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 JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA™**  
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# HOSPITALLERS

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## The 2023 Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion

*“It is Good That We Are Here”*

**C**hampion is an unincorporated community in the town of Green Bay in Brown County, Wisconsin — a countryside dotted with farms, crossroads, mostly flat, with modest hills, and a published measure of 700 feet above sea level. In 2021, the population of Champion, Wisconsin, was reported to be just over 5,000. Champion is also home to a Shrine that is drawing people from all over the country and beyond.

The reported attendees at the 10th Annual “Walk to Mary” pilgrimage in Champion, Wisconsin exceeded the local population when 5,330 pilgrims from forty-four states made the twenty-one mile pilgrimage from the National Shrine of Saint Joseph in DePere to the Shrine in Champion where Our Lady appeared to a Belgian immigrant woman and told her, “Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they need to know for their salvation.”

Now, the number of pilgrims who visit the Shrine annually is around 190,000 or thirty-seven times the population of *(continued on page 12)*

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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 Magistry 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.”



AS I WRITE TO YOU ON THIS BEAUTIFUL SUMMER DAY, I look forward to great things for the Associations and look back with joy at the many good things you are all involved in to live the charism of our Order. So many good things are happening!

We had a wonderful Pilgrimage in Wisconsin at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion with over 200 pilgrims from all three US Associations. The highlight was the attendance of our new Grand Master, Frá John Dunlap, at the Pilgrimage. He was available to meet many of the pilgrims. One encounter a pilgrim had with the Grand Master illustrates what type of person our Grand Master is. The pilgrim asked Frá John

how to address him, “As your Eminent Highness or some other designation?” Frá John smiled and said, “You can just call me John!” The weather was perfect, the Chaplains were outstanding, the Choir was angelic. If you were unable to make the pilgrimage this year, mark your calendars for 2024 — August 8th to August 11th. It really is a special opportunity.

There was also another successful Summer Camp for disabled young adults at Siena College in Loudonville, New York. This year’s camp was led by Mary Delaney who did an outstanding job with the assistance of her committee. We had participants from all three US Associations, so we can now add this ministry to the other joint US Associations ministries such as prison ministry, mobile van ministry and anti human trafficking ministry. It is through these joint ministries as well as our two pilgrimages (Wisconsin and Lourdes) that all three Associations will continue to grow closer together so that we can think of each other as members of the US Association of the Order of Malta.

Another joint effort was the relief response for the victims of the fire in Maui. Through Malteser International Americas, all three Associations contributed over \$100,000. The aid to the victims was coordinated by Western Association members who live in Maui. The American Association members contributed over \$40,000.

A question I’m sure all of you have on your mind is why are we only electing a President this year and no Board of Councillors members. The answer is that we are trying to slowly comply with the Order’s new Constitution and Code which require a decrease in our Board size from the current twenty-five to somewhere between twelve and fifteen. After this year’s election we will have sixteen Board members and a new President. Next year’s election will further decrease the board size and will also allow all members for the first time to directly elect the Officers of the Association. The titles of the Officers will change slightly in that there will no longer be a Chancellor but rather a Secretary General. There will continue to be a Hospitaller and Treasurer.

Our goal is to update our by-laws to comply with the new Constitution and Code. This will be fully accomplished next year under the direction of the new President and the smaller Board of Councillors. We are working with the other two US Associations to have commonality with the by-laws.

The Capital Campaign has surpassed its goal of \$20 million, thanks to the tremendous generosity of our members. Your financial support of our works and ministries is an outward sign of your commitment to live the charism. Your generosity will enable us to expand the impact of our work and fund them into the future.

Finally, I would urge all of you to participate in our election this year and cast your ballot for the President of the American Association. Whoever wins the election will be guiding us through the changes I mentioned above and will hopefully continue to expand our ministries throughout our Association as well as the joint ministries with the other two US Associations. It is important for the new President to feel that he was chosen by a large number of our members. Also on the ballot will be several edits to the Certificate of Incorporation and the By-laws to begin the process of compliance with the new Constitution and Code.

It’s been an honor and blessing to have served as your President for the past six years. I hope to see many of you in New York during the events of our Investiture.

Thank you for all that you do.  
God bless you,

Peter J. Kelly, MD, GCM, President

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## The 35th American Association Lourdes Pilgrimage— *A Return to the Grotto*

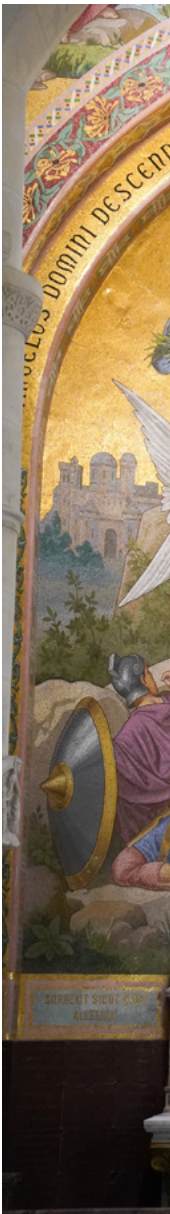
When the charter jet took off from Baltimore-Washington International Airport, heading east to foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains in Southwestern France, it began a journey that had been long awaited — the return of the American Association to its spiritual haven. After the pandemic forced the Association to forgo its annual Pilgrimage for three years, the wait was over.

Fortunately, the success of the pilgrimage is not measured by the performance of the charter jet — mechanical challenges at both ends of the pilgrimage may have distracted some from the purpose of the pilgrimage but the grace of standing in the Grotto for many overcame the inconveniences that attempted but failed to cast a pall over the pilgrimage.

Many veteran pilgrims found the 2023 Pilgrimage to have been spiritually enriching, service-oriented with the opportunity to care for our beloved Malades and their Caregivers while bonding with fellow *(continued on page 4)*

pilgrims. The weather, a gift from Our Lady, was almost perfect and had first-time pilgrims wondering when the rain (and snow) were coming. The Chaplains never fail to set the tone of the Pilgrimage. They created a spiritual foundation that focused each pilgrim on the reason they were there. Seeking peace and understanding, asking for strength to face life's challenges, for themselves, for the Malades, and family and friends, pilgrims were blessed with messages of faith and hope. Many sought much and were rewarded to find solace in the care and compassion of the Blessed Mother.

The Grotto calls. Returning pilgrims found themselves drawn to the Grotto and could not wait until the Opening Mass on Thursday; they make their way to the Grotto filled with anticipation — the day of rest provides an unexpected moment of calm and some use the opportunity to sleep, to rest, to talk to friends, old and new, and some, perhaps surreptitiously, head up the street and across the bridge to make their way to heart of the pilgrimage — the Grotto. Some smile, some cry — the wait has been too hard to hold back. Our Lady waits — she missed us even more than we missed her for her love for us is more perfect, reflecting as it does, His love for each of us. *(continued on page 7)*









Registration is beginning for the American Association's 36th Lourdes Pilgrimage. It will run from Tuesday, April 30th to Tuesday, May 7th. There are no plans to require vaccines. The extra day will continue at the beginning. The medical assessment was that those most vulnerable benefited greatly and the difference was immediately obvious at the opening Mass in the Rosary Basilica — people of every age and category were awake and alert! The restful start carried throughout the Pilgrimage — a small investment for a major return.

Next year, the plane will be smaller than for past pilgrimages. Please register as soon as possible to ensure you do not miss this special journey that, for many, represents a return to their spiritual home. The third of the three-year theme for the 2024 pilgrimage calls out from Our Lady of Lourdes, "that people should come in procession." The lineup in front of the hotels will be here before we know it. She is waiting for you! ■

## WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK — Recognizing Jesus as We Walk “Through The Woods” of life!

*Reflection given by Msgr. Frank Caldwell during the Morning of Recollection on the American Association's 35th Lourdes Pilgrimage — May 5, 2023*

It's often good to begin a reflection with a little story or joke. We had a great flight from Baltimore to arrive safely here to Lourdes! But I'd like to tell you about another trans-Atlantic flight. And, being of Irish descent, this is a story that maybe only the Irish can tell or will get!

Shortly after a flight took off on an Aer Lingus jet from BWI to Dublin, a flight attendant nervously announced that the airline catering department made a terrible mistake! She said there was “a big mix-up,” noting that, “although 302 passengers were onboard, they only received 150 dinners from the catering department.”



The flight attendant profusely apologized but said, “Anybody who is kind enough to give up their meal to someone who is hungry would receive free, unlimited drinks for the remainder of the flight,” (which was very nice of them)! The next announcement came three hours later when another flight attendant announced, “If anybody is hungry, we still have 150 dinners available!”

The title of this talk is “Recognizing the signs (the multiplicity of signs) that the Holy Spirit is always revealing!” First, let's reflect upon a Gospel passage from St. John that reminds us of the signs and symbols of God's revealing presence:

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*A Reading from the holy Gospel according to St. John:*

*On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb, early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. She stayed outside the tomb weeping. And, as she wept, she bent over the tomb and saw two angels! They said to her, “Why are you weeping?”*

*She said to them, “they have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” She thought it was the gardener and said to him: “Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni,’ which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.”*

*Mary went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and then reported what He had told her.*

*The Gospel of the Lord!*

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Lourdes and Easter are all about recognizing that God is with us! Saint Bernadette was given the great opportunity and privilege of recognizing Mary right here in this place! Others came here too, but did not see, and/or refused to believe (which you may remember from seeing the film, *Song of Bernadette*).

But, like us, millions have come to this place through the years to recognize and find God in and through Mary's intercession and presence here in this her shrine (Mary's House)! So, coming to Lourdes is all about acknowledging, accepting, embracing the



recognition (the signs) that God is always sending us — especially, for us, as Catholics, through Mary, even, and especially as with Mary of Magdala “while it is still dark”, out there in our world, then, and now!

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*Here's another story that serves as a segway to what I'd like to say about Lourdes. The story goes like this: So, a 65-year-old woman had a bad heart attack. And while she was on the operating table, she had a “Near Death” experience! Seeing God, she asked, “Is my time up?” God said, “No, not yet! You have another thirty-three years, two months and three days to live!” “Thank you, God,” she said!*

*Upon her recovery, the woman decided to stay in the hospital and to have a face-lift, liposuction, implants, and a tummy tuck. She even had someone come in and change her hair color and brighten her teeth. Since she had so much more time to live, she figured she might as well make the most of it! After her very last operation, she was released from the hospital. But while crossing the street on her way home, she was killed by an ambulance! Very sad! Arriving in front of God, she lamented and demanded to know from God, “I thought you said I had another 33 years to go? Why didn't you pull me out of the way from the path of that ambulance?” God paused and said, “Well, you know, I didn't even recognize you!”*

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Lourdes is all about recognizing God for who GOD has made us to be in the here and now, with all our issues, “situations,” and maladies (seen or hidden) even before we arrive at our ultimate destination with God (and all those who have gone before us) to the Kingdom of Heaven! The very fact that we are here in Lourdes isn't just the workings and “arrangements” of the Order of Malta, but it's also a sign that God has us right where He wants us to be here at this moment, as Malades, caregivers, members of the Order, Auxiliary, Associates, Chaplains and Staff.

Our task here is to ponder the many signs that God keeps sending our way, often through Mary's intercession, that (to use the theme of the 35th Pilgrimage ) “a chapel should be built here,” and, that's exactly why we should be here too, in God's plan – with Mary!

Whatever “initials” [or letters] are after our names on the name badges: “M,” or, “CG,” “DM,” “KM” “AUX,” “CH,” or whatever, none of us know how many days we have on this earth. But each of us has the opportunity to be open to the ways and the signs and the messages that come to us as we are. We don't have to change our appearances to look better before God. God recognizes us in good times and bad, in sickness and in health and wants us to cooperate with His Grace through the joys and sorrows of every life!

In the Gospel we just heard, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb “while it was still dark.” Please notice on the Gospel card that you received a few minutes ago, those five words, (bolded and highlighted) which are so meaningful and significant, “while it was still dark!” Mary of Magdala came to the tomb in deep sadness (in her personal darkness) because of what she had witnessed, and whom she had lost! And we know that, like Mary of Magdala, there can also be a similar heaviness in our hearts because of some immediate or persistent “darkness” ... perhaps:

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- *As a malade, you might wonder, “What's going to happen to me?” “Can I keep trusting my doctors and the treatments they are prescribing?” Yet, by your presence here at Lourdes “you keep on keeping on” “while it is still dark,” otherwise you wouldn't have come to Lourdes in the first place!*
  - *As a caregiver, maybe you ponder, “What more can I do; how can I be patient; how can I help more; “how can I, how are “we” (together) ... struggle on” — “while it is still dark,” keeping hope alive!*
  - *As a member of the Order of Malta, a chaplain, an auxiliary, the rest of us, in one way or another, “We're all malades!” That's why we're here in Lourdes!*
- 

YES, we each have our struggles and issues, with health; with family matters; with aging; with someone at home who is ill; or on drugs; or going through a divorce; or the children and grandchildren who don't go to Mass or may have rejected the faith that is so precious to us; or, maybe we're rightly concerned about the state of our country and politics (even politics in The Order of Malta (God-Forbid)!

But here we are as one group, one body of faith, “while it is still dark” yet looking for the signs of life and light. Perhaps, we could use some of our time here in Lourdes to think about that story about the woman who had the “near-death” experience and the fact that we don't need a “make-over,” we need to live one day at a time, asking and seeking not just for more time, but for more meaningful living! Keep Looking! Amid all the darkness that still, and always will exist in our frail and all-too-human lives, it's important to keep looking for signs of hope!

Jesus didn't tell us that He was going to take away the Cross (the challenges, the sufferings) from us in this life individually or collectively. But He said that if you carry your crosses, your struggles, and anxieties with Me, if we carry them together, there will be the opportunity of new life! Jesus *(continued on page 10)*

never promised us a “rescue,” or immunity from cancer or escape from death.

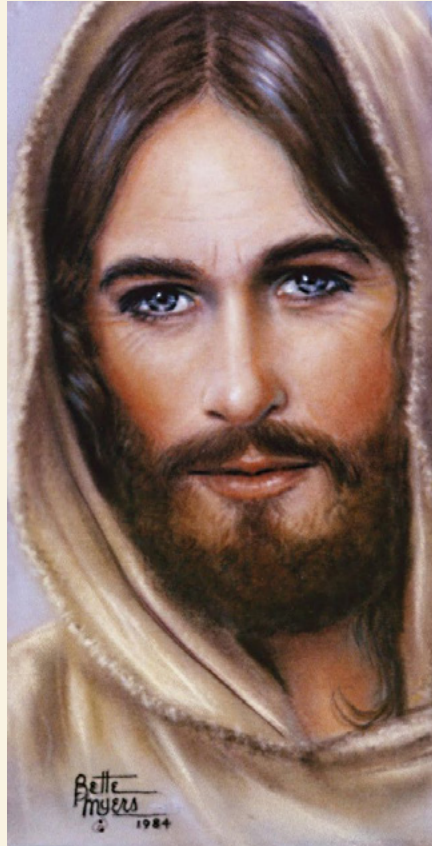
Rather, He promised that, in the end, there would be redemption, vindication and Eternal Life! But that’s in the end (or at the end)! In the meantime, in the early and intermediate chapters of our lives, there will be maladies, struggles, humiliation, pain and death that everyone (eventually) suffers. The cross and resurrection of Jesus reveal a redeeming, not, a rescuing, “God-with-us!” The constant message of Lourdes, and which I would suggest we focus upon today, is what this Gospel tells us: five simple words “while it was still dark!”

Mary Magdalene came to the empty tomb; with the stone rolled back. Not only was it still “dark,” for her, but she didn’t even recognize His voice! She and the apostles didn’t have an immediate and complete understanding of all that had, was, or would be happening! But they paid attention to all the little signs and invitations. There’s so much in life we don’t understand, so many times we wonder where God is, and we discover that God is found in the mysteries of life and, in the large and small signs of His presence, and the invitations to see deeper into the symbols that surround us — with or without explanations! Here are a few recent and public examples of little but meaningful signs of “God in the darkness:”

*FILM: Despite our super-secular and dysfunctional culture, there are signs of hope, even from Hollywood, where light and insight break through such as films like: The Chosen, The Jesus Revolution — demonstrating Christian resurgence; His Only Son, about Abraham and Isaac, and more! “Good News” stories “while it is still dark!”*

*LITERATURE: I just finished a book entitled, “When God Winks” about how the power of coincidence can guide our lives — God-instances are all around!*

*NEWS: Perhaps you read about the story that happened at St. Thomas Church in Thomaston, Connecticut? Eucharistic miracles are very rare — but, in that church (two months ago) a Eucharistic minister was running out of hosts in the ciboria, and, as the*



*pastor surmised, “God just duplicated Himself in the ciborium.” Maybe it could be more than a “God Wink” that might strengthen the cause of Blessed Michael McGivney who was associated with that parish, and the founder of the Knights of Columbus! Who knows? Signs and symbols galore!*

The point is, even in the “darkness” that’s always out there somewhere, we’re invited (especially here in Lourdes) to pay attention to the multiplicity of signs of life, and light, and hope! That’s what I would suggest we try to do this week. And, I’d like to offer a few personal examples:

Just over a year ago, I was in a very bad accident while visiting my sister, Eileen, in Florida. My brother-in-law, Mark, was driving; my sister was in the back seat; and I was in the passenger seat. Mark was severely injured, on a ventilator for 2-plus months and in the hospital for over 100 days. Over those months, I spoke with my sister many times each week. I didn’t think he was going to survive! And I kept

asking my sister if she thought he was “out of the woods,” which is not an expression I would ordinarily use.

Looking back, she said, “You were preparing me for the worst!” A few months later, she told my brother-in-law, “Frank kept asking me if you were “out of the woods, yet?” That night, Mark had a dream that he was being carried “through the woods” somewhere in a forest, and strapped in an open harness, face down and, all he could see was the ground just beneath him, and the side of the person’s face carrying him — “through the woods.” During that dream, he said that someone else appeared and asked the person who was carrying Mark, “Can I help you with him?” He was told, “No, he’s, my responsibility!” And they kept on traveling through the woods!

Then he woke up, and that was the end of the story (his dream), until he and my sister came up to my parish this past Christmas Day. When they entered the church, he saw an image of Jesus that’s been hanging on the church wall for years. Mark said to my sister: “Look, that’s the guy who was carrying me ‘through the woods’ all that time.” That image of Jesus is on the card you received a few minutes ago, along with the Gospel passage we just heard. It’s amazing, God is always speaking to us in our experiences, or dreams, our ups and downs, and trying to get our attention, carrying us “through the woods”... of life!



Another example of signs of life even in darkness was when I visited the home of a woman who lost her 24-year-old son in Baldwin, Long Island. I had offered the funeral a few weeks before. He had been driving a motorcycle, was hit by a sedan and he died instantly. His mom said the police recovered everything – his backpack, his cell phone, the helmet. But he had a metal cross on a chain around his neck which they never found. It was the only thing that was “attached” to him besides his clothes. She had his cell phone on the table and knew that there were many messages of love and condolences – that people left for him. But she kept trying to figure out the password to get access to hear the messages.

The mother tried every conceivable number — his birthday, her birthday, every number she could think of! Then, she mentioned the missing Cross. I said, “maybe that’s the password?” She entered those numbers on the phone 2-0-4-6 (the Sign of the Cross +). And that was it! ... God winks” in many ways! I occasionally use that code for some of my passwords as a connection to that moment of grace and insight.

Here is a third and final example of looking for signs amid darkness. For many years, one of my most ardent and fervent prayers to Jesus and his mother Mary has been, “Please help me get through the death of my mother who is and was the love of my life.” I often speculated and feared that moment of “coming to the tomb” (as Mary of Magdala did) in utter darkness, falling apart, overwhelmed, losing my faith as well as my composure. How am I ever going to get through offering her funeral Mass?

Well, this is the first time I’ve been back to Lourdes since she died in April of 2020. She passed away at the very height of COVID-19 on Divine Mercy Sunday with four of her ten children present. There was no wake, just her burial. So, the idea of a public funeral was simply lifted away, as she was lifted up to God. Jesus was saying to me as He did to Mary of Magdala “Stop holding on to me!” An hour later, I offered my mom’s funeral Mass at her bedside, with three of my brothers, and the rest of the family on Zoom, before the funeral home came.

So, all those years, of fearing the darkness of that moment “at the tomb,” as it were, and all that “anticipated grief” was lifted away. Years ago, a wise priest said to me: “We don’t know how many days we have left. All we have is the grace of the present moment.” He also said: “I don’t believe in miracles; I depend on them.”

I truly believe that God has us “right where He wants to have us” and, our “job,” is to keep paying attention to the multiple signs and symbols that are all around us EVEN WHILE IT IS STILL DARK! God walks with us, brings us together here to Lourdes, and even carries us “through the woods” of life’s journey. **Amen!**





## The 2023 Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion

*(continued from cover)*

Champion. Included in the number of pilgrims were the more than two hundred members, family, and friends from the American, Federal and Western Associations who gathered at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in early August to share the peace and beauty of the serene setting on a county road, surrounded by cornfields. They came to pray at the apparition site where the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brise and changed her life forever.

When the Blessed Mother told Adele to gather the children and teach them, Adele inquired as to how she should accomplish that. “But how shall I teach them who know so little myself?” Adele asked. The Blessed Mother responded, “Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the Cross, and how to approach the sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing, I will help you.”

The Shrine has been called the Shrine of Our Lady of

They came to pray at the apparition site where the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brise and changed her life forever.

Good Help for many years because of the promise Mary made — I will help you — to assist Adele in carrying out her instructions. Earlier this year, the Shrine received word from the Holy See approving an annual Solemnity Day on the grounds of the Apparition site under the title “Our Lady of Champion”. The feast day will be celebrated each year on October 9th, which is the anniversary of the Blessed Virgin

Mary’s second and third apparitions to Adele in 1859. The Shrine is officially changing its name from the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. This makes the Shrine’s title consistent with other apparition sites such as Lourdes, Fatima, and Guadalupe.

This year’s Pilgrimage officially began more like a day in Lourdes with a rain shower as the pilgrims made their way to St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay, with celebrant Rev. John Girotti, ChM, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Green Bay. At Mass, the rain broke and the sun shone through the stained glass windows of the Cathedral. After Mass, pilgrims gathered in the hotel ballroom for the opening dinner where





the Grand Master Frá John Dunlap was invited to the podium and, on behalf of the Order of Malta, accepted a plaque that contained relics of the two trees between which the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele. The day's activities concluded with Evening Prayer.

Friday morning started with early breakfast and a bus ride to the Shrine where the Mass in the packed Apparition Chapel was led by Celebrant Fr. Richard Mullins, ChC, from the Federal Association. The opportunity was extended for Confessions before lunch. After lunch, the venue shifted to the National Shrine of Saint Joseph in De Pere — it is located on the beautiful campus of Saint Norbert College. Another opportunity for Confessions was presented during Adoration, prior to a reflection by Fr. Augustine Puchner, of the Western Association, and the Anointing of the Sick, which was very moving. This signature stop on the pilgrimage offers everyone a second reflective setting to be with God. Fr. Puchner served as the Chaplain Coordinator for this year's pilgrimage; he is a member of the Norbertine Order.

Saturday began with the sun shining brightly and the bus trip to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion seemed quicker as pilgrims recognized the road ahead and the cornfields filling much of the scenery on the trip. The Rosary Procession through the beautiful grounds of the shrine behind a statue of Our Lady of Champion was a highlight for many. After the procession, we gathered on the back lawn for a group

photo with the official photographer, Peter Scudner from the Federal Association, climbing a ladder to get a full view of the two hundred pilgrims. Mother of Mercy Hall was the setting for Mass with American Association Chaplain, the Very Rev. Brian Dellaert, ChM, as celebrant and homilist (find his homily elsewhere in this issue). The Mass was immediately followed by a Eucharistic Healing Service led by Fr. Augustine Puchner.

The afternoon offered a time for personal reflection at the shrine, followed by a talk by Fr. Joseph Aytona, Rector of the Shrine, about offering Communion for the conversion of sinners. The time at the shrine was capped off with a Vigil Mass with Father Pucher as the Celebrant.

While the travel to Champion is labeled, appropriately, as a pilgrimage, the activities and setting resemble a retreat as well. Pilgrims traveled home, grateful for the opportunity, for the effort of those who put it all together, and for the graces that flowed from the time spent with Our Lord, Our Lady and Saint Joseph and with friends from across the three Associations and across the country. ■

*For more information about the Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion, please visit the American Association website at [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org). Click on Spirituality in Action on the navigation bar and open the Wisconsin Pilgrimage section. The 2024 Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion is scheduled for August 8th to August 11th.*

## “Go and fear nothing, I will help you.”

*This is the text of the sermon given on the feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major on Saturday, August 5, 2023, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion by the Very Reverend Brian Dellaert, a Magistral Chaplain from Iowa.*

Today, on this first Saturday of August, we celebrate the feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome, when on August 5th during the reign of Pope Liberius, snow fell on the Esquiline hill marking the spot where the basilica would be built in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On a pilgrimage, it is fitting that we celebrate the feast of a dedication of a church. Among the many things that come to mind when thinking about ‘church’, is the meaning of the word itself. Church means to be “called out” into a new assembly. In the mosaic apse of St. Mary Major and in other Roman basilicas, the scene of sheep being led out from two cities bearing the

symbolic names of Jerusalem, the city of the Jews, and Bethlehem, the city of the Gentiles. The sheep are walking out of the cities and towards the Lamb of God in the center. On pilgrimage, especially to Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, we think about being called out of the cities to come before Mary’s Son, and to receive the blessing that Jesus gives in the Gospel to those who will listen to the word of God and observe it.

Inside the Basilica is a beloved and miraculous icon, Salus Populi Romani (Protectress of the Roman People or Health of the Roman People) where Pope Francis has adopted a very beautiful custom to visit St. Mary Major before he departs on any journey and when he returns to offer some prayers and some flowers asking for the powerful intercession of the Mother of God. I must say I have always loved this beautiful custom of Pope Francis. How much we associate the role of the Blessed Mother to give protection and health to her children. I’m sure among the things the Pope prays for is for protection in his travels and all those with him along with protection for all who come to see him on his Apostolic journey. There is also this endearing human quality about it. What son wouldn’t greet his mother before saying goodbye or returning home? And so we too, have come here on pilgrimage to greet our heavenly mother and ask her for her protection and good help.

I doubt that most of you have ever heard of Father Thomas Byles. He was an English priest, born in 1870, whose father was a Congregationalist minister. When Thomas Byles was at Oxford University, he converted to Catholicism, and eventually went to the Venerable English College in Rome and became a priest. He was the eldest of 7 children and some of his other siblings also converted to the Faith. His father and mother and some of the younger children eventually moved to this country.

Father Thomas Byles’ brother, William, who had also become a Catholic, liked America and returned here as a young man to make his fortune in industry. After becoming fairly well-off, William met a young lady in Brooklyn, NY, proposed marriage; she accepted; and he sent his priest-brother Thomas — by now a pastor in England — a ticket to come to America, by ship, in April of 1912, to officiate at the wedding. At the last minute, Fr. Byles changed his ticket to another, faster ship: the Titanic.

Father Thomas Byles, along with a German and a Lithuanian priest, offered Mass each day on the Titanic. On Sunday, April 14th — as Fr. Byles was the only one of the three priests who spoke English very well — he preached at two Masses (1 in second class and 1 in





third class) on a topic of no little irony: The Faith: our lifeboat in the shipwrecks of life.

After the collision with an iceberg late that Sunday night, Fr. Byles — and the other two priests as well — were reported to have been heroes on board the sinking ship. Father Byles helped calm people who were in panic, he helped women and children into lifeboats, and helped bring 3rd class passengers up to the promenade deck on the stern of the ship. Three times he was offered a place in a lifeboat and three times he said "No, my place is here." When it became evident that there were no more lifeboats, Fr. Byles gave everyone general absolution, and said "We are all now ready to appear before the judgment seat of God." Then he began the rosary.

Those in the nearest lifeboats reported hearing two distinct sounds coming from the Titanic right before it sank: the band playing Nearer My God to Thee, and a huge crowd of people on the promenade deck answering the rosary, led by Fr. Byles: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen."

As Catholics always have in times of crisis, Fr. Byles and the people he chose to remain with on that ship, turned to the Blessed Virgin for courage. And for good reason. From the time the Angel Gabriel told her at the Annunciation, "Do not be afraid, Mary," she wasn't. She knew she could be stoned to death for being with child out of wedlock; she must have stood her ground at many points; she took a difficult trip to visit her cousin Elizabeth; she took what must have been a terrible trip down to Bethlehem in her ninth month; she gave birth in a stable; and she fled into Egypt with an Infant.

She knew Isaiah's prophecy about the suffering Savior; and every time she looked at her Son while He was growing up, she must have

remembered old Simeon telling her that because of Him, a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart. And at the end of her Son's life, she was there. The most graphic crucifix doesn't begin to do justice to the reality of a crucifixion. They were unspeakably cruel. People didn't go near a crucifixion, especially not the mother of the condemned. But Mary was there next to the cross of her Son — courageous to the end.

Among the most important virtues, I think that parents, and particularly mothers, can give their children — after the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love — is the virtue of courage.

**The courage** to be a follower of Christ and to do what is right, even if nobody else does; even in the face of persecution and ridicule.

**The courage** to love — as Christ loves His Church — unconditionally, magnanimously generously, irrevocably.

**The courage** to pick ourselves back up, when life knocks us down, which it will, and keep on the right path.

**The courage** to admit that we are sinners, and sometimes do wrong and need repentance.

**The courage** to go to confession.

**The courage** to stand firm in Christian conviction, even if society around us becomes pagan.

**The courage** to confront the strong.

**The courage** to defend the weak.

**The courage** to be honest.

**The courage** to be pro-life.

**The courage** to say "no," when "no" needs to be said.

**The courage** to believe that many things — in fact most things — are more important than money or popularity.

**The courage** to live our lives, at any time, ready to appear before the judgment seat of God.

These are just some of the goals of the virtue of courage. And the message of the Blessed Virgin Mary here in Champion is a message she gives in every age:

**"Go and fear nothing, I will help you."**

Parents, give you children courage! Blessed Mother, give us all courage!

May God bless you.

*Father Dellaert can be reached at [briandellaert@gmail.com](mailto:briandellaert@gmail.com)*



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

As we traveled throughout the Association to discuss the Capital Campaign, we were most impressed by the strong desire of our members to be proper stewards of our relationship with the Order of Malta. You are a very knowledgeable and sophisticated group of donors and your interest in securing our future was not surprising. You embraced our campaign goal of \$20,000,000 but you wanted to know how your investment in the organization would be cared for.

Proper stewardship involves every step in the process from the receipt of a donor's pledge and resources, preparing and maintaining records of each donor's wishes, wisely directing those resources consistent with prudent money management and Catholic values investing, and granting those resources in ministries according to the wishes and direction of the donors.

Our message of witnessing our faith through our living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy resounded with an outpouring of support from more than 27% of our members. With CCS as our campaign advisor and support from our office staff in New York, we hastened our journey which is ongoing to share the message of Blessed Gerard's pathway to spiritual life.

The Board of Councillors instructed us to achieve two important objectives. The first objective was to fund the Pilgrimage Foundation's ability to fully cover the costs of bringing fifty or more Malades and their caregivers to Lourdes each year. While we were unable to predict how costs might increase over time for the pilgrimage, we estimated that it would require a corpus of at least \$10,000,000 in the endowment. We are happy to report that, once pledges and planned gifts are fully realized, the Pilgrimage Foundation will receive the benefit of more than the original \$7,300,000 targeted for the endowment. We will need that money and more!

The second objective was to address the needs of the sick and the poor which are virtually limitless; no matter what the goal for the Malta Human Services Foundation (MHSF), it would never be enough. Therefore, we set our sights on a campaign that would double the financial impact of the annual grants program that the MHSF funded (for context, the total grant allocation from the MHSF in 2019 was \$614,514 and in 2023, it was \$692,880). We have been focusing our message on maximizing the impact of

the growing endowment through signature works that can be executed across the Areas and throughout the Association. At our present pace, we are running short of our goal of increasing the endowment by \$13,000,000 as a number of donors have restricted gifts to more immediate needs of other Order of Malta ministries (see following paragraph for examples).

One of the guidelines we established from the start was that we would "meet people where they were at." What that has meant is that when generous donors have identified specific needs and projects that they would like to direct their donations to, our rule of thumb was that money directed at serving the sick or the poor was always going to be within the parameters of the campaign, just as those worthy goals of service are fundamental to the Order's mission. In the amounts that have been pledged, generous donors have identified anti-human trafficking, the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, Holy Family Hospital, Malteser International and other important ministries not included in our original mandate from the Board of Councillors — we are indeed grateful.

We practice four principles of stewardship that are being woven more strongly into the fabric of the Association: Exceeding Goals, Nurturing Donors, Providing a Lasting Impact, and Widening the Circle of Support beyond the Association's members.

At the outset, the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Councillors had suggested a goal of \$16,000,000 for the campaign, but we learned in our study that the capacity of our members justified a more aggressive target. It seemed an aspiration without a foundation to some but the study we did before a single dollar was pledged indicated that \$20,000,000 should be achievable.

### WE HAVE REACHED AND EXCEEDED THE COMMITMENT OF \$20,000,000 AND THAT IS NOT THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN!

In all honesty, it has not been an easy road — the success of the campaign has come with sweat and tears (although without any bloodshed). It took a team, our Campaign Cabinet, the resources and expertise of CCS, and the refocusing of resources in the New York office, to make this happen. And the trajectory of our campaign success suggests that the generosity of our members and circle of friends has not been exhausted. We believe we have a clear line of sight to at least \$22,000,000. We continue to believe that





the generosity of our members will continue to support what some believed to be lofty goals.

Bringing Father David Sellery on board represents a commitment of the Association to continue to build on the work of the CALLED TO SERVE Capital Campaign through development and member engagement. Not every active member has been a donor and not every donor has been what we would define as active. The place in the hearts of many of our members for the Order is clearly reflected in the stunning generosity that has been exhibited. In many ways, the campaign has provided an answer to the question, “How else can I help?”

One of the messages we heard as we travelled to more than forty events and spoke to hundreds of our members over the past four years was that we were not set up to properly recognize and thank our very generous members. Part of the focus has been to ensure that we properly thank and continually recognize those people who have provided the financial resources to achieve the remarkable success of this campaign.

Providing a lasting impact is the goal we feel the most challenged to ensure will happen. So much good work has been put into the campaign and so much goodwill has come out of it that we cannot let it fade into the sunset. The lasting impact is not about the campaign, it is about the commitment of our members that is represented by their willingness to invest in the future of service to the sick and the poor. The lasting impact is about the sick and the poor and how they will best benefit from the outpouring of generosity that our members have demonstrated. The Campaign Chairs, the Campaign Cabinet and the current Boards of the Association and the two Foundations will be a memory while the impact of this culture of philanthropy should continue into the future.

We owe it to ourselves and to our donors to ensure that we have put everything possible in place to ensure that the impact of this campaign is not allowed to fade along with us. The Boards of the Association, the Pilgrimage Foundation and the Malta Human Services Foundation can provide the leadership needed to ensure that works being funded are impactful over the broader environment. This focus on impact will meet the goals of serving the sick and the poor while attracting others to become a part of that mission, as members or as donors.

One of the cultural changes whose seeds have been planted is about widening the circle of donors — of investors — who would be willing to support the work of our members as the hands and feet on the ground serving the sick and the poor. Expanding the circle of donors is blazing a new path for the Association — we never really focused on the fact that there are individuals, organizations, and foundations that would be interested in hearing our story. The fact that our members

have committed an investment of more than \$20,000,000 in the future of serving the sick and the poor will encourage family endowments, and other religious-oriented philanthropists who are always looking for ministries that align with their goals.

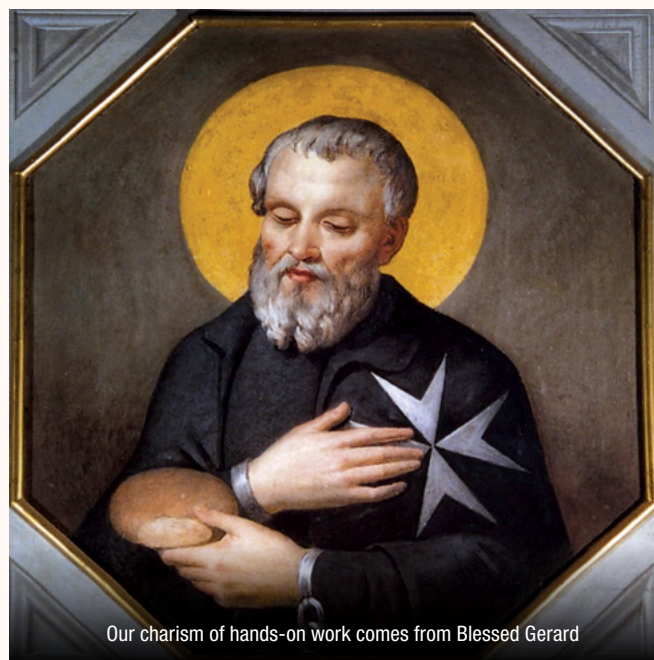
Our ministries are crucial to the social fabric of our nation; we believe our charism should be shared with potential investors outside our immediate circle. In some cases, it will require creating opportunities for them to hear the story, seeing our members at work, and providing an avenue consistent with our charism that focuses their energy and resources into areas that appeal to their interests and goals.

Reaching and exceeding our \$20,000,000 goal is a wonderful milestone — it is not the beginning of the end of our drive to build a culture of philanthropy, it is just the end of the beginning — one that takes us down a path of greater engagement by our members, greater impact on those we serve, a better and broader articulation of who we are and what we do to our members and to those in the broader community with a vision that aligns with ours.

We look forward to thanking you personally during our American Association Investiture events in NYC starting on November 9th. We will be sharing our projections for 2024 and beyond.

We are all Called to Serve!

*This article was contributed by Gail and Joseph Berardino, Co-Chairs of the Capital Campaign. Gail can be reached at [gtberardino@gmail.com](mailto:gtberardino@gmail.com) and Joe can be reached at [jfberardino@gmail.com](mailto:jfberardino@gmail.com). They welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions.*



Our charism of hands-on work comes from Blessed Gerard

## The Eucharist: The Source of the Very Life of the Church



"... the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Next year, a National Eucharistic Congress is scheduled to take place in Indianapolis from the 17th until the 21st of July. It is the first National Eucharistic Congress in the United States since the 1976 International Eucharistic Congress was held in Philadelphia. This is a great ecclesial event that will involve all the vital forces of our Church.

The Eucharistic Congress is a particular manifestation, an intense moment of commitment and prayer. It is an invitation that the Church offers to all of us to participate in the deepening of our understanding of the Eucharistic mystery in the authentic sign of our faith.

To spread this message and encourage the preparation of the people in all of the American dioceses, a special team of 50 priests will visit the country to explain the importance of this Congress in order to help everyone follow and understand this most important event whose central theme is the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.

The Eucharist is the Sacrament instituted by Jesus during the Last Supper on the eve of His passion and death. As recounted in the Holy Gospels, Jesus distributed to his disciples the bread and wine, His Body and Blood, which He offered as a sacrifice for the salvation of all the people, instructing His disciples to continue to do the same in His memory. The Eucharist is the most sublime sacrament because it contains all the spiritual good of the Church. It is the Body of Jesus Christ Himself that in the precise moment of the Consecration, offers Himself to us to meet in communion with Him. In love, without measure, Jesus offers to us everything, all that He is, so that our sins may be forgiven and the door to eternal life opened.

As Saint John Paul II repeatedly commented citing the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, the human person "cannot fully find himself except through the sincere gift of himself" in love to God and to those He has placed in our lives. The Consecration in the Mass is the supreme source of the grace that helps us live this gift.

Pope Benedict XVI said "we must not be surprised if today too many find it hard to accept the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Precisely because this is a mysterious reality that surprises our understanding, it cannot be otherwise. This is how it has been since the day when, in the Synagogue of Capernaum, Jesus openly declared that He had come to give us His flesh and His blood as food. Then as now, the Eucharist remains a sign of contradiction and can only be so because a God who makes Himself flesh and sacrifices Himself for the life of the world throws human wisdom into crisis." As St. Thomas Aquinas wrote in the *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*: "Dogma datur Christianis, Quod in carnem transit panis Et vinum in sanguinem." "This is the truth each Christian learns, bread into His flesh He turns, to His precious blood the wine."

With humble trust and faithful to our Lord this is the truth we proclaim and we believe.

For St. Thomas Aquinas, the Eucharistic sacrament is the greatest of all the sacraments, as it is the only Sacrament where the consecration of matter (bread and wine) consists in a miraculous conversion to substance (body and blood), which God alone can accomplish. This transubstantiation takes place when the priest at Consecration pronounces the words "this is My Body" and "this is My Blood".

St. Justin Martyr who laid out in the Second Century one of the earliest descriptions of the Mass said this bread and this wine, this food is called among us the Eucharist, in which none can partake but the people who believe the truth of our teachings, and who have been cleansed with the remission of sins, and who live as Christ has commanded.

We are not perfect. We are not always able to live as Christ Himself ordained. We are sinners. But even if we have sinned, Jesus always forgives. Every time we approach the Eucharist, we invoke Him: "Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." This is an admission of our weaknesses and of our imperfections. And the merciful Lord in the Eucharist comes to meet us in communion with Him, He snatches us away from our selfishness, and He offers us His forgiveness and His grace. At every Mass, in the Eucharist, the Lord's sacrifice and covenant with us is always reaffirmed and renewed.

The Second Vatican Council affirmed that the Eucharist is the source and apex of all Christian life, the center of the whole life of the Church. The Eucharist does not replace the other sacraments, but all the other sacraments and all the works of the Church have a close relationship with the Eucharist and are considered as preparation for the Eucharist. Pope Francis considers the Eucharist "the source of the very life of the Church. It is from the Eucharist that every authentic journey of faith, communion, and witness springs."

The upcoming Eucharist Congress, which will be an authentic journey of faith, communion and witness, has chosen the Blessed young Carlo Acutis, the "influencer" of the Eucharist, as a patron of inspiration for the Eucharistic revival. At an early age, Carlo made a radical choice by centering his young life on the Eucharist. Carlo was a young disciple, a young apostle who poured out his immense love for the Lord in concrete gestures of charity in favor of the neediest, which also involved his schoolmates and friends.

An avid internet user, Carlo was convinced that the worldwide-web could be a significant and important channel to spread the Gospel in a new way. Through the use of the internet, Blessed Carlo brought Jesus to his peers. The two cornerstones of his life were love for the Virgin Mary and love for the daily Eucharist. Famous were his words which were a compendium of his "modus vivendi": "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven" and "We go straight to Heaven if we approach the Eucharist every day."

A young Christian, a child of our times, a normal boy, attracted by modern means of communication, Blessed Carlo suggests a road to

take, the same one he has followed with faith, trust and charity towards his neighbors.

According to our possibilities, but with extreme dedication, we can make these simple but demanding words pronounced by Blessed Carlo Acutis our own too, and follow in his footsteps.

We too can become apostles within our community, whether small or large. We can share the message of the Eucharist. We can bear witness to the values we believe in, even at the cost of facing misunderstandings and obstacles. They are small steps to touch the hearts of the people we meet and bring them closer to God.

Prayer and mission were the cornerstones of young Carlo's life, of this young apostle who with his immense faith gave us lifeblood, courage and constancy to continue in our journey of faith.

*This reflection was written by Frá Nicola Tegoni, Regent of the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes. Frá Nicola can be reached at [regent.subpriory.oll@gmail.com](mailto:regent.subpriory.oll@gmail.com). For more information on the 2024 Eucharistic Congress to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from July 17-21, 2024, go to [www.eucharisticcongress.org](http://www.eucharisticcongress.org).*





Lujaris del Carmen Báez Fernández, a 33-year-old Venezuelan immigrant, who belongs to the indigenous Wayuu community. Lujaris and her son Jose, in their home.

## Searching For a Better Future: *Lujaris del Carmen Báez Fernández*

**R**iohacha, La Guajira, Colombia — Comunidad El Pasito is located in the outskirts of Riohacha, Colombia. It is considered remote because of a lack of direct access to proper roads, that often get flooded. This community is mainly composed of Venezuelan immigrants who have just arrived or are in the process of settling into neighborhoods that they can barely afford.

The heat is always sweltering and there is rarely a passing, cooling breeze. The light brown dirt roads encompass the trajectory and lead up to each individual house. There are different types

of homes in this community. Some are made of wooden planks, others of aluminum roof sheets, or clay, or plastic nylon sheets. There are fences built to differentiate between each other's properties, and curious children peer through them as we pass, alongside the clucking chickens and lean-looking mutts scurrying around. People are always looking up with hope in their eyes.

One member of this community is Lujaris del Carmen Báez Fernández, a 33-year-old Venezuelan immigrant, who belongs to the indigenous Wayuu community from Maracaibo. She is 22 weeks pregnant with her second child. We first see her sitting on a plastic chair

waiting for our arrival. She is wearing a long, brightly colored, floral, loose-fitting gown. She greets us, but otherwise listens quietly as the nutritionist tells us about her experience treating Lujaris.

Living in El Pasito makes getting standard medical care for her child, and herself, sometimes impossible. Maltaser International Americas has made it easier for her to get the access she needs through laboratory exams, immunizations, obstetrics, and gynecology, as well as nutritional support. MI Americas programs have brought access to vulnerable groups impacted by crisis, migration, and malnutrition, including a large segment of refugees from Venezuela. Primary healthcare services provided include medical consultations, prenatal checks, psychological and psychiatric consultations, nutrition services, and the provision of medical supplies and medication.



Lujaris is a resilient woman that has faced many challenges. When she lived in Maracaibo, she knew that with her first son, Jose, on the way, she wouldn't be able to make ends meet. Life was too expensive, and the pressure she had was also affecting her health, leading to being underweight during her pregnancy. She faced this uncertainty with her husband, and they both decided the best thing for them, and their unborn child was to leave Venezuela. Lujaris, like many other Venezuelan immigrants facing instability in their home country, have fled due to lack of opportunities and no other choices. She raised 20,000 pesos (\$20 USD), while back in Venezuela cleaning houses, to pay the fee to cross the border.

With a heavy heart, having to leave family and friends behind, they made their way to Riohacha, Colombia. She was 6 months into her first pregnancy when she was able to contact Malteser International Americas. Thanks to this effort, she was able to get help with medical and psychological care, and at

this point was able to gain adequate nutrition, proper pre-natal control, which led to a weight gain of over 4 kilos. During pregnancy, nutrition vulnerability is at its greatest, with a healthy diet critical to ensure the well-being of both mother and child.

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MI Americas programs have brought access to vulnerable groups impacted by crisis, migration, and malnutrition, including a large segment of refugees from Venezuela.

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During our visit with Lujaris, she proudly takes us to her house, a single-story room made with stacked layers of clay, large wooden sticks, and the roof sheets held together by car tires. The

heat is stronger once we step inside the one-room she calls home. Inside, her young toddler son is placidly sleeping on top of a deep blue hammock. He is only wearing a diaper and sleeps peacefully even though he is covered in sweat. Her son, José Epiayu, now one year and a half old, has also benefitted from Malteser International Americas nutritional support program. He was malnourished but has come out of it and is in a much better place, the nutritionist and Lujaris confirm.

Lujaris is hopeful and confident that the future will be better. She has more support than she had in her home country and is taking active steps to improve both her health and her children's. With Malteser International Americas support, as well as Lujaris openness to receiving care, Lujaris and her children will have a brighter future. Services like the ones provided by Malteser International Americas to Lujaris, can be completely life-changing for mothers and their young children. ■





## Statistics Tell the Stories, But Not the Dreams

Located in the heart of dusty and noisy downtown Bethlehem, Holy Family Hospital's staff warmly greet each patient. Everyone has a friend or relative who has worked for the Hospital. Seventy percent of the babies of greater Bethlehem were born at the Hospital. It is a community touchstone welcoming all in need without regard to creed.

There is something special about our Hospital; the statistics and medical outcomes tell an impressive story of care delivered with a limited budget. Last year the Hospital provided over 150,000 services, delivering over 4,600 babies, and caring for more than 470 sick and premature newborns, including 42 born before 32 weeks. It also offered care to Bedouin communities and villagers living in isolated communities. This care was delivered for only \$5,000,000. Over 200 families count on our high-quality employment. In short, the Hospital is a blessing for the whole community, not just the patients who come for care.



The statistics are impressive, but they don't tell the whole story. In January, the 100,000th baby was born on the Feast of the Epiphany. A beautiful, healthy baby boy joined his family, a young couple just beginning their family. To us, it was our 100,000th, but to them it was the child they began to dream about soon after marriage. It was the baby boy who made his mother a mom and his father a dad. He was the answer to their prayers.

Recently I met a young couple in the NICU with a very premature baby needing lifesaving cardiac surgery. Their first child arrived early, not ready to be born. As soon as he was delivered, Dr. George began arranging for his surgery and transfer to a hospital in Jerusalem with a cardiologist. Once stabilized, they would transfer him for surgery and bring him back to Holy Family Hospital to convalesce. In most countries such a transfer is simple. In Bethlehem it is complicated. The baby would need official documents to cross the checkpoint. He would also need two coordinated ambulances- one to bring him to the checkpoint in Bethlehem and the other to pick him up from the Israeli side. A doctor from Holy Family Hospital would have to wheel him across in a portable incubator equipped with oxygen, his ventilator, and a clean closed environment. Later the Hospital would need to arrange for the return of the transfer incubator, praying that another baby would not need it before its return.

The statistics marked this event as a preterm delivery with complications and NICU admission with a transfer to Jerusalem. The reality was more complicated. The transfer required multiple phone calls, waiting for answers, governmental signatures, and approvals



on both sides all while trying to stabilize the baby. The social worker counseled the young couple and assured them that the Neediest Baby Fund would cover the transfer which they could never afford. The staff consoled the young couple as the ambulance sped away in the night with their first born. Meanwhile three more babies were born, and one was admitted to the NICU.

On average, 13 babies are born at the Hospital daily and a little more than one of these will need NICU care. Last week, 5 babies weighing less than 2 pounds each were admitted to the NICU within hours of each other. The staff must always be prepared for the busiest and most complicated shifts. They must also always remember that the last baby of their shift may be the very first for a couple that has been waiting for years for a baby. Each baby has a story, and every family has a dream.

It is the intangibles and the unquantifiable that count at Holy Family Hospital. The baby clothes gifted to new mothers who have none, the groceries and blankets packed for distribution for poor villagers and Bedouins, the home deliveries of milk and bread in the snow and the free prenatal vitamins are not in the statistics. But it is these gestures which bind the community to the Hospital. The value of five years of residency is not quantifiable as it is hard to calculate how many lives a resident doctor once graduated will go on to save or improve. A newly trained midwife will deliver thousands of babies over her career. She will likely remember the first one and some memorable others, but each mom will always remember the details of her own deliveries and the kindness and compassion of the midwives and doctors. The details



of the care and the deliveries become the stories of promise and hope. The walls of the Hospital become the holders of the dreams for the futures of the 100,000 babies born just 1,500 steps from the manger.

For Holy Family Hospital Foundation, the stories and the statistics are important. They reflect our commitment to be excellent stewards of the generosity of our donors. To know that the services sponsored by our \$3,075,000 fundraising budget include more than 4,600 births, over 470 NICU admissions and thousands cared for by the Mobile Medical Clinic tells us that every donated dollar is well spent. Hearing the stories of the 220 nurses and midwives trained and launched at our Hospital annually assures us that future generations of mothers and babies will be cared for because of donations supporting training today. Knowing that thanks to our donors, every medical decision affecting a mother or baby is based on best practices and not cost, assures us that we are offering the best care for the mothers and babies of Bethlehem. Every gift at Holy Family Hospital Foundation is treasured and well spent in furthering our mission of delivering life, peace, and hope. Come visit and see the hope for yourself.

Blessings and prayers from Bethlehem,

Ambassador Michele B. Bowe, GCM  
President





Guests and volunteers dress up in team colors and show off their team flags

## You Are The Light Of The World — 2023 Malta Camp USA

This summer the Order of Malta hosted its second annual Malta Camp USA, a free, week-long summer camp for young adults with physical and intellectual disabilities. Held at Siena College in Albany, NY from July 9-13, Malta Camp USA is an Auxiliary and young Knight and Dame-led effort that builds on a 40-year tradition of Malta Camp programs in Europe. Our focus is on building community among those with and without disabilities — recognizing the innate value and dignity of each participant. Targeting the 22-40 age demographic, Malta Camp USA serves a population who has recently aged out of social services offered through schools and often faces social isolation as their peers matriculate to college and beyond.

This year's camp represents an exciting growth milestone for the program, with participation from all three US-based Order of Malta Associations (American, Federal, and Western). Further, the program was planned and executed by a dedicated team of ~20 individuals, including Auxiliary, young Knights and Dames, and volunteers from across the country, under the guidance of a

Steering Committee of American Association leaders. With 23 Guests, 35 full-time volunteers, and 10 part-time volunteers (a rough doubling of last year's size), Malta Camp 2023 was filled with laughs, smiles, and lots of spontaneous dance parties!

This year's Guest roster included 10 returning Guests (out of the 11 who attended last year) and 13 new Guests. Volunteers, about a third of which returned from last year's camp, fell into two groups — Helpers, individuals in the same age demographic as Guests who were paired 1:1 to support them throughout the week; and Staff, an age-agnostic group of both medical and non-medical specialists who supported specific needs throughout the week (e.g., media, logistics, medical team).

Our growing size prompted us to take a cue from the Lourdes Pilgrimage — this year Malta Camp USA implemented color teams to make the size of our larger program more approachable to new participants. Each color team took bus rides together, ate meals together, and competed for bragging rights at events like Field Day and a Scavenger Hunt. Further, each team color corresponded to a Saint of the Day (e.g., Team Yellow had St. Lucy), and was responsible







L > R: John Craig, Guest, Tom Leverso, KM, Elena Collins, Guest, Jean Maloy, DM, Katie Martinez, AUX, and Dr. Pat Broderick, MD, KM enjoy whitewater rafting at the Adirondack Adventure Center



Guest Angel Guerrero (left) and Western Association Auxiliary member Renee Sandoval light a candle in the Siena College grotto at the Silent Night prayer service



Camp Director, Mary Delaney, AUX, greets Guests Chris and Tom Hogan



Guests Chris Hogan (left) and Sean Furlong pose for a picture while visiting animals at June Farms



Guest Kimber Marchesi faces her fears while tackling a tree-top ropes course at the Adirondack Adventure Center

for leading mealtime prayers and sharing information about their Saint with all campers on their assigned day at camp.

Themed “You are the Light of the World”, based on Matthew 5:14, our spiritual programming centered on Jesus as a source of light and hope for everyone, and a call to all participants to share God’s light with all they encounter. This theme was brought to life through our camp prayer, said daily at meals, a candlelight procession and vespers Taize service, and our new Saint of the Day initiative, among other moments shared throughout camp. At our Closing Mass, Bishop Scharfenberger called us to be a beacon on Christ’s light to all those we encounter.

Beyond our spiritual program, our packed agenda included whitewater rafting, pottery painting, bowling, and a visit to a local farm, giving participants an opportunity to try new things and test their limits.

In addition to creating long-lasting memories and supporting new friendships, our adventurous activities help many participants build a sense of independence and self-confidence that can last well-beyond the week of camp. While no one could agree on their favorite activity, one camper said it best — “I was scared to try something new, but I pushed through and now I’m so proud of myself!”

At our annual Talent Show, we had Guest’s showcase their skills in

singing, dancing, magic, karate, and more! As one of our Guests said, “I was so scared to perform, but the cheers from the crowd made me so happy.” Each participant at Malta Camp USA brings their unique abilities, personality, and, above all, love to our week at camp. If you haven’t seen it yet, one of our most articulate Guests shared her reflection on what Malta Camp means to her in our final daily update, available on the American Association website. A particularly meaningful quote from her speech was:

“In a world where my uniqueness and need for support is often met with misunderstandings, Camp is not just a place but a family where I am embraced by everyone in all that happens — good or hard. It feels like a warm hug and a belly laugh every day, because we laugh a lot every day here. The support I and others have received this week for various reasons — our care was filled with the biggest amount of loyalty, love, loving, compassionate, care, kind, joyful, thoughtful, and caring support. In the moments when I’ve had some hard times, it makes me want to cry thinking about how everyone here at Camp showed up and kept showing up to be the hands and feet of Jesus, no matter what.”

*(continued on page 26)*

## HIGHLIGHTS

In building our Malta Camp USA community as a year-round “family”, we see our week at camp as the keystone event that grows and re-energizes a lifelong community of current and past Guests and volunteers. Kept alive through quarterly virtual events, occasional cards, and near-daily texts, we are a chosen family — 60+ people who love each other unconditionally, quirks and all.

In order to offer Malta Camp USA free of charge to all participants, we rely on donations from individuals and organizations. The Malta Camp USA team would like to extend a special thank you to the White Cross Ball Committee, Albany Area Chairs, Peter and Jean Maloy, Albany Area membership and friends, the American Association, and the Western Association for their significant contributions that made this year’s program possible!

We are very excited to see the Malta Camp program mature here in the United States, and aspire to see the program continue to grow, potentially moving to different cities across the country and including participants from across the Americas.

*If you are interested in hosting a future Malta Camp USA in your Area, or know of any young people who might be interested in helping plan or volunteer at Malta Camp USA, please reach out to Mary Delaney, AUX at [info@maltacampusa.org](mailto:info@maltacampusa.org). Go to [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/2023maltacampusa](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/2023maltacampusa) to view the Malta Camp USA video.*

### Malta Camp Prayer

*God our Savior, in You we have  
been born again as sons and  
daughters of the light.*

*You invite us to follow You and  
become a light for others in  
the world.*

*May we be Your witnesses to  
those we meet of Your love and  
joy, for You are the light of life.*

*Through Christ our Lord,  
Amen*



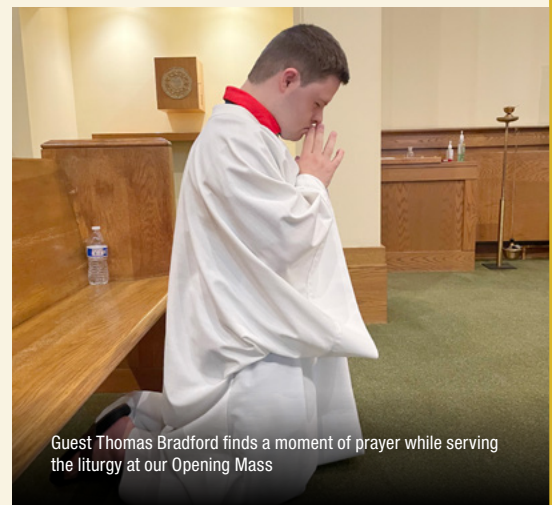
Guest Jack Piscitell performs a song during the Malta Camp talent show



Participants in Malta Camp USA 2023 pose for a group photo in front of the New York State Capitol building



Guests and volunteers enjoy a dance party during the final night at camp. Back row (left to right) - John Schweshka, KM, Gibran Espinoza, KM, Erin O' Kane, VOL, Elena Collins, Guest, Kristen Andree, AUX, Christopher Lee, KM, Kristi Nemes, Guest, Lauren Cook, Guest, Steven Hardy, KM. Front row (left to right) - Antonio Collaruso, Guest, Dana Kolderup, Guest, Nicole Weigers, Guest, Sofia Bruno, VOL



Guest Thomas Bradford finds a moment of prayer while serving the liturgy at our Opening Mass



# 2023 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

## October 13

Feast of Blessed Gerard

## November 1

All Saints' Day

## November 9-11

Investiture Weekend — *All Events in NYC\**

## November 9

### New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting,  
New Member Orientation, Area Leadership  
Meeting, Chaplain Meeting

## November 10

### New York City

Annual Meeting, Solemn Mass of  
Investiture, Annual Dinner

## November 11

### New York City

Mass for Malades, Malades in Spirit,  
and Deceased Members,  
Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem  
Foundation Brunch, 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

Pilgrimage for Life, Washington, DC

## January 25, 2024

### New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting

## February 16-18, 2024

### Lutz, FL

Spring Retreat

*\*See the Order of Events for all Investiture-related Activities*

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/) or see the Sunday issues of the Spirituality in Action email for more information regarding upcoming events.

## ■ IN MEMORIAM

### Deceased Members: January 1 – September 11, 2023

Camille H. Aubuchon, DM	Fitchburg, MA	Andrew J. McKenna, KM	Chicago, IL
Patricia S. Bick, DM	Saint Louis, MO	Raymond J. Mccrory, KM	Garden City, NY
Patrick J. Carroll, KM	Birmingham, MI	Virginia Hyde Moriarty, DM	Morristown, NJ
Alfonse A. Cinotti, MD, KM	Naples, FL	James J. O'Connor, KM	Chicago, IL
Lily T. Duggan, DM	Town and Country, MO	Ricardo Pines, KM	Coral Gables, FL
David C. Farrell, KM	Saint Louis, MO	William F. Plunkett Jr, Esq, KM	Stuart, FL
Mary White Ferrick, DM	Saint Louis, MO	Joseph H. Price, KM	Naples, FL
Joseph F. Finn, Jr, KM	Wellesley Hills, MA	Thomas W. Reedy, KM	Northfield, IL
Hans E. Geisler MD, KM	Indianapolis, IN	Michael P. Ricatto, KM	Kew Gardens, NY
Mary Grace Guyol, DM	Saint Louis, MO	Colette Roe, DM	Shelter Island Heights, NY
Richard J. Haffner, DDS, KM	Saint Louis, MO	Owen Telfair Smith, KM	Roslyn Harbor, NY
Cornelia A. Kelley, DM	Jamaica Plain, MA	Anthony E. Wallace, KM	Wayland, MA
William J. Koenig, KMOB	Switzerland, FL	John H. Van Kooten, KM	Palm Coast, FL
Patricia Crane Lynch, DM	Edwards, CO	John G. Wilmsen, KM	Saint Louis, MO
John H. Mackinnon, KM	Hingham, MA		





lenges. Responding to faith by serving others was deeply ingrained in the Maynard family fabric.

Tim's mother, Velma Maynard, was a Dame of the Order of Malta and his father a permanent deacon at Saint Mary's in Crompton where he grew up. "We were taught to be stewards of the gifts God gave us. My seven siblings and I all have different talents," he says. "By looking at their individual lives, I can see how they each have tried to use those gifts for the Glory of God." Tim's gift may be a desire to keep learning, teach, and serve.

When Tim retired from the United States Navy working as Commander, he began teaching creative writing in prisons. Education is also in Maynard's bloodline and he holds various degrees including a Masters in Science from John Hopkins and a Masters of Arts in National Security and Strategy from the U.S. Naval War College. He also earned a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from American College Dublin and a Doctor of Education from Johnson & Wales.

Collette, Tim's wife and Dame of the Order of Malta, may be credited for supporting his education and dedication to the demanding role of a prison Chaplain. "Love is Tim's driving force and I am very proud of him. One of my functions is to protect him from overcommitting and overworking. He tends to overdo it," Collette's voice contains a discernible smile. "Sometimes the men inside only need for someone to listen. It takes a lot of love to continue to do this; hour by hour, day after day, year for year."

Tim credits a certain kind of grace for the power to step up and serve. Inmates in segregation are kept apart from the general population due to disciplinary issues and these visits are often the most challenging. "I can see an individual through a very narrow window; I can hear him through a crack behind a locked door," he describes an impossible situation for engaging in an open dialogue. "The grace of God helps me to listen in these conditions, to follow this person in conversation who so badly needs to talk. To listen without judgement, and then, to bless."

This act of listening can lead to a moment of peace and sense of safety. If Tim can impart that faith is the solution for something that these men can rely on in a system that is daunting and fearful — Tim feels he may have succeeded. Many personal freedoms do not exist in prison and this new trust in a higher power is something that cannot be taken away.

Teaching inmates about mercy is another important responsibility in Tim's job. Many feel as though they did not receive mercy from their own families, lawyers, judges, and correctional officers. He asks them to focus on the Gloria Prayer during their time together each week as a congregation:

*You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.*

Tim reminds that while humans may often find it dif-

## “Now They Are the Gentlest of Men”

### *A Discussion about Service with Timothy Maynard, KM*

When first meeting inmates through a small window inside of a steel door, Timothy Maynard asks if they can pray together. On average one in two of these men know a prayer by heart. Tim is the Chaplain at two Adult Correctional Institutions in Rhode Island. He administers to the religious needs of approximately 1000 inmates serving various lengths of sentences. The men living inside call him “Chaplain Timothy.”

Timothy Maynard has been volunteering in the state's Department of Corrections' prison ministry for the last four years. This past April he also became the ACI's Catholic Chaplaincy Coordinator and recently joined Order of Malta, American Association's Prison Ministry Committee. Due to the drudgery and routine of prison life, Tim discloses how most days involve painfully slow reckonings. Many of these men are also plagued with deep and complex spiritual chal-



difficult to give mercy; God finds giving mercy a delight.

Priests, deacons, and volunteers participate in the prison's scheduled ministries. In the Catholic services, two priests, one deacon, and six additional volunteers assist in conducting Mass, prayer groups and Bible studies. Two Knights from the Boston Area in Rhode Island, Rick Smith and Bob Sirhal, are among the volunteers. Tim sees how the effect of a volunteer's kind gesture — whether supplying Communion, providing a Daily Reader, or listening — can change how an inmate feels. Gratitude, he says, is an extremely powerful and life affirming emotion.

Only ten percent of the prison population currently participate in Catholic Mass every Sunday primarily due to prison logistics, but Tim is seeing an increase after the pandemic's restrictions begin to ease. Liturgies of the Word with Holy Communion is part of their ritual, and many men volunteer to be readers. Much to Tim's amazement, he is encouraged by enthusiasm and participation during a capella singing.

While the literacy rate is high in prison, Tim realizes often that the Bible can often appear overwhelming. "We hand out Bibles, and sometimes it seems difficult for many to read and comprehend," says Tim. "Guiding men by showing the comforting passages or more creative places to read and experience the Word, in lyrics for example, is very important." Tim takes the love of singing and chooses the "Prayer of St. Francis" as a song for a capella chorus. Together they may also sing the Catholic hymn written by Bob Dufford, "Be Not Afraid." Dufford's song lyrics resonate and contain the message:

*And blessed are your poor for the kingdom shall be theirs  
Blest are you that weep and mourn for one day you shall laugh  
And if wicked men insult and hate you all because of Me  
Blessed, blessed are you  
Be not afraid. I go before you always  
Come, follow Me and I will give you rest.*

After the service, most men will take with them a Daily Companion reader. Tim's office is filled with spiritual books, Bibles and pamphlets that he gives out with his hand truck. He also collects cards from local parishes and gives them to inmates to write their families at Christmas or for their family members' birthdays. Through these demonstrations, trust can begin.

Tim is starting to focus on the Psalms. He is dedicating to teaching about Psalm 34.

*"I will bless the Lord at all times...  
I sought the Lord and he answered me, delivered me  
from all my fears..."*

It is amazing how this verse can hold them spell bound. Some men truly believe, Tim states plainly, that no rehabilitation is possible. Yet they don't realize that they have found a channel of peace through the Lord. They will admit they

entered with an attitude of violence but now are the gentlest of men.

When asked how others can help, Tim answers that he doesn't need more books or pamphlets. "It seems like I am able to manage," he says. "More than anything, I think these men need prayers." A man of action, he started a new program called "Just Prayers." It began by asking a few friends and family to pray for a segregated inmate named Emmanuel who asked for prayers. These folks began praying for him and afterwards Emmanuel received a card back to tell him that he was being prayed for. The Diocese of Providence approved the program and now the American Association Prison Ministry Committee will participate, too. A list of inmates asking for prayers is beginning to grow. A variety of prayer groups, parishes and individuals are stepping up to participate.

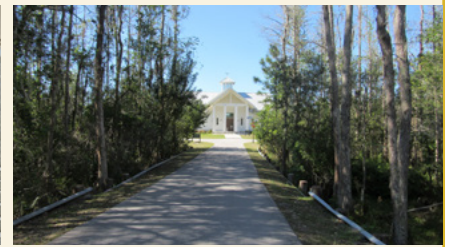
Prisoners, Tim believes, most of all, must not be led to believe they are forgotten. ■

*For more information on Prison Ministry, go to the American Association website at [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/prison/overview/](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/prison/overview/) or contact your Area Chair.*

*If your parish and/or prayer group wishes to participate in a prison ministry prayer program or wishes to start one, please contact Maryjo Kriz, co-chairperson of the American Association Prison Ministry Committee at [maryjokriz@icloud.com](mailto:maryjokriz@icloud.com).*



## What's Coming Up for the American Association?



As you may have noticed, we are fully back into the swing of things with several upcoming events for the American Association. We hope you plan to join us for some, or all, of our hallmark events during the fall and winter seasons.

We started out strong with our Fall Retreat at the New England Retreat Center at Betania II in Medway, Massachusetts. This year's retreat was led by Rev. Ian Jeremiah, ChM. Fr. Jeremiah was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Bridgeport in 2008 and has been a chaplain in the American Association since 2014. He had his seminary training at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. He is currently a Magistral Chaplain in the Connecticut — Southern, Western, & Northern Area and serves as Pastor of St. Ann Parish in Bridgeport, CT. Fr. Jeremiah led close to 50 Knights, Dames, Candidates, and Associates through this long-weekend retreat with the theme, "Our End: A Relationship with God. Our Means: Prayer."

Up next on the calendar is the always-anticipated Investiture Weekend. Taking place in New York City from Wednesday, November 8th through Saturday, November 11th, members from all Areas, and beyond, will join us for this 4-day affair culminating in the Solemn Mass of Investiture for the Class of 2023. Activities will include meetings for Area Leaders, the Board of Councillors, Spirituality, new Chaplains, new members, and all members.

Those in attendance are also invited to attend Mass for the Blessing of the Robes and Capes and Installation of Deputy Chaplains, Mass for the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes, Mass for the Intentions of Living and Deceased Malades and Deceased Members, and the Solemn Mass of Investiture. Other activities include the New Member Reception, the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation Brunch, and our signature event, the 95th Annual Reception and Dinner, with special guest speaker, the Most Rev. Allen H. Vigneron, ChC, Archbishop of Detroit.

The Investiture Weekend is packed with events that will inform you of the Order and Association's current events, provide you with opportunities to reconnect with members and make new connections, and, of course, enrich your spirituality by attending Masses alongside members of the Order from across the country, and even the world. If you have not already registered for this

event, please consider joining us in support of the incoming class of new members and the Order of Malta, American Association.

After the Investiture Weekend, we will take a break to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas with our loved ones before reuniting in the new year for the 2024 Pilgrimage for Life on January 18th–19th in Washington, D.C. Led by Pilgrimage Chairs Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky, KM, and Dr. Robert A. Graebe, KM, and Nancy Graebe, DM, members gather together in community and in prayer to support the sanctity of life.

Pilgrims start this pilgrimage with reflection and prayer with the Sisters of Life and a shared meal. Volunteer members then serve as the ushers for persons with disabilities at the Vigil Mass for Life at The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. Our pilgrimage participants come together afterward for an evening of food and fellowship. On the morning of the official March for Life, we attend Mass at a local church before joining the march. We stop across from the Supreme Court and pray the rosary. After the march, a meal is offered to participants and guests.

We ask that you please consider joining us for this American Association Pilgrimage that provides us with the opportunity to give witness to the faith in support of life.

The winter season wraps up with the Winter Retreat at the Bethany Retreat Center in Lutz, Florida on February 16th–18th. Members will receive an invitation later this year to register for the first retreat of 2024. The Most Rev. Edmund Whalen, ChC, will lead attendees through a weekend of spiritual enrichment, allowing you to grow your faith alongside fellow members of the Order. We have hosted many Association Retreats at the Bethany Retreat Center over the years, as it provides a beautiful setting for personal reflection and a place to "warm up" during the cold winter months. Stay tuned for registration details.

While the 2024 Lourdes Pilgrimage does not occur during the Fall and Winter time period, registration, Malade sponsorship, and significant planning does. Be on the lookout for the announcement material and be sure to register as soon as possible. Expectations are high for a great turnout.

*If you are interested in attending any of our upcoming events, please visit our website at [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org) or call our NY Office at (212) 371-1522.*



## ■ HIGHLIGHTS

*(continued from back cover)*

and provide even greater assistance to those in need. Matching gift programs generally have a cap on how much of a donor's gift will be matched. Those programs usually have an annual maximum as well.

### HOW MATCHING GIFTS WORK

The process to obtain a matching gift is usually straightforward. Before you make a donation to a qualifying organization, check with your employer to see if they have a matching gift program. If they do, get the information and understand any requirements your employer may have. Normally, you will be required to fill out a form provided by your employer indicating your donation details. Once verified, your employer's matching gift program will contribute the same amount or a predetermined ratio to the same organization as your original donation. It's a relatively simple way to increase the impact of your giving without any additional financial burden on your part.

### WHY COMPANIES OFFER MATCHING GIFTS

Matching gift programs reflect a company's commitment to philanthropy and community engagement. By supporting the causes that their employees care about, companies strengthen their connection with the community and create a culture of giving. These programs also encourage employee involvement in charitable activities, fostering a sense of pride and purpose within the workforce.

### HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Participating in matching gift programs is a simple but highly effective way to magnify your support. Here are the steps to consider:

- **Check Eligibility:** Inquire with your employer's human resources department about their matching gift program and the process to apply.

- Make your contribution to a qualifying organization such as the American Association.
- **Apply for Matching:** Complete the necessary paperwork provided by your employer. This may involve filling out an online form or submitting a physical application.
- Once your donation is verified, your employer will contribute a matching gift to the designated organization where you made your donation. Some organizations may provide the matching gift immediately while others may make the matching contribution at a specific time each year (such as at year end).

### BEYOND DOUBLING DOLLARS: AMPLIFYING IMPACT

Matching gifts are not solely about financial multiplication; they symbolize a collective effort, a shared commitment to our mission. They are a demonstration of unity among our members, working together to create lasting change in the lives of those who rely on our support.

As we continue our journey of service to the sick and the poor, consider the impact a matching gift can have on your generosity. By leveraging this simple yet impactful approach, you can amplify your gift and extend support to even more individuals in need.

"Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness." 2 Corinthians 9:10

Together, through your generosity and the support of your company's matching gift program, you have the opportunity to make a greater impact as you create a legacy of care, compassion, and transformation.

Thank you for being a part of this remarkable journey.

*This article was submitted by Father David Sellery, the American Association's Director of Development and Member Engagement. Contact him at [dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org](mailto:dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org)*



Another way to make a significant gift without current financial impact is through a planned gift. For more information about Planned Giving, contact Father David Sellery at [dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org](mailto:dsellery@orderofmaltaamerican.org)

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Abundant Harvest: The Power of Matching Gifts



Father David Sellery and Gail and Joseph Berardino

While there may be no such thing as free money, there is a program that many employers offer that comes close. The matching gifts program can significantly increase the value and impact of your generosity by your simply completing and submitting a form to your employer.

In our ongoing journey to make a tangible impact on the lives of the sick and the poor, we are reminded of the immense power of generosity. We are also aware that their needs are virtually limitless. Each contribution, regardless of size, is vital in supporting our mission. Today, we delve into a topic that magnifies the potential of your generosity — the impact of a matching gifts program.

#### THE MAGIC OF MATCHING GIFTS: DOUBLING THE IMPACT

Matching gifts, often called “double your donation” programs, are a remarkable way to amplify the impact of individual contributions. The concept is simple yet profoundly effective. When a donor gives to a nonprofit organization, such as the Order of Malta, American Association, their employer — and sometimes even their spouse’s employer — matches that gift with an equal or larger amount.

Imagine the potential — your \$500 donation transforms into \$1,000; your \$1,000 gift becomes \$2,000. These matching programs create a ripple effect of giving, stretching the reach of every dollar and allowing us to expand our initiatives, reach more beneficiaries, *(continued on page 31)*

### 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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*Photos for this issue have been graciously provided from a variety of sources including Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation, Malteser International Americas, Studio Eleven, Lacaze Photos, Peter Scudner, and others.*

#### 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.

You can also email [mail@orderofmaltaamerican.org](mailto:mail@orderofmaltaamerican.org) or call our office at (212) 371-1522 with your contact information updates.