

SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION

What's going on throughout the Areas of the American Association of the Order of Malta

JUNE 2015

INSPIRATIONAL NEWS FROM THE AREAS AND THE ORDER OF MALTA WORLDWIDE:

A reception for our Cardinal Patronus, Cardinal Burke, was held at the Waldorf May 31st. The event was well attended by Knights, Dames and Auxiliary. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet the Cardinal who we hope will be able to visit the American Association in the future.



Cardinal Burke speaks as President Jack Pohrer and audience listen attentively.

The Cardinal told the gathering he was honored to be the Cardinal Patron of the Order of Malta, acting as a liaison between the Order and the Holy Father. The Cardinal said Pope Francis made it very clear to him he was "deeply interested" in the Order of Malta which was one reason he had chosen a somewhat younger man for the job. The Cardinal thanked the Knights and Dames "for all you do". He said he was "deeply edified" by the Order's work with the sick and the poor, which he observed in Lourdes. Cardinal Burke also spoke of the Order's need to exercise its other principal charism, Defense of the Faith, in an age of "so much confusion", when society has become "so secularized...in some cases worse than pagan". He spoke of the Order's long "and noble" history, saying Our Lord was counting on us to "honor Him.... especially by defending our faith."

MICHIGAN AREA: Archbishop Allen Vigneron, Chaplain for the Order of Malta and a frequent pilgrim on the Order's annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes ended a year long, Detroit diocesan - wide prayer for a new Pentecost, with a vibrant, stirring celebration of the Eucharist at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in downtown Detroit. The packed Cathedral revealed the universality of the Catholic Church as all ethnic groups were in attendance. "God has heard our prayer," the Archbishop told the congregation, "I can affirm for you today, this vigil of Pentecost." At the close of the Mass, as if to affirm the Archbishop's words, a large contingent of the worshipers began speaking in tongues.

"The Michigan Catholic", the Detroit archdiocesan newspaper, devoted a full page and a half to the Order of Malta American Association's annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Order of Malta chaplain, Father Gerald Murray was a guest on a "Power From the Pews" show also from Lourdes. An 8 minute video on the 2015 Lourdes Pilgrimage can be seen on the Power From the Pews Facebook page.

NYC AREA: With springtime in the air, Area volunteers again organized our annual Circus for the severely disabled children living at the Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center. A grand circus parade kicked off the event,

accompanied by music from Squeaky Clean, and included both the children and large balloon animals. Under the energetic leadership of our Ring Mistress Maggie Ludwiczak, the children were treated to a series of games and, of course, no circus is complete without a clown! Our thanks to Maggie and other Knights, Dames, Candidates and Auxiliary who gave their time on a beautiful Saturday morning to bring a bit of sunshine into the lives of these children.



The Grand Hospitaller of the Order, H.E. Dominique Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion in Obedience, visited New York during the week of May 11th. The purpose of his visit was, in part, to see some of the activities and works of the Order in New York and New Jersey. The Grand Hospitaller and his wife had a wonderful visit to the Sisters of Life Visitation Mission. Mother Agnes Mary and the Sisters explained their many activities in helping women in unplanned pregnancies.

The Grand Hospitaller also had an opportunity to visit the Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center. Doctors Vicki Deutsch and Tony Lecich provided a tour of the Specialty Hospital for Children and the Huntington's Unit and were able to provide an in-depth description not only of ArchCare's efforts on behalf of the poor and sick, but also the Area's involvement at TCC. In addition to a tour, the Grand Hospitaller and Members joined the residents for daily Mass and then enjoyed lunch on the lovely rooftop terrace of TCC overlooking Central Park and the Conservatory Garden.



SUBPRIORY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES: The Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes, spiritual home to our Professed and Members in Obedience, American and Federal Associations, held its annual Retreat, May 28th to 31st, in

Malvern, PA. Lead by Subpriory Chaplains, Father John McGuire, OP, and Msgr. James Watkins, the community had daily Mass, Conferences, Exposition and Benediction and Morning Prayer and Evening Compline. The Subpriory members in attendance left for home on Sunday having experienced the spiritual gift of peace and good fellowship in a beautiful retreat center in the countryside of Eastern Pennsylvania. Founded in 2006, the Subpriory's churches are St. Joseph Church in New York City and the Immaculate Conception Church in Washington, D. C. Membership has grown in recent years to include six Fra's in the First Class and 74 Knights and Dames in Obedience. Those interested in learning more about a calling to the First or Second Class are welcome to speak to the Regent of the Subpriory, Joe Metz, at (516)766-2336.



NAPLES AREA: Lourdes moment that will last forever. by B. J. Barone, candidate Naples Area

Over 408 pilgrims of the American Association of the Order of Malta attended the 30th Annual Lourdes Pilgrimage from April 29 – May 5, 2015. For my wife, Lucia, and me, it was our first pilgrimage to Lourdes. We were joined by over 5,000 other pilgrims from Associations from over 100 other countries. Our Pilgrims included over 50 Malades and their caregivers, as well as Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, Volunteers, clergy, medical team, and office staff. All answering the call of Our Lady to pray, do penance, drink and bathe in the waters of the spring, and process to the Grotto. We will always remember this, our first pilgrimage.

My understanding of the purpose of the pilgrimage was that we were to join together to work and pray and offer comfort and care to those who are suffering. As Father Caron explained to us at the first meeting of the Red Team, we did not come to Lourdes for a miracle, but for healing. Our Malades and their caregivers gave us this opportunity by allowing us to serve. We found each day to be a true time for prayer, sharing, laughter and grace with our new Lourdes family.

We have met so many new friends and shared in so many beautiful memories. On the third night, we attended the First Year Medal Ceremony with the other members of our group who were attending their first pilgrimage to Lourdes. My first thoughts were that it resembled the opening ceremonies of the Olympics. After a long speech by the Grand Master, each association of the over 100 countries attending was introduced followed by the customary cheers and applause.

Then it happened, the Association representing Iraq was introduced. The impact of their attendance with over 100 pilgrims was awe inspiring and sparked what would be a 15 minute standing ovation by all in attendance. In light of the recent events and martyrdom of hundreds of thousands of Catholics and Christians in Iraq and the Middle East, it was a very emotional experience.

Our new friends and members of our team, Nancy Graebe, DM, and Robert Graebe, MD, KM were at the event as well. Nancy had volunteered to represent the American Association on stage to accept the First Year Medals. Having been standing on stage during the entire program, Nancy had a front row seat to the portion of the program where each individual of the Iraq Association received their individual medals from the Grand Master. She later related to me how it was such a moving experience. She also mentioned how for some reason she had made contact with a specific woman member of the Iraqi group in a wheel chair. As Nancy later explained to me, she didn't know why, but she was drawn specifically to this woman. After the ceremony she tried to find her in the crowd but was not able to locate her. Two days later many of us shared the memorable experience of praying the Lower Stations of the Cross led by Msgr. Brown, who wonderfully integrated Our Lady's miraculous apparitions to St. Bernadette.

Afterwards, while we were all walking through the Domain back towards the hotels, Nancy Graebe noticed the Iraqi flag being waved and a group of its members gathering. She soon noticed the woman in the wheel chair from the medal ceremony. She hesitated at first, but soon found herself approaching the woman. Nancy asked her if she spoke any English, and the woman replied, "a little English, and a little French." Nancy told her that she remembered seeing her at the ceremony and how everyone admired all of the Iraqi Knights and Dames for their courage and faith. Then the woman began to cry and reached around her neck to show Nancy the medal she wore. She explained to Nancy that the figure on the medal was her son. "My son was a priest, and they killed him," she said as both she and now Nancy cried and hugged each other. She then explained that the pilgrims would return to Iraq, but that the world must know about her son and all of the martyrs.

When Nancy rejoined our group, she showed us a prayer card that was given to her and described to us the events of the exchange with the mother of the priest. On the evening of Sunday, Oct. 31, 2010, in the Syrian Catholic Church of Our Lady of Salvation in Baghdad, 58 Chaldean Christians, including two priests, Father Waseem Sabeeh Al-kas Butros, 27, the woman's son, and his lifelong friend Father Thair Sad-all Abd-al Boutros were brutally massacred by Islamic terrorists during the celebration of the Mass.

Nancy could not believe that this had happened and reflected how just before meeting Father Waseem's mother, she had been moved by the scene at the 13th Station of the Cross and how she often meditates on the scene of the body of Jesus being taken down from the cross and placed into the arms of Mary, His mother. Nancy said that she saw the woman in the wheel chair as Mary with her son in her arms, the mother of a martyr. As Nancy suggested, Father Waseem was the same age as her son, and our son. He made the ultimate defense of the faith. This is an image that will stay with us forever.

Our guide book for the pilgrimage explained that the theme for the pilgrimage was taken from Luke 1:34-37. Mary responds to the angel Gabriel upon being told of God's plan, "How can this be...?" Many of our Malades and their caregivers have asked this same question and experienced the feelings of fear, isolation, and disbelief when given a difficult diagnosis. Gabriel's answer was to Mary, and is to all of us, "Nothing is impossible with God."

There have been more martyrs in this century than all others combined. Now, more than ever our world is in chaos and as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI warned today's Christians, "be ready for the radical choice of martyrdom." As the future events unfold and we too experience the feelings of fear, isolation, and disbelief, will we respond, "how can this

be?” The answer was then, is now, and will always be, “Nothing is impossible with God.” There is a movement to name as holy martyrs and saints those Christians who have died in Iraq for their faith.

“POWER FROM THE PEWS”: Last month had several interviews with Knights and Dames of the Order discussing the Lourdes Pilgrimage. If you wish to listen to a replay of the show you can go to the archive section of Ave Maria Radio’s web site: <https://www.avemariaradio.net/>

From the main page, open the “Archive” link on the top line of the screen. Use the drop down menu and select Power from the Pews. You can choose the month (April) and the Year (2015) and select the specific program (April 25, 2015) and listen to the broadcast at any time after the broadcast has aired using the Audio Archive. For those who are interested, there is also an “app” available for Ave Maria Radio if you wish to put it on your smart device.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION WEBSITE: Our Association website is full of news and updates on all the activities of the Association. Please search the website for news of all the different Areas, for Spiritual Insight and click the following link to see a video on this year’s Pilgrimage. <https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/lourdes/videos/2015-Lourdes-Video/>

SAVE THE DATE: In addition to the Annual March For Life the NYC Auxiliary has several pro-life events in September as part of the” 40 Days for Life Campaign” which is scheduled from September 23rd to November 1st. The kick-off date is Saturday, September 19th 7-8pm at St. Patrick’s Youth Center, 268 Mulberry Street in NYC.

For more information please visit these websites: **40 Days for Life website:** 40daysforlife.com or **Manhattan 40 Days for Life Facebook group:** <https://www.facebook.com/40DFLNYC>

The Association’s second retreat for 2015 is scheduled for **October 4 – 6, 2015** at the **Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, Long Island**. Father David Caron, OP, will be the retreat master. Registration materials will be sent shortly.

The **2016 Retreat Schedule** is now in place: the Winter retreat is scheduled for **February 5 – 7, 2016** at the **Bethany Retreat Center in Lutz, Florida**. The Fall 2016 retreat is scheduled for **October 14 – 16, 2016** at **Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, in Mundelein, Illinois**.

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