and 4 vans to their team.

With donations now coming in larger amounts, both of them now had to start a completely new *(continued on page 10)*

## ■ HIGHLIGHTS

project where the pair had no prior experience in nor the correct infrastructure for. In need of a warehouse to store these large donations, they then found themselves going through three different warehouses within the space of a month before finally being able to settle at the one I was working in (the 4th). This was due to multiple reasons including size, and cleanliness of the facilities. To respectfully understand the scale of these challenges, whilst organising a team of volunteers to man the border 24/7, they went through 4 different warehouses whilst simultaneously repackaging and receiving more donations to both their current and future warehouses without the use of any forklifts or palette trucks — all within a month, all with only two members of staff!

Speaking of the hardest day since February 24th, Tünde and Janos, with the help of a 15 year old volunteer, had to unload the following amount of aid; 4 trucks; 4 minibuses with trailers; two 5 tonne vans, as well as then loading a further 18 tonnes of outgoing aid. Yet still, and rather expectantly, they completed all this in just one day.

But did they stop here? Of course not. Whilst running an operation on such limited staff and in a country of war, Janos and Tünde made sure not to forget about caring for the people unable to leave Ukraine. They created a system that established social cards for local civilians in order to identify who resides in that house, how old they are and what their needs are. This entitled people to food privileges and care. This idea was such a success that the Mayor of Beregov helped with its establishment and adopted it himself for the entire city.

Now all of the aforementioned achievements above came within the last 12 months. Long before the war, however, the order's work in Beregov was well established as a community centre offering a wide range of services to the local population. Remarkably, all of what is about to be listed continued to run smoothly and to full efficiency by Tünde, Janos and a small group of volunteers despite the outbreak of the war:

- The Order provides European Computer Driving Licence certificates, using one of the rooms as an examination centre. This office is recognised as an official test centre allowing students and governmental organisations to be examined.
- The office works as a soup kitchen, serving two course meals every day for those suffering from extreme poverty. These meals serve over 50 households Monday to Friday, including a delivery service for those that are unable to leave their homes.
- With a community of 6,000 living a couple of streets away,

the team also founded the 'Intergenerational House (2018) Project' for children. This involves free music lessons and extracurricular classes on careers and interfaith dialogue, run by 4 full time teachers and a music teacher.

- What's more, the office is the home to an early development centre for disabled youths, whereby the Order of Malta offers physical massage sessions, speech and movement classes and neurofeedback therapy. The team here continues to provide over 5,200 therapy sessions a year, all free of charge to people living in surrounding areas. Furthermore, the Order organises for a therapist to visit refugees living in nearby communities.
- The team also has a minibus that serves as a mobile playground that visits local villages 2 to 3 times a month with the specific aim of integrating local and refugee children to play together.

The work being achieved on the outskirts of this small city by a select few individuals remains astounding. This experience reminded me of the existence of truly selfless and hardworking individuals that work endless hours not for any other reason than to protect, support and care for our fellow suffering man. As I have already written, no amount of words or praise can ever justify the truly perpetual level of kindness and benevolence that Tünde and Janos have shown in their continued effort to uphold the core values of the Order's work. I would like to say thank you.

*This article was submitted by the office of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Order of Malta to the United Nations. You can visit them online at [www.unmissionny.orderofmalta.int/en](http://www.unmissionny.orderofmalta.int/en).*



## 2023 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

### April 2-9

Holy Week and Easter Sunday

### April 12-13

**Huntington, NY**

Area Leadership and Chaplains Workshop,

### May 2-9

**Lourdes, France**

Lourdes Pilgrimage

### May 17-18

**New York City**

Board of Councillors Meeting

### May 18

Ascension Thursday

### June 23-25

**De Pere, WI**

Summer Retreat

### June 24

Feast of St. John the Baptist

### August 3-6

**Champion, WI**

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help

### September 8

Feast of Our Lady of Philermo

### September 13-14

**Boston, MA**

Board of Councillors Meeting

### September 15-17

**Medway, MA**

Fall Retreat

### October 13

Feast of Blessed Gerard

### November 1

All Saints' Day

### November 9-11

**New York City**

Investiture Weekend

### November 9

**New York City**

Board of Councillors Meeting

### November 10

**New York City**

Annual Meeting, Solemn Mass of Investiture, Annual Dinner

### November 11

**New York City**

Mass for Malades, Caregivers and Malades in Spirit

### November 11

**New York City**

Subpriory Mass

### November 19

World Day of the Poor

### November 23

Thanksgiving Day

### December 8

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

### December 8-10

**Jacksonville Beach to St. Augustine, FL**

Baby Steps Camino™

### December 25

Christmas Day

### January 18-19, 2024

**Washington, DC**

Pilgrimage for Life

On the first Wednesday of each month, there is a Spiritual Outreach call at 11AM ET.

On Sunday evenings at 7PM ET, there is a live Rosary conference call.

Visit our website calendar on [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/events/](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/events/) for more information regarding upcoming events.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Deceased Members: January 1 – March 13, 2023

Lily T. Duggan, DM	Town and Country, MO
Mary White Ferrick, DM	St. Louis, MO
Cornelia A. Kelley, DM	Jamaica Plain, MA
Andrew J. McKenna, KM	Winnetka, IL
Virginia Hyde Moriarty, DM	Morristown, NJ
Michael P. Ricatto, KM	Kew Gardens, NY
Colette Roe, DM	Shelter Island Heights, NY





## CALLED TO SERVE SECURING OUR LEGACY OF CARE FOR THE SICK AND THE POOR A Campaign for the Order of Malta, American Association



**The Called to Serve Capital Campaign continues secure our legacy of care for the sick and the poor. We have over \$18.2 million committed towards our \$20 million goal. We look forward to reaching \$19 million by the Lourdes Pilgrimage in early May, positioning us to exceed our goal this summer.**

Recently, all Members received an invitation to consider if the circumstances are right to make a planned commitment at this time and as a part of the Called to Serve campaign. A planned gift is a donation recorded today, but not fulfilled until a future date, perhaps decades from now. Planned gifts take different forms and provide different benefits, such as federal and state tax deductions, increasing your income, reducing capital gains tax, and lowering estate taxes. Crucially, planned gifts can also reduce the burdens your descendants may feel after your passing.

Our Members do extraordinary work daily, improving the lives of those who need us most. Planned gifts are an essential way our hands-on works and ministries in our Areas can continue for generations to come.

There comes a time in every person's life when they must turn their attention to the impact they want to make and the legacy they want to leave. The following pages detail how, through planned gifts, your compassion can secure for you, and the American Association, a legacy that will endure.

### PLANNED GIFTS RECEIVED TO DATE

**\$1,000,000**  
Largest Planned Gift

**29**  
Total Number of  
Planned Gifts

**15**  
Number of Planned  
Gifts of \$100,000+

**\$132,708**  
Average Planned  
Gift Value

“

*Rory and I had always planned to include the Order of Malta in our estate plan because of our belief in the mission of the Order. The Called to Serve Campaign has provided the opportunity to focus on how best to support the Order today and in the future. We decided to give a cash pledge over five years and to structure our planned giving by designating a portion of our retirement funds with the Order as beneficiary. We see this as tax efficient since it protects those amounts from income tax that would apply if the beneficiary were our estate or our children.”*

CAMILLE KELLEHER, DMOB, AND RORY KELLEHER, KMOB



## SUMMARY OF PLANNED GIVING VEHICLES

GIVING VEHICLE	IF YOUR GOAL IS TO...	THEN YOU CAN...	AND YOUR BENEFITS ARE...
<b>Bequest</b>	Defer a gift until after your lifetime	Put a bequest in your will (cash, property, or a share of the residue)	A gift that is fully exempt from estate tax
<b>Gift of Retirement Assets</b>	Avoid the twofold taxation on IRA or other employee benefit plans	Name us as the beneficiary of the remainder of the assets after your lifetime	The ability to leave your family other assets that carry less tax liability
<b>Gift of Life Insurance</b>	Make a large gift with little cost to yourself	Contribute a life insurance policy that you no longer need	Current and possibly future income tax deductions
<b>Gift of Real Estate</b>	Avoid capital gains tax on the sale of a home or other real estate	Donate the property to the American Association	An income tax deduction, plus reduction or elimination of capital gains tax
<b>Charitable Gift Annuity</b>	Receive fixed annual payments that are partially tax-free	Create a charitable gift annuity	Current and future tax savings on income taxes, plus stable payments
<b>Charitable Lead Trust</b>	Reduce gift and estate taxes on assets you pass to children or grandchildren	Create a charitable lead trust that pays income to us for a specific term of years	Reduces your taxable estate, and your family is able to keep the property
<b>Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust</b>	Secure a fixed life income while avoiding market risks	Create a charitable remainder annuity trust	Tax benefits and often a higher rate of return
<b>Charitable Remainder Unitrust</b>	Create a hedge against inflation over the long term	Create a charitable remainder unitrust	Tax benefits and a variable income for life

## SECURING YOUR LEGACY

To learn more about securing your legacy with the American Association, contact

**Fr. David Sellery**

Director of Development and Member Engagement  
646-661-4975 | [dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org](mailto:dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org)



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE



“

*Joining the Order of Malta has been one of the best things I have ever done. For me, everything comes down to our mission to help the poor and the sick. I decided to make a blended gift [part cash and part planned] because I want to help people in need today, but I also want to help ensure the Order continues in perpetuity.”*

**CYNTHIA (SUZY) MORAN, DMOB**



### PLANNED GIVING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Our Planned Giving Advisory Committee, comprised of Knights with decades of combined expertise, have offered to provide assistance to you as you reflect on this invitation:

**Joseph (Joel) H. Miller III, KM**  
New Canaan Group  
203-912-2904  
joel.miller@newcanaangroup.com

**Barnet Phillips, KM**  
Silver Point Capital LP  
917-971-1964  
barnetphillips4@gmail.com

**Christopher (Chris) Poch, KM**  
Morgan Stanley  
202-557-8801  
christopherpoch@gmail.com

*The Order of Malta, American Association, is not a financial, legal, or tax advisor. As with any decision involving your estate plans, donors are advised to consult their own professional tax and legal advisors for more information and guidance.*





# Malteser International Americas in Haiti

## *The Road to Addressing Long-Standing Challenges*

**H**aiti still struggles with issues of political, economic and social instability that the nation has faced for decades. The power and influence of violent gangs is not a new phenomenon and for decades has been fueled by poverty, political corruption, and lack of access to education and opportunities. Since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, however, the country was left with a political and security vacuum, a vulnerable state for the rise of gang activity. In Port-au-Prince in particular, the nation’s capital, violent groups have seized a significant amount of political control, spreading their influence to surrounding towns. Their rule has resulted not only in decreased access to healthcare, electricity and other forms of aid, but has also resulted in violence targeted directly at individual citizens and aid workers in the form of kidnapping and extortion. In 2022 there were more than two civilian kidnappings recorded every day.

Food insecurity has also been an

issue the nation has struggled with for many years, but the situation has intensified due to political instability, economic crisis, and natural disasters. These conditions have created both a shortage of food and a situation in which food prices are too high for most residents to be able to afford enough to satisfy their caloric needs. An estimated 4.7 million people face acute food insecurity out of a population of 11 million as of 2022, according to the UN. This includes a staggering one in three children who are malnourished, an increase of more than 60% compared to 2019 levels.

Not only do Haitians struggle to reliably secure food, but access to clean, potable water has been a longstanding challenge. Contaminated water sources, poor sanitation infrastructure, and waste dumped in rivers by aid workers amid the 2010 earthquake response, have all lead to a Cholera outbreak in the same year that spread rapidly through the country and has yet to be fully eradicated. In order to address this challenge, Malteser International Americas has had the opportunity to

work in collaboration with the community of Nippes, and has conducted training sessions in which residents learned the importance of hand and food washing, strategies to stop the spread of cholera, preparing homemade mediations, as well as appropriate responses when around an infected individual. Malteser International Americas was also able to distribute sanitation kits to almost 2,000 residents with items including alcohol-based sanitizer and water purification tablets.

In order to boost the capacity of the local community of fishermen to provide for their families and improve their economic status, Malteser International Americas has transplanted more than 23,000 mangrove seedlings to Nippes which help to support the growth of fish populations. Geneste Savilien, a local fishermen testified that, “It is for the first time that I see so many fish in the sea...above all, I make much more profit [now].”

Malteser International Americas continues to support the people of Haiti and work with them to build a healthier, happier future in 2023 away from the chaos. As stated by Yolette Etienne, Malteser International Country Director for Haiti “Our wish for this country is that we can get some security, and that people can again have hope; that the people of Haiti continue to fight to change the system — to get a system where everyone can enjoy life, can live and can experience opportunities.”

*For more information about Malteser International Americas, please visit [www.orderofmaltarelief.org](http://www.orderofmaltarelief.org).*



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# Three Years of Spirituality, Creativity and Service to God and One Another

*Report on the Work of the American Association's Prison Ministry Committee January 2020 Through January 2023*



**I**n January 2020, it was an honor to assume the role of Chair of the American Association Prison Ministry Committee. Over the past three years, with the hard-working committee members, we have come to know firsthand of the spirituality, creativity, and commitment of our members involved in prison ministry outreach.

In preparation for stepping down from my role at the end of January and handing over the committee's leadership to fellow committee members Mary Jo Kriz and Bob Nephew, I reviewed the accomplishments of the committee as well as those serving this ministry throughout the American Association. A special thanks is extended to all the committee members: Mary Jo Kriz, Bob Nephew, Pat Hofmeister, Paul Young, Grace Dawgert, Fay Connors, and Steve Hawkins.

## LISTENING TO THE EXPERTS WAS THE FIRST STEP

Listening to those who have gone before as well as those currently involved in ministry was the best way to understand the foundation of the mission we would be helping to move forward. As I began my tenure, Dr. Bob Fredericks, GCMOB, former Chair of the American Association Prison Ministry

Committee, provided a picture of the strategies and structure to date. I also had the opportunity to hear from current Area Chairs, Area prison ministry leaders and Hospitaliers, as well as leaders from national and regional organizations dedicated to prison ministry. Many current and former leaders in the American Association provided their ideas on priorities for continuing to grow the Prison Ministry program.

## CREATING A WORKING COMMITTEE WAS KEY

The committee in place three years ago demonstrated that interest in and support for prison ministry was strong. It also showed that an active committee would be needed going forward to build on the work that had been done over the years. From the listening sessions, it became apparent that a great deal of enthusiasm existed for the ministry. This presented an opportunity to evolve the committee into a strong working group where everyone participated in strengthening programs. We streamlined the committee from 50 participants to fewer than a dozen so that all involved were able to make prison ministry a top priority. Committee members were drawn from those who were actively leading prison ministry programs.

The committee proved very effective in charting a course going forward. We reviewed existing strategies and ministry programs. Then, with broad input from other leaders in the American Association, we set about creating a new Prison Ministry Committee Charter. This document provided a clear purpose, goals, duties, roles, responsibilities and a regular meeting schedule.

## PROVIDING RESOURCES TO AREA PROGRAMS ENHANCED EFFECTIVENESS

With over 30 Prison Ministry programs across 13 Areas and more than 250 members of the American Association participating, it was critical that we provide resources to support our members and help assure their success. We reviewed all existing ministry programs, revised as needed, and created new resources to enhance the American Association's effectiveness. Highlights include:

- **Spirituality in Action Resource Book:** We updated the book to create a master list, including detailed information, of all prison ministry programs throughout the Association;
- **Conference Call Prayer Services:** These take place regularly and are designed to build fellowship and a sense of community for ministry members; we gather for prayer time together and then all participants share updates on their respective ministries;
- **American Association's Bible and Prayer Book Program:** We reviewed and put in place efficiency measures, including an online order form facilitating order entry, tracking and status; we also ensured that funding continued to be a high priority for this program that was started and continues to be coordinated by Dr. Bob Fredericks, GCMOB;





- **Pen Pal Program:** Steve Hawkins of the Minnesota Area continues to add members to the “Pen Pals for Prisoners” program started by the Twin Cities Prison Ministry in Minnesota. Steve continues to guide and grow this ministry;
- **Ongoing Formation Program:** Intended for all members who have been involved and experienced in prison ministry, our ongoing formation program is designed to deepen holiness and conversion of heart for prison ministry outreach.

## TELLING THE STORIES SHOWED THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK

Of all the ministries we serve, prison ministry probably creates the most ambivalence. After all, we are supporting people who are in prison or jail, or are in transition back into society. But everyone has a story. Sometimes that story takes a wrong turn. Knowing Christ is within each of us, we set out to find the blessedness in the stories of the incarcerated and to show the Holy Spirit at work even, perhaps particularly, in the darkest corners of life.

- **Prison Ministry Email Newsletter:** In July 2020 the Prison Ministry Committee launched the first issue of a monthly email newsletter. Each issue included stories that showcased direct hands-on ministry, Bibles and Prayer Books usage and the Pen Pal Program;
- **Prison Ministry Landing Page:** We made a complete overhaul and upgrade to the American Association Prison Ministry landing page and other pages within;
- **Prison Ministry Web News Page:** All prison ministry stories in the newsletter were added to the American Association Prison Ministry online news page, providing broader visibility;
- **Hospitaller Articles:** From time to time, we provided the Hospitaller magazine with articles highlighting the powerful impact of prison ministry. Topics included promoting the glory of God through prison ministry; communicating prison ministry stories; our prison ministry formation program; and, the important role of prison ministry to the priestly calling for Cardinal Dolan.

## BUILDING COALITIONS BOOSTED OUR RESOURCES

Connecting with other organizations that are like-minded and have similar goals provides access to information and programs beyond what we are able to create on our own. We established critical new partnerships with leading national and regional prison ministry organizations, including the Catholic Prison Ministries Coalition, Catholic Mobilizing Network, National Association of Catholic Chaplains, Dismas Ministry, Thrive for Life Prison Project, the Archdiocese of Boston and the Archdiocese of Seattle. Additionally, on behalf of the American Association, I was invited to serve on the Catholic Prison Ministries Coalition Steering Committee to help with plans for strategic growth.

## THE COMMITTEE’S ONGOING PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO GROW

Just a few of the highlights of the committee’s ongoing work include:

- **Committee Meetings:** The Prison Ministry Committee meets regularly;
- **Monthly Prayer Meetings;** All members involved in prison ministry are invited;
- **Online Educational Webinars:** Committee members participate in a growing list of online educational webinars on prison ministry topics. Previous outside programs included monthly webinars and town hall forums. In addition, the committee hosted panel discussions on prison ministry programs for Hospitallers and Area Chairs, leaders in Chicago, and five Areas in the extended New York metro area, with an emphasis on the Thrive for Life Project.
- **Guest Speakers:** The committee hosted ZOOM calls with guest speakers on a range of prison ministry topics;
- **Ongoing Formation Program:** working closely with the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, the Catholic Prison Ministries Coalition, Msgr. James Moroney, ChM, Diocese of Worcester and Deacon Jim Greer from the Archdiocese of Boston, we are rolling out a comprehensive two-part formation program with an emphasis on developing pastoral care skills for ministry. The Holy Father recently noted the critical importance of ongoing formation.

It was a pleasure to announce that current Prison Ministry Committee members, Mary Jo Kriz, and Bob Nephew were taking over as the new Co-Chairs for the Prison Ministry Committee. Their official start date was February 1, 2023. Mary Jo and Bob have been very involved in prison ministry for a number of years. Mary Jo has been involved as a spiritual director at a women’s correctional facility outside of Boston. Bob has played a central role in a weekly men’s rosary prayer group at a men’s correctional facility, also outside of Boston. They both have significant “hands-on” experience and a deep passion for serving others through their prison ministry outreach, both inside and outside the walls.

It has been a busy and rewarding three years witnessing how the Holy Spirit has moved both the incarcerated, those in transition, and our members who bring them the Word of God along with camaraderie and hope for a better future. While my role leading the committee has ended, the work of the American Association Prison Ministry Committee is ready to rise to a whole new level under the leadership of Mary Jo and Bob. We all look forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will guide their progress in service to God, the incarcerated and those in transition, and finally to one another. ■

*This report was submitted by Craig Gibson, KM, Chair of the American Association’s Prison Ministry Committee from 2020 through January, 2023*



## A Summer in Wisconsin

### The American Association invites members to attend two wonderful events this summer in Wisconsin

Our Summer Retreat on June 23rd–25th will take place in community with the Norbertine Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. This retreat is being held in collaboration with our Northeast Wisconsin Area in celebration of the Feast of St. John the Baptist, Patron Saint of Our Order. Retreat Master Fr. Joseph Aytona will lead this retreat surrounding the theme, “The Return of the Prodigal Son”, which encompasses the mission and message of our great Patron Saint: repentance, conversion and forgiveness, a vital and ongoing pursuit of our rich Catholic Faith. This theme also carries forward the message of our Blessed Mother, who appeared to Adele Brise at the location of the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, calling her to “pray for the conversion of sinners and offer her Holy Communion for them.”

Fr. Aytona is the Rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. In 2003, Fr. Joseph joined the Congregation of the Fathers of Mercy and was ordained to the Priesthood in May 2010. He is a 2010 graduate of Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, a Master of Divinity Degree, and a Master of Arts in Theology. Along with being the Mission Director, Fr. Joseph is the founder of the Spiritual Motherhood Sodality as well as the founder of Family

Vocation Ministries, an apostolate that promotes vocations through the sanctification of families.

He has appeared on “EWTN Live” and “Life on the Rock” Catholic programs during which he discussed the importance of the Eucharist, the Priesthood, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. He has also been interviewed by Catholic Newspapers and Periodicals such as the National Catholic Register and Religious Life Magazine. He has conducted hundreds of retreats and we are looking forward to his joining us for our Summer Retreat.

The Norbertine Abbey is home to the Norbertines, who have been ministering in the Diocese of Green Bay for over 125 years. They live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the traditions of Saints Norbert and Augustine by living a common life “one in mind and heart on the way to God” through celebration of the Eucharist, liturgical prayer and service to the People of God. We are thankful to them for opening up their community to our members for this extraordinary opportunity.

This retreat space offers lodging in the beautiful newly renovated Spirituality Center, located on 160 acres where many whitetail deer roam freely. The grounds feature magnificent flower gardens displaying exquisite color and a well-manicured walking trail. A special bonus of this retreat will be a visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion.





If you are interested in attending the Summer Retreat, please visit [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/member-retreats/](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/member-retreats/) or call the NY Office to request registration information. The Summer Retreat promises to be a captivating spiritual experience, certain to draw you closer to God.

We will then return to Wisconsin just over 30 days later for our Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help on August 3rd – 6th in Champion, Wisconsin. Also known as our Wisconsin Pilgrimage, this pilgrimage offers members, family, and friends, an opportunity to visit the site of the only Marian apparition in the United States approved by the Catholic Church. Marian approval for this Shrine and its Chapel was received on December 8, 2010, from the Most Rev. David Ricken, Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay and a Conventual Chaplain in the Northeast Wisconsin Area.

This is a peaceful long weekend filled with prayer, Masses, the Sacraments, Adoration, Stations of the Cross, presentations on the Blessed Mother, and a breathtaking Rosary Procession under the morning sun on the grounds of the Shrine. We join members of the Federal and Western Association for these activities and fellowship, as we grow closer to God through the work of His Blessed Mother. It is a beautiful opportunity for all to step away from their busy lives and focus on their faith. If you have never been to Lourdes, this is a unique opportunity to share in the experience of a Marian Shrine pilgrimage. If you have been to Lourdes, this Pilgrimage will provide you with a very different setting in which to encounter Jesus through the Blessed Mother.

Pilgrims will also visit St. Francis Cathedral for the Pilgrimage's Opening Mass and the National Shrine of St. Joseph in the Norbertine

Abbey, the location of the Summer Retreat, for Adoration, Confessions, a Chaplain Reflection, and the Anointing of the Sick. This humble area of Wisconsin is most definitely not short of religious places that offer a variety of opportunities for us to practice our Catholic faith in community with fellow Knights, Dames, Chaplains, Affiliates, Candidates, family, friends, and others. We pray the Rosary while en route to each location via bus, we offer personal time to pray on the grounds of the Shrine, and we close each evening with a Night Prayer that we pray together, in unison.

Two phrases that may come to mind when you think of Lourdes are spiritual healing ...and lots of walking! You can think of the Wisconsin Pilgrimage as peaceful prayer and powerful stillness, something you will only recognize when you step foot onto the grounds of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help for the very first time. Our time spent in this still and quiet allows us to strengthen our relationship with God. We take in the stillness of the fields that surround the Shrine and center ourselves in the Blessed Mother's presence. We remember the Blessed Mother's encounter with Adele Brise during the apparitions and her call to "teach the children about salvation."

If you are interested in attending this year's Wisconsin Pilgrimage, please visit [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/wisconsin-pilgrimage/](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/wisconsin-pilgrimage/) or call the NY Office to request registration information. We hope you plan to join us for this prayerful pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help.

## Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum — Paving Our Road to Heaven A Reflection on the Fall 2022 Retreat

A fall weekend retreat in New England provided wondrous time for prayer, contemplation and deepening learning about the sublime history, charitable efforts and aims of the Order of Malta. Nestled in the woods, we attended Mass together, participated in discussions, had spirited conversation on faith and the Order as well as on family, communities, and current affairs, and devoted time to praying in silence. Under the excellent guidance of our retreat leader, Father Eric Hollas, OSB, we explored the centuries-long evolution of the Order's vocations of service to the sick and poor. Both through organized sessions and unscheduled time, I gained perspective on how the Order helps draw us closer to Christ, how members consider their vocation within the Order, and how much members appreciate and influence one another. Although the retreat rekindled friendships among some decades-long members, everyone seemed very friendly and open to meeting those in formation, such as myself.

Over the course of three days, we explored Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum. Questions we found ourselves asking were as abundant as the lessons we were receiving, all rooted in theology, philosophy, and the inspiringly steadfast endurance of the Order of Malta. For example, with the depth of human suffering in our immediate communities and in Haiti, Ukraine and beyond, how should we go about thinking about our vocations within the Order of Malta? To what extent do or should our personal circumstances or the particular time in which we find ourselves along the arc of the Order's history help shape these callings?

**With wisdom and good humor, Father Eric offered overarching guidance for navigating questions such as these. Here are some takeaways:**

- Put our spiritual lives first, for spirituality is “so often sacrificed, along with family, for work,” according to Father Eric. Resist pressure to prioritize other demands.
- Know our faith, read the Bible and meditate, as Saint Jerome of Stridon implored, creating moments of grace in our lives.
- Show humility as we represent the faith to many. In representing our faith, we should be a difference to others. “God has blessed you and you have responded,” Father Eric said, “and you can be a difference to people.” He advised looking to Saint Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu, MC, as a model.
- Build up the Church; show up and rebuild parish communities in light of the pandemic. Encourage the value of gathering in person at Mass and the value of presence within our parishes. In light of the scarcity of ordained pastors, Father Eric said, “others can be pastoral, and being pastoral helps you as a penitent.”
- Remain resolute in following the Order of Malta's mission to support the sick and the poor. Remain mindful and vigilant against diversions from this mission. Paraphrasing Fra' Gerard, Father Eric reminded us that our world is never going to run out of the sick and the poor.
- Be pro-active in carrying out your vocation. Think of membership in

the Order of Malta, Father Eric recommended, “as a religious vocation rather than as an honor: membership no longer should be thought of as the Academy Awards of the Catholic Church, as it used to be.”

Provocative topics during our conversations ranged from aspects of faith, history, and poverty and healthcare in lands near and far, to internal organizational issues of the Order of Malta. We heard faith-filled stories of witnessing the Holy Spirit in action on the Lourdes Pilgrimage and Malta Walks and through other forms of service — and of confronting poverty on both an intimate and national scale.

For example, I spoke at length with a member of the Order who serves as professor of internal medicine at Université d'État d'Haïti and Boston University, specializing in hypertension. A member of the International Medical Council of Lourdes, he spoke ardently of the depth of suffering among Haitians and the fear with which they live. Just several hundred miles off the coast of Florida, Haiti is suffering in the aftershock not only of earthquakes, but also of payments of “debt” to France, and this member of the Order is working to find resources to alleviate individual, community and national tensions. I was intrigued to learn that the Cross was first planted in the Americas on this island 350 years ago, and it remains predominantly Christian. Another member of the Order of Malta spoke with me about his ideas for increasing membership among younger generations. His father, a Knight in Europe, successfully attracted young Catholics to the Order by inviting them to volunteer through the auxiliary program, an approach his son believes would work very well here. Learning from vibrantly engaged members of the Order, such as these two men, as well as from our retreat leader, Father Eric, was a blessing.

Among many other teachings, Father Eric instilled new appreciation for the humility of the patron saints of the Order of Malta. His description of why he believes Saint Teresa could or should one day be included among these patron saints resonated with me. I will keep Father Eric's recommendation in my prayers.

To summarize, presentations, conversations, mingling and times of silence during this retreat in New England brought to life the philosophy, history and vibrancy of the Order of Malta. The experience substantially expanded and enriched my understanding of the well-curated readings and recordings available online. Furthermore, these opportunities for learning and socializing helped me appreciate the diverse range of members called to the Order — and brought new friendships.

As a result, over the course of the retreat I found that my sense of belonging within the community grew. I would especially encourage those who have never attended a retreat of the Order of Malta or who are relatively new members to sign up for one. Just be ready to open your hearts and minds to God, your vocation, and one another. May you, too, experience a sense of spiritual growth, edification, and belonging.

*This article was contributed by Marlene Rehkamp O'Brien. She is a member of the 2023 Year of Formation class from the Boston Area.*





## What Exactly Is the Order of Malta?

Earlier this year, we shared this write up of the history of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and Malta written by H.E. Michael Grace, a member of the Federal Association and the Order's Sovereign Council. His summary provides us with a great overview of the Order's history, which dates all the way back to the 11th century. This would also serve as a great piece to share with a candidate you are currently sponsoring for membership, as well as any prospective candidates for the Class of 2024.

The origins of the Hospitallers go back to the eleventh century in the Christian Quarter of central Jerusalem. In around 1048, the Hospitallers began to care for pilgrims and residents from all faiths at the Hospital of St John the Baptist. On February 15, 1113, Pope Pascal II recognized the Hospitallers as a religious order led by Fra' Gerard. The original papal letter still exists and can be seen at the National Library of the Republic of Malta in Valletta. Pope Pascal placed the Order under the protection of the Holy See, free from outside interference or control, to pursue its charitable works for the needy. It has been said that the Order is the world's oldest Christian medical mission.

For nearly 250 years the Hospitallers operated hospitals and hospices for pilgrims throughout the Holy Land and provided for the military defense of pilgrims as well as the protection of highways, villages, and hospitals from marauders and invading forces. This effort ultimately proved to be unsuccessful, and the last of the Hospitallers were expelled from the Holy Land in 1291. The remaining Hospitallers settled in Cyprus and began to rebuild the Order as a Mediterranean naval force.

In 1310 the Knights liberated Rhodes from Ottoman occupiers and held the island as sovereign territory until 1523. One of the gems that they discovered on Rhodes was an ancient icon of Our Lady of Philermos, which exemplifies the Marian spirituality of the Order. That icon was treasured by the Knights for centuries. It resides today in a monastery in Montenegro.

After being expelled from Rhodes, in 1530 the Order accepted the Maltese islands as a gift from Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, in view of the Order's naval prowess against Ottoman shipping in the Mediterranean. In 1565, a small band of Knights leading a Maltese local militia defeated a vastly superior Ottoman force during the Great Siege of Malta. After that victory, which is still celebrated in Malta each year, the Order built the most modern and well-defended city in Europe and named it Valletta after Fra' Jean de la Vallette, the Grand Master during the Great Siege.

Two centuries later, in 1798, the Order was forced to surrender Malta to Napoleon Bonaparte's invading fleet while en route to Egypt, completing the seizure of most of the Order's extensive charitable landholdings. The Order temporarily settled in St. Petersburg, Russia under the protection of Czar Paul I, who became the de facto Grand Master for a short period

until his assassination. After a few difficult decades in Messina and Catania on the island of Sicily, the Order's headquarters moved in 1834 to Via Condotti in Rome, where it remains today.

The Order of Malta is a sovereign subject of international law as well as one of the oldest religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church. It has bilateral diplomatic relations with 112 States, more than 30 official representations at multilateral organizations, and permanent observer status at the United Nations.

The Order has a permanent presence in 120 countries in the world through an extensive network of humanitarian works operated by Malteser International, the Order's national associations and priories, and dozens of other subsidiary entities on six continents. Its 13,500 members, nearly 100,000 volunteers, and over 50,000 doctors, nurses, and paramedics are dedicated to care for the poor and sick, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, and especially the victims of natural disaster and war. For example, in recent years the Order has provided humanitarian assistance and healthcare to hundreds of thousands of the neediest located in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and Ukraine. The Order is renowned as one of the first relief groups to arrive on the scene of a disaster and the last one to leave.

Under the new 2022 Constitution promulgated by Pope Francis, the Grand Master is elected for a term of ten years from among the Professed Knights by the Council Complete of State, a representative body of all Knights and Dames. The Grand Master is both a prince and a religious superior and dedicates himself to the support of the Catholic Faith and the development of the works of the Order. He is vested with supreme authority to carry out the policies of the Chapter General, which meets every six years. Together with the Council of the Professed and the Sovereign Council, the Grand Master issues legislation, promulgates government acts, appoints officers, manages the Order's assets, ratifies international agreements, admits new members, and summons the Chapter General. He is recognized by other States as possessing the sovereign prerogatives, immunities, and honors of a head of state. His title is "Most Eminent Highness," the Prince and Grand Master of the Order, with the rank of a prince (cardinal) of the Church.

The current head of the Order is Fra' John Dunlap, a Canadian descendant of the eponymous first Philadelphia printer of the 1776 Declaration of Independence. He holds the office of Lieutenant of the Grand Master and resides at the Order's seat of government, the Magistral Palace, on Via dei Condotti in Rome, near the Spanish Steps. By agreement with the Italian Republic, the Order's Magistral Palace and the Aventine Palace on the Aventine Hill in Rome have extraterritorial status and constitute the sovereign territory of the Order.

*For more information on the Order of Malta, please visit [www.orderofmalta.int](http://www.orderofmalta.int).*

## Q&A with Rev. John W. Girotti, ChM

Rev. John W. Girotti, ChM, Vicar General for the Diocese of Green Bay, delivered an amazing talk at the Spirituality in Action meeting during the 2022 Investiture. That talk is available on the Association's website at [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/investiture](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/investiture) in transcript and in audio form. You will want to read or listen to his talk (or both) titled, "Remembering Our First Love — Our Call to Be Disciples of the Lord Jesus." A number of very important questions were addressed following Fr. Girotti's talk. Here is an edited transcript of those questions and answers.

### 1) CAN YOU GIVE US SOME ADVICE ON HOW WE CAN RESPOND TO CHRIST'S CALL TO FOLLOW HIM?

So how do we answer the Lord's call? That is what discipleship is. Often times today, you may have heard this word in parishes throughout the country. The word discipleship is a very ancient word. That is what we're called to be. We're called to be followers, friends, and followers of the Lord Jesus, and it's so basic.

It's the first principle. It is what's the bishops of the United States are really calling us to. But we've been focusing on so many other things as a church that sometimes we need to focus on what's essential, which is falling in love with Jesus and allowing Him to love us and then inviting others into the church family so that together we can be disciples of the Lord. It's so basic. And yet, isn't it true that sometimes we've taken that for granted? That's what's behind the talk that I gave this morning — it a concept I want us to focus on. It's about invitation. It's about witness. It's about example.

### 2) HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH FAMILY MEMBERS OR OUR CHILDREN WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY FROM THE CHURCH?

That is the most common question that I'm sure my brother priests and I receive, and it is a question that's in many of our hearts; it's a question also that was behind some of the remarks that I made in my talk this morning. I think the first step, practically, is to engage the children or the grandchildren with the matters of the faith. Don't simply say, "Well, there's nothing I can do about it. It's not my problem, and I can't talk to them, and they won't listen to me."

And then you just give up. That's not helpful. I think, you also know that beating the kid over the head and saying, "If you don't come back to church, your soul is in danger, and I won't talk to you again" is not going to be helpful, either. It doesn't work.

Many of you know this from your own work that sometimes when you don't know what to say at the moment, it's helpful to ask questions. "Why aren't you going to Mass?" or "Why do you say that you're spiritual, but not really religious?" "Why do you say the Catholic Church is hateful?" or whatever kind of question that will draw them out. Their answers may actually give you a better sense of what's going on from a spiritual standpoint. You urge them, and then you let it be. You urge them, then you let it be.

You just have to find the right time and the place. Sometimes, I have found that it's so difficult to preach to our own. You know I'm the priest in my family, and many times my mother or my father would say, "Oh, yeah, you go over there and talk to your cousins and tell them to go back to church." It's my cousin who remembers pushing me in a baby stroller, so it's very difficult.

But I have found that, sometimes, if you can't reach, or seemingly can't reach, the kids or the grandkids, pray that God will send a prophet into their lives to reach them. Pray for whoever that person is, that God will raise that person up and send that person to them to bring them back to faith. But then, remember if you play that card, know that you're going to have to be that person for somebody else's kids. No prophet is accepted in his own native place. So sometimes just pray that somebody else will do it, and then to be open to being that person for somebody else's family. It works, you know!

### 3) HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO A PERSON, WHEN I AM TRYING TO BRING THEM BACK TO THE CHURCH, WHO SAYS, "GOD LOVES ME; GOD LOVES EVERYONE. EVERYONE IS GOING TO HEAVEN"?

We all run the risk of having to deal with that comment. I read an article in *First Things*, which is a theological journal which I recommend — the article was written by Cardinal Pell. And he said, basically, how we answer this question is determined by our understanding of the Church. And the question is this, does everybody who dies go to heaven?

If we believe as Universalists that, pretty much, everybody who dies goes to heaven, then we build a therapeutic parish. We make sure the pews and kneelers are soft and the air conditioning works, and then we keep people comfortable for the journey of life. We deal with only things of this world - matters of justice, as important as those are, matters of the here and the now. We want to keep people comfortable for the journey, and to confirm them in whatever ails them. That's a therapeutic model of the church. It's quite popular, by the way; I think you know what I mean.

If, however, we believe that not everybody who dies goes to heaven, that there is a possibility of hell, that there is a battle going on for our souls, which is, by the way, the testimony of the Gospels and all of Christian tradition and the saints and the mystics, then that's a very different church. That's a church that evangelizes. That's a church that makes disciples. That's a church that has a zeal for souls. That's a church that preaches the truth. That's a church that takes up its cross.

And you know, I think that that distinction, which I've been rolling over in my mind for many months, now seems to be apt. What are we to believe with this? So I think that's a long way of answering your question. I think that any reading of the Scriptures will say that there is a battle going on for our souls, and if a person is intellectually honest, or even psychologically honest, he or she will observe that this battle is real, and that to say that everybody's a good person, it doesn't really work that way. We are all broken people. We are all in need of redemption. None of us is perfect. That's why we need a Savior.

I mean, so often as I go through my work, sometimes I hate to even admit this, but in the busyness of the work that I do as a priest, and the many, many broken things that come to my desk in my diocesan work, I sometimes think to myself, you know, this world is really a mess, we need a savior.

Ah! We have one, and his name is Jesus. This is good news. This is good news.

### 4) HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS? HE WAS A THIRTY-THREE YEAR OLD JEWISH MAN WHO LIVED TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

Yes, and he is still living right now. Yours is a very honest question, and I'm grateful for it. Often times, the phraseology of a personal relationship with Jesus comes from our Protestant brothers and sisters, usually Evangelical



Protestantism. It's not necessarily wrong. There's a lot of truth in the statement that if we are part of the body of Christ, and we know that the Lord has called us, and that we are loved by Him, that there is a friendship there. Why don't you replace the word personal relationship with the more Catholic phrase, friendship, friendship with God? Great saints, including St. Teresa of Avila, a doctor of the church, Carmelite mystic, spoke about friendship with God. Catherine of Siena, also a doctor of the church, spoke about friendship with God.

You know, whether it's personal relationship or friendship, the idea is that God calls us, as Jesus says in the Gospels, "I call you friends." And I think that all of us are working on this. What I would urge all of us, because none of us have this down perfectly, is to ask the Lord to increase that in your heart.

Jesus, I love you, help me to love you more, or as one of the apostles said, "Lord, I do believe; help my unbelief." What your spiritual director told you is true, but perhaps, using the word friendship might be a little bit more helpful. The Lord is alive today, has risen, and He's alive in his church so He is with us. Keep going. Keep going!

#### **5) IS THERE A LIBERAL AND A CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC CHURCH?**

There are divisions within the church, which have always existed because we're fallen human beings. Even the word Catholic resulted from a division within the church. The word Catholic was used, I think, for the first time by Ignatius of Antioch in 106 or 107 AD. Catholic means universal. Why did he have to use the word? Because there were people running around in the early church saying, "This is the way, this is the way." So we had to use the word Catholic, which meant universal faith, and he used it in such a way that it indicated that the term had already been in use.

So much of the case, and I experienced this somewhat in my diocesan work, is an attempt to hold on to what is essential in the church and recognize that there are varying ways of approaching things. And yet there is one Gospel, one Lord, one Church.

I think that the danger that we face today is that we live in an age where everything is seen through the lens of politics. Everything - family, relations, covid! God forbid! - all these recent unpleasantness, as I like to call Covid (that's what they called the Civil War). Covid is the recent unpleasantness, and it was a civil war. Everything is seen through the lens of politics, and the world wants to impose that on the Church because they don't get us. The world doesn't understand the Church - never has, never will. And so, they're trying to figure out, "Who are these people who believe in God, and they've been around for 2,000 years, and we keep trying to kill the Catholic Church, and we can't kill it?"

And it keeps going, and they keep asking who these people are. So the world tries to impose a political lens, a gridwork on us. You can't do that because the church is a family. You should never talk about a family in political terms. My cousin is this way, my aunt is that way. You can't do that — you are a family with all of the bumps and the bruises, and the humanity of that. I mean, it's coming your way in just a few days with Thanksgiving. It's coming, you know, and then Christmas after that. This is the season of family, and you know we wouldn't put this in merely political terms.

The Catholic Church is a family. We call a priest Father. We call religious women Sisters, we call Jesus brother, Lord, Master, Friend. We call the Pope our Holy Father. We call each other brothers and sisters in Christ. All of the language we use in the Catholic Church, and, indeed, one of the strengths

of our faith and the truth of our faith, which is why the Church is true, is because it reflects that family, and we act like a family at our best moments and we act like a family in our worst moments.

But we are a family, and if we can understand it that way, then I think we can try to get beyond the political piece which is being imposed on us, sometimes by ourselves, and to understand that we're all trying to follow the way of the Lord Jesus together and if a person gets too far one way or too far the other way, they have got to be corrected. That's how I approach it.

#### **6) HOW DO YOU BALANCE THE INDIVIDUAL WITH THE GENERAL SO YOU DO NOT LOSE THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE GROUP AND YOU DON'T LOSE THE GROUP WHEN YOU FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL?**

This is the great question, right? The Catholic genius of this is that we are a family. We are part of this community of believers - that it's not just me and Jesus. I think also, though, at the same time, we are judged at the end of our lives individually. And I think sometimes that gets lost. We see, for example, there is a push by some where we only talk about generalities — being mean to people, or being unkind, or harming the environment, or large-scale social things, which are very important, but yet the temptation in that is that the individual responsibility can be lost. The reason we have problems in the family is because you and I have made sinful choices from time to time.

The reason we have division in the church in our country is because you and I have division in our families, in our homes, in our lives. The individuals make up the whole. It's a temptation, at least for me, to point towards the general, because then I feel safe in the individual. But the brokenness that we find in our world, and in our politics, and the challenges in the Church are a reflection of the challenges that you and I have. I know this is very neat, but I think, if we want our country to be a better place, you and I need to be better citizens, and if we want the Church to be holier, then you and I need to be more serious about holiness. I know this is very neat, but I think it's also true.

#### **7) IS THERE A WAY TO ACCESS YOUR TALKS AND YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE ISSUES?**

Bless you!!! I am laughing because sometimes I need to access my own thoughts more myself — I have to practice what I preach. Some of my homilies are on YouTube from a number of years ago. I've done a DVD series about the Catechism of the Catholic Church that includes 15 one-hour talks with an apologetic lens about Parts One and Two, the Creed and the Sacraments. I did a video series just a few years ago, about Parts Three and Four of the Catechism, The Moral Life, and The Spiritual Life.

The first part is called, Know your Faith; the second part is called Live Your faith. Both of those DVD series are available through the diocese of Green Bay at the Education Department, for a nominal fee. Most of the money goes to the Education Department; I don't see any of it. I am just happy to give talks about the Lord. So those DVDs are available through the Diocese's Education Department, if you are interested.

I hope it was helpful. "Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Do you love Me?" "Yes, Lord, I do love you." "Follow me!"

**GOD BLESS YOU!**



## HIGHLIGHTS

### 100,000 Blessings



On the twelfth day of Christmas, the Feast of the Epiphany, the 100,000th baby made his way into the world at Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem. Just 1,500 steps from the manger where the Christ Child was born, Baby Muhammad was delivered safely into the arms of his parents, Nadine and Abou Muhammad. The Hospital staff has eagerly been awaiting his birth since early December.

It was appropriate that the 100,000th baby was born in the wee hours of the morning on a day held dear to Christians around the world. A few years ago on Christmas Eve, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas addressed those gathered for Mass saying that, "Christianity is essential for Palestine. Our Christians may be few, but they are like salt; essential. Palestine has been a mosaic society for centuries and will continue to be so."

Holy Family Hospital operates on this same premise. Christians and Muslims work together in our ecumenical workplace in service to the poor. All are welcome.

Nadine comes from the town of Hebron, and her husband works for the government. She chose to deliver her first child at Holy Family Hospital because that is where her brother's children were born and the care was excellent.

"I appreciated the kind and warm midwives who were there with me when I delivered my son. They helped me forget my fears and pain. I am overjoyed to be a mother and looking forward to introducing Baby Muhammad to my friends and neighbors. The birth of a new baby is God's way of telling us there is hope for the world. He is strong because he had a good start at Holy Family Hospital." Nadine said.

100,000 babies represent half the population of Bethlehem. Holy Family Hospital serves a catchment area of one million people and provides over 150,000 services a year.

*Holy Family Hospital is a primary work of the Order of Malta and a shared work of all three US Associations (American, Federal, and Western). American Association members on the Board of Holy Family Hospital Foundation include Michael J. Heck, Vice Chairman, Gail T. Berardino, Jean L.P. Brunel, Molly K. Heines, and Nicolle C. McGowan, MD. Visit [www.birthplaceofhope.org](http://www.birthplaceofhope.org) or contact Kate Robinson, Foundation Director, at [kate@hfhfoundation.org](mailto:kate@hfhfoundation.org) to learn more about Holy Family Hospital.*

## Our Mission

The American Association of the Order of Malta has as its mission to promote the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, through witness to and support of the Catholic faith and through active service to the sick and the poor.

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### Change of address?

**Please notify the New York Office.**

If you have recently moved, changed phone numbers, or created a new email address, we encourage you to visit: [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/update](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/update) and fill out our information update form. This online form provides members with a quick and simple way to update any, or all, of their information that is stored in the American Association's database. Members with and without active email addresses can now submit an update to their home address, professional, and even educational information on our website using this new form. We hope that you will utilize this new method and help keep the American Association's records up to date.

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