



Order of Malta American Association Missouri Area NEWSLETTER May, 2024

Chaplain's Column

Spiritual Resources

In writing articles for the Malta Newsletter over the years, I have covered many different topics, e.g., the Blessed Mother, St. John the Baptist, ministry to the poor and the sick, liturgy, evangelization, defense of the faith, and more. One area I have not addressed is the importance of spiritual reading, in particular, the many resources in spiritual reading which our Order provides for us.

Some of these are: Malta Meditations; Many Ways to Pray—a Resource Book for the Order of Malta; Malta Meditations; Spirituality and Formation of Members; Minutes with the Catechism. These books provide support for our growth in the spiritual life. Ultimately, the spiritual life is about growing closer to Jesus Christ in love, and in love of neighbor. In this journey of Christian love, though, we often need the thoughts, prayers, and advice of others. Saint Teresa of Jesus (Avila), one of the greatest mystics of the Church, wrote: “I passed more than fourteen years unable to meditate, except with the help of a book... With this help, I was able to collect my wandering thoughts, and the book acted like a bait to my soul. Often, I needed only to open the book; sometimes I read a little, at other times much, according to the favor

which the Lord showed me.” (*Way of Perfection*, 17)

In the Church’s long history of saints who themselves wrote down their thoughts and advice, just some of the classics we can cite are: *The Rule of St. Benedict*, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales, *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence, *The Autobiography of a Soul* by Ste. Therese of the Child Jesus (Lisieux). There are of course many more. It is also helpful simply to browse in a Catholic book store, like our own Catholic Supply of St. Louis.



Msgr. Vernon Gardin, Ch.M.

Our calling to be a Knight or Dame of Malta is based on our relationship to Jesus Christ, a calling which is nurtured by prayer, the Sacraments, and works of charity. Prayer is a means to be in touch with the love that comes from the Heart of

Christ. Spiritual reading helps our prayer life. As the saints have said in different ways, we use our intellect in reading to support our prayer life. They all agree, though, that the essence of prayer is intimate communing with God, in which love, not reasoning, predominates.

Area Chairs' Column

The transition to new leadership of several of our committees has run smoothly. Our Hospitallers, Larry Koesterer and Jonathan Klimpel, have been busy identifying new service opportunities. In January Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church issued an urgent appeal for men's shoes. The church has a homeless shelter and a soup kitchen. Larry Koesterer bought 53 pairs of shoes at thrift stores at a very reasonable price, and our Missouri Area donated them to the homeless. The 1st quarter service project which benefitted the Rural Parish Clinic was a success, with 48 members participating. The donated items were delivered via the Malta Mobile Ministry van. Rosati House meals continue to be donated by our generous members on the 3rd and 4th Saturdays of every month.

The St. Agnes Home Saturday morning monthly bingo was resurrected by our hospitallers. We thank Genie and John Wilhelm for their longstanding support of this ministry. Mike had the opportunity to serve on May 11. While this ministry may not seem as impactful as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, or saving a baby's life by supporting a pregnant woman with nowhere to live (all of which our Malta family does), cheering up and accompanying an elderly person who may be lonely is a great hands-on service opportunity.

With our Hospitallers we investigated opportunities for prison ministry with the Criminal Justice Ministry. The chair of our Women's Prison Ministry is Pat Hofmeister who is being helped by Joan Lipic, and the chair of our Men's Prison Ministry is Michael Weisbrod. Both ministries are in a state of flux, as is the Criminal Justice Ministry, but we expect good opportunities for all of us to serve in the near future.

Chris Winkelmann, our Membership Chair, has been in contact with several prospective new members. Please identify potential candidates for the Order of Malta and let Chris know.

We had a large contingent from our area attend the Lourdes pilgrimage: 12 Knights and Dames, 2 in the year of formation, and 1 volunteer. The experience was very moving, beautiful, and impactful, and hard to put into words.

Our next Mass and dinner are Tuesday June 25. If you did not receive an invitation let us know. The 10th National Eucharistic Congress

will take place in Indianapolis, IN from July 17 – July 21. We have 11 Knights and Dames who will attend. It is not too late to join us! Please let us know if you will attend this momentous event.

In Christ through Mary,

Mike and Helen



Mike & Helen McCadden at Lourdes



Serving the Sick and the Poor

Service Project

The Missouri Area's First Quarter Service Project assisted the Rural Parish Clinic, which service the sick and poor in the out-lying areas of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Area members of the Order were requested to make donations of personal hygiene supplies or make a donation via check to RPC. The personal hygiene items were those specifically requested by RPC leadership because their clients are often not able to afford such items or have difficulty shopping for such items and included soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, razors and shaving cream, dental floss, mouthwash, lotion and shampoo. The various items were separated and packed into individual kits, each mark with a Malta badge, so as to be ready for those who need them.

In the deciding how to use the funds donated by members, the area hospitallers decided to ask RPC leadership what they most need, assuming they would list more hygiene items that we might purchase. Our hospitallers were surprised and delighted when they responded with a list of needed medical supplies, and we were able to supply blood pressure cuffs, blood glucose monitors and strips, lancets and lancing tools and antihistamines. In addition to the personal hygiene and medical supplies, the Missouri Area also provided a \$1000 check to RPC for their use. The delivery was made to the Cardinal Rigali Center in St. Louis, where the RPC office is located. All found it inspiring to work with Sr. Mary Rachel, a physician and President of RPC, and Molly Judd, the RPC's Operations Director.



The Malta Mobile Van at the Rigali Center



Molly Judd of RPC and Kathy Gantz, D.M.



Hospitallers Jonathan Klimplel, K.M. and Larry Koesterer, K.M

Other Ways of Helping

During the last few months members of the Order of Malta in the Missouri Area have found many other ways to “to practice charity towards our neighbors, especially the poor and sick.” Our long-time support of a morning of bingo and fellowship at St. Agnes Home in Kirkwood has resumed. The monthly pizza dinners at Rosati House that members arrange on a rotating basis have continued. Several members recently joined confrères from the Order of St. John at the St. Vincent de Paul food bank at St. Pius V Catholic in the City of St. Louis, and others continue to bring the Holy Eucharist to patients at Mercy Hospital. Others continue efforts to support Malteser International, the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, and the prison ministry. Finally, Malta Mobil Ministry has continued regularly stocking a food bank and making runs as needed for other organizations, including a new partner: The St. Louis Crisis Nursery.



Mike McCadden, Genie & John Wilhelm, and Larry Koesterer at the St. Agnes Home



Randy Weber, K.M with our partners at the Ascension/St. Nicholas Food Bank



An MMM Van Load Delivered to the Food Pantry



An MMM Van Load on the way to Our Lady's inn

Malta Mobile Ministry

In the summer of 2020, our former Area Chairs, Greg and Kathy Gantz, were asked by the American Association to spearhead a pilot project to determine whether or not the Order of Malta Mobile Ministries begun several years before by the Western Association in California, could be successfully operated in the American Association. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2020, the St. Louis members of the Order of Malta gathered at the Church of the Immacolata to hear mass and see the area's new Malta Mobile Ministries van blessed by Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski. The van's first delivery was made the following week. Throughout the pandemic this new Ministry never failed to respond to any request received.

Because of the successful launch of the Mobile Ministry in St. Louis, the American Association began the same ministries in New Jersey and Michigan, and last year made the Mobile Ministry a permanent ministry of the Order in the American Association.

Here in St. Louis, the Malta Mobile Ministry has continued to serve our partners within the Archdiocese of St. Louis, with no request for service unmet in the first quarter of 2024. Using the Western Association model, our members, associates and auxiliaries of all ages and abilities have worked collaboratively to minister to the poor and sick across the Archdiocese of St. Louis, nearly 5,968 square miles. Highlights of the program for this quarter included:

- Transportation of roughly 12,000 pounds (6 tons) of fresh and frozen food from the St. Louis Area Foodbank which is in northwest St. Louis County in Bridgeton, Missouri, to a St. Vincent de Paul food pantry supporting 50 families near downtown St. Louis. Our availability to transport that food saves the food pantry \$200 per month in truck rental fees, which frees up funds the food pantry can direct to its primary purpose, buying additional food. At the same time, our ministry saved the food pantry volunteers a lot of time and inconvenience. Food pickups from the St. Louis Area Foodbank

are begun first thing in the morning, with our driver often waiting for the staff to open the doors. In order for our client food pantry to rent a truck for the same purpose, their volunteers would have to pick it up from the rental agency the day before, arrange overnight parking, and arrange to take it back to the rental agency after the delivery. The bed height of our van is ideal for forklift loading of palletized food at the St. Louis Area Foodbank, and the dual-door arrangement of the van—both rear and side—allows multiple volunteers to manually unload the van at the client food pantry. This quick access is important because they need to check the temperatures of frozen and refrigerated perishable foods immediately upon arrival to assure that no spoilage has occurred, and get that food into their refrigerators and freezers as quickly as possible.

- We have just begun cooperating with a new partner agency, St. Louis Crisis Nursery. We expect our services will be useful for this agency and we are pleased that it extends our service to the area's Hispanic community, which is one of the principal underserved groups that agency serves.



Randy Weber, K.M.

- We continue to use the van in support of the Order's quarterly area service projects. Our 1st quarter service project involved collecting donated items from our Missouri Area members and delivering them to the St. Louis Archdiocesan Rural Parish Clinic. The Rural Parish Clinic serves the working poor, those with jobs who cannot afford medical insurance and earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. Both medical and dental services are provided free of charge.

To date, we have served seven organizations: **Our Lady's Inn**, providing housing and support for pregnant women who have chosen life for their babies; **Marygrove**, a ministry of Catholic Charities offering residential and community-based programs to help children, teens and young adults learn how to transcend abuse or overcome other life challenges; the **Society of St. Vincent de Paul**, Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis; the **Criminal Justice Ministry of St. Louis**, a recipient of funding from the Annual Catholic Appeal and an affiliate of the

Archdiocese of St. Louis; the **St. Patrick's Center**, which is an agency of Catholic Charities of St. Louis that serves the poor and homeless; **Cardinal Ritter Senior Services**, an agency of Catholic Charities of St. Louis; and— through our service project—the **Rural Parish Clinic** of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

With three and a half years of service in this ministry, the participating members of our Order have gained a rich understanding of the needs of the Archdiocese and those we serve, and the ability of our Order to meet those needs. This past April for the first time in its history, the ministry lacked a sufficient number of available drivers to favorably respond to a request from St.

Vincent de Paul to assist with a program to make home deliveries of food to the needy. While our members responded in unprecedented fashion to the request in 2020 to fund the start-up of the ministry, in order to respond to further requests for assistance, we now need them to respond with their time. There is an old saying that “the most valuable thing you have to share with others is your time.” Please consider sharing a part of your time with the Malta Mobile Ministry.

—Michael J. Roth, KM

—William R. Weber, KM



Ken Craig Visits Missouri Area to Accept Award

On April 14 Ken Craig, President of the American Association, was in St. Louis to accept an award presented by Our Lady's Inn to the Order of Malta, in recognition of the many years of support the Order of Malta Missouri Area has provided.

Our Lady's Inn provides women in crisis pregnancies a place to live as they prepare for birth and the care for their infant. It also shelters and provides for the basic needs of any dependent children a pregnant mother may have. Proving that there are real alternatives to abortion, even for the neediest, OLI provides services that help women and children not just to deal with a crisis, but to lead flourishing lives. A woman and her children may reside at OLI for a year. For the next two years, she can count on the support of OLI caseworkers, whose goal is to ensure that every family it serves has safe and

stable housing and that every mother has the assistance she need to achieve her personal goal, whether that is securing employment or enrolling in further education.

Our Lady's Inn has been providing these services for 42 years and during that time more than 8,500 pregnant women in crisis plus their 10,000 children have found refuge, support, and hope in OLI homes. There are currently 2 OLI homes in the St. Louis area, and a third will be built soon.

The keynote speaker was the Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas. He is a staunch pro-life warrior and was elected chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life activities on November 14, 2017.

There were many Knights and Dames of Malta present at this "Angel Gala" dinner, and over \$80,000 in donations were made.



Mike & Helen McCadden with Ken Craig



Arch Bishop Naumann



Peggy Forrest, D.M., CEO of Our Lady's Inn

“Come and See”

We have asked Michael Weisbrod, who is in his year of preparation and will be invested this fall, to give his impressions of the Order of Malta's Pilgrimage to Lourdes, from which he recently returned. An unprecedented number of members from the Missouri Area took part in the pilgrimage this year.

The theme for the 2024 Order of Malta Malade trip to Lourdes was “Come and See.” As a first-time pilgrim, I must admit that there were no truer words spoken. Speaking of words, I know I am not able to justify the trip in a single paragraph, as there were so many amazing aspects which deserve recounting. The whole experience was so much for me to absorb that I spent a significant amount of time in tears to our Holy Mother and her Son for all the graces they have bestowed upon all of us!

The lead up to the trip was extremely well thought out, both at the national level and the local level. The communication from our New York office made it easy to prepare myself for the physical side of the trip. In the weeks prior, our local leadership also worked to ensure we had all questions answered and had the opportunity to come together to discuss experiences earlier pilgrims had on their trips and to answer any questions the first timers had.

An early morning flight to Baltimore then a late night to France was initially exciting and then somewhat deflating, as we knew we wouldn't have as much down time as we initially anticipated for our first day at Lourdes. As Malta pilgrims, our first charge was to find our Malade and Caregiver to answer any questions they had and ensure they were settled. The delay didn't seem to worry our Malades in the least. We kept them occupied, hydrated, and fed. Some slept before boarding the plane, but most were very much awake and anxious to meet others on the trip.

Once we arrived in France, the weather was overcast, but nothing could dampen our excitement. Everyone was peering out the bus windows as we motored from the airport to the hotels anxious to see all there was to see along the scenic drive. Once we arrived at the hotels, there was a buzz of activity as everyone checked

in and found their rooms. The first Mass and reception were well attended, as this was a relaxed way to meet our fellow pilgrims.

The following day, May 2nd, was the beginning of the experience we had all been waiting for! After lunch, we met by team colors to ensure we had introduced ourselves to one another and to build our team spirit with color coordinated gifts. From there, we made our first trip to the Domain, which was a short distance from the hotel. We began with a prayer service with all three United States affiliates. We then processed to the Basilica of the Holy Rosary for a solemn Mass. This was

our first glimpse of the beauty and majesty of this most Holy place.

Of course, the day ended with a reception followed by dinner. The conversations were buzzing as everyone recounted their day and what held special significance to them.

As they Bible says, “Evening came, and morning followed.” The second full day in Lourdes took us to the contemporary St. Bernadette Chapel for a Holy Hour which included Exposition of the Holy Eucharist, the opportunity to receive Confession, and some most inspiring speakers. One of the comments that resonated most with me is that we are all Malades. It manifests itself in each of us in different ways, but we are all broken and sick. Our salvation is that we have Faith, Faith in God and His Holy works. With His help, we will all one day become perfect as we enter Heaven!

After lunch, the Malades were very excited as this was the day they were able to visit the Baths. As if that wasn't enough, we then moved to the Notre Dame Chapel for a special Mass for the American group and the Anointing of the Sick.

The evening would prove to be just as inspiring as ALL



Jack Poher, K.M and Larry Koesterer

of the Malta groups worldwide assembled in the plaza in front of the Basilicas for the candlelight procession. Tears flowed as the crowd just continued to grow. Thousands of faithful Catholics stood together in the dark with candles glowing as we sang to Mary and recited the Rosary in a multitude of languages. By the time we returned to the hotels that evening, I suspect everyone was emotionally drained, but full of the Holy Spirit!

Saturday included a Mass at the Grotto, which was amazing to see so many Malades brought together with closest access to the Shrine where Bernadette spoke with our Blessed Mother.

As one may expect, Sunday, the Lord's Day, was even more amazing than Saturday! All pilgrims processed to the St. Pius X Basilica for the "World Mass." As I entered this underground Basilica, I felt as though I was Jonah in the whale. As far as I could see, there were curved concrete roof supports which looked like whale's ribs. This massive concrete ribbed structure seats 30,000 people, and we filled most of it with our worshipers. The Mass was simple but elegant, incorporating the multitude of languages and cultures. The distribution of holy communion was fascinating to me as I watched scores of priests scatter throughout the huge space to ensure all were able to receive the Body of our Lord. The process didn't take more than about 15 minutes!

Sunday ended with a most poignant event, the Sing-Along. Honestly, I thought it was going to be hokey, but I was terribly wrong. Watching the Malades and their teams experience the pure joy of the moment, forgetting their personal sufferings as they sang along, danced, and hugged one another left me speechless and in tears. Our Lady, mother to us all, was truly present that evening in a very special way!

Our final day, Monday, began with a closing Mass in the Upper Basilica in the Domain. It was bittersweet as we knew that it was our last Mass as a group and within 24 hours, we were all heading back to the real world. I looked at the hundreds of plaques affixed to the walls of the large building. Each was an acknowledgement of the kindness Our Lady had shown to a pilgrim. I tried to fathom the goodness of Our Lady as she has helped thousands of pilgrims and so many unnamed. The experience again left me in tears.

The Mass was followed by the Stations of the Cross. The day became cool with a light rain. As we moved from station to station, I just kept thinking that these were tears that Our Lady was shedding for all of our sins, the times we have turned our

backs on those in need and put our needs first. I thought how unworthy I am to even be here, experiencing these wonderful examples of our faith and the goodness of our Lord and his Mother.

As if this wasn't enough to initiate the waterworks, after dinner on our last night, we came together for the closing festivities. Again, bittersweet, but also poignant. Three individuals were asked to give their personal reflections. A Caregiver, a Malade, and a former Malade who is now a volunteer. Their stories were heartfelt, hopeful, and inspiring. I left knowing that I will spend my life praying for these and so many other Malades who are unknown to me today, tomorrow, and forever.

I only pray then when they leave this earth, they pray for me and all of you that we may all one day find our way to God's Heavenly Home!

—Michael Weisbrod



Missourians Enjoying a Few Hours in Baltimore



Missourians in Lourdes

Prayer and Fellowship

World Day of the Sick

The Missouri Area of the Order of Malta celebrated World Day of the Sick by gathering for Mass at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church in St. Louis County. Mass was concelebrated by Msgr. James Ramacciotti, the area's new Deputy Chaplain, and Magistral Chaplain Msgr. Vincent Gardin. After mass many joined area co-chairs Helen and Mike McCadden at a local restaurant for breakfast, fellowship, and conversations about the Order of Malta work in serving the sick and the poor.



Msgr. Ramacciotti Preaches on Our Duty to the Sick



Msgrs. Raaciotti & Gardin Distribute Holy Communion



Mike McCadden Leads the Daily Prayer of the Order

Monthly Rosaries

Led by Pat Amato Kreienkamp and Ray Kreienkamp, the Missouri Area of the Order of Malta gathers each month at St. Clement of Rome to recite the rosary, join in reflecting on the mysteries of the gospel, gather their prayer and join them with those of the Holy Mother as they present them to Christ. Those unable to attend can share their prayer intentions with the Kreienkamps ahead of time, and intentions presented at rosary are shared with all in the Missouri Area by e-mail each month.



Lenten Reflection and Mass

On Saturday March 16th the Missouri Area Knights, Dames, Affiliates, and their guests gathered in the Chapel of St. Joseph at the Kenrick-Glennon Seminary for a Lenten Morning of Reflection. The day began with an insightful and inspirational reflection on the Passion of our Lord as described in the Gospel of John by our new Deputy Chaplain, the Reverend Monsignor James Ramacciotti, ChD. After a period of for meditation in the lovely chapel, Mass was concelebrated by Msgr. Ramacciotti and our Magistral Chaplain, the Reverend Monsignor Vernon Gardin, PhD, ChM. The group from the order then enjoyed lunch in the refectory and a tour of the seminary conducted by the rector and president, Father Paul Hoelsing. Donna and Mike Albers, the Missouri Area's new co-chairs of our Defense of the Faith committee deserve great praise for arranging this wonderful day.



Members of the St. Louis Area before the altar of the Chapel of St. Joseph, Kenrick-Glennon Seminary



Msgr. Ramacciotti expounding the Passion according to St. John



Lector Michael Albers, KM



Celebrant Msgr. Ramacciotti and server Mike Roth, K.M.

2024 Missouri Area Leadership

Area Co-Chairs: Helen and Mike McCadden

Area Chaplains: Msgr. Vernon Gardin and Msgr. James Ramacciotti

Hospitallers: Jonathan Klimpel and Larry Koesterer

Membership: Chris Winkelmann

Treasurer: Bill Guyol

Affiliate Coordinators (Associates and Auxiliary): Kenny Darragh

Communications: Brian Abel Ragen

Malta Masses: Donna and Mike Roth

Prison Ministry: Pat Hofmeister and Michael Weisbrod

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

Malta Rosary (first Wednesday): Pat Amato Kreienkamp and Ray Kreienkamp

Daily Devotional Mailings: Carole Less

Defense of Faith: Donna and Mike Albers

MALTA MOBILE MINISTRY—ST. LOUIS

Director: Mike Roth

Financial Accountability and Operations Coordinator: Randy Weber

Program and Services Coordinator: Chris Winkelmann

Volunteer Driver Coordinator: Brian Abel Ragen

Vehicle Maintenance Coordinators: Randy Weber

Communications: Jim Bick