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JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA™**  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, U.S.A.

# HOSPITALLERS

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## The 2017 Investiture: Something Old, Something New

**W**hen over one hundred men and women stood in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in the moments before their actual investiture into the Order of Malta, the words of the formal ceremony beckoned them to a greater challenge and they responded, "We ask the mercy of God, and to be received into the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta."

Several thousand people gathered at Saint Patrick's Cathedral to give witness and support to the hundred six members who were received into the Order. Bishop Jean Laffitte, Prelate of the Order of Malta, was the celebrant and homilist at the Solemn Mass. President Jack Pohrer presided over the investiture ceremony, presenting the decorations to the members that had been blessed by the Bishop and are a sign of the new Knights' and Dames' inclusion in one of the oldest organizations within the Catholic Church. *(continued on page 6)*

orderof  
malta  
american.  
org

### Association Web Site

Be sure to visit our Web site at: [www.orderofmaltaamerican.org](http://www.orderofmaltaamerican.org) to find the latest information about the Association, forms needed for new members and new auxiliary members, Area Web sites and much more information about the Association and the Order of Malta. Links are also available to other Association Web sites and the Sovereign Magistry's Web site.

The Mobile App has been completely redesigned and enhanced with the new features most requested by members. You can find a link on the Association website to download the app.



At our Annual Meeting, I reported on the State of the American Association and want to share my observations with you. I am happy to report that the Association is doing very well. We were joined at the Investiture and many of the associated events by a number of dignitaries for which we are most grateful; it was especially wonderful to see so many of our Dames and Knights with us, including the newest Knights and Dames.

**MEMBERSHIP**

The American Association of the Order of Malta is over 1,800 members strong as we welcomed and invested over one hundred new Dames and Knights in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral. The same spirit, pride and congeniality was expressed and experienced over 903 years ago when the first Knights took their vows and oath into what is now the oldest Lay Religious Order in the Catholic Church. I am happy to report that the zeal of our newest Dames and Knights is similar to the earliest Knights who were committed to the sick and the poor and so loyal to and protective of our faith.

The Dames and the Knights of the American Association are supported and guided in their religious quest by more than 124 active Chaplains, with our Principal Chaplain being Cardinal Dolan. The Association also has five Deacon Chaplains and a vibrant Auxiliary that includes more than four hundred forty members.

The American Association was founded in 1927; in 10 years, we will celebrate our 100th Anniversary. We should honor and thank those Knights who were the first to bring the Order to the United States of America. It was embraced and nourished by so many before us that today the United States has more members in its Associations than any other country in the world, our American Association being the largest.

**TRI-ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY**

There are three USA Associations, the American, Federal and Western. They join together to perform and orchestrate certain charitable acts such as the Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes; and our newest Annual Pilgrimage to Wisconsin where Our Blessed Mother appeared as Our Lady of Good Help. We also coordinate for the Pilgrimage for Life in Washington, DC. The Associations work together to support the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem.

Prison Ministry Work has grown to an extraordinary mission all over the United States and is present in almost every one of the Areas of the American Association. The favorable response from the prisoners in the USA has been overwhelming. They seem to thirst for a relationship with the Lord. Prisoners across the US and beyond its borders have received tens of thousands of Bibles and Prayer Books which are available in English and Spanish.

In addition to the Bibles and Prayer Books, there is an extraordinary interest for a quarterly publication called “The Serving Brother” which is published in both English and Spanish. Our Associations are distributing them four times a year. A total of 50,000 copies in English and Spanish have been distributed to the Catholic inmates in the United States and in Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa and to 36 other countries in the Western Hemisphere.

We currently have approximately 75 Dames and Knights and 2,500 volunteers working with us in prison ministry. Many of the volunteers have become “affiliated” with us through their parishes, working with our Dames and Knights. The USA Order of Malta’s Associations Prison Ministry is now the largest Catholic Outreach to the incarcerated in the world.

**LITIGATION**

Although many of you have heard this before, as I leave office, I want to briefly synopsise a lawsuit in which the American Association has been named as a Defendant. In addition to the American Association, there are five other defendants in the case. The lawsuits grow out of a charitable school program in Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, known as Project Pierre Toussaint. The school was run by The Haiti Fund, a char-

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# 2018 Lourdes Pilgrimage:

## *God Guide and Guard You*



Family traditions, when lovingly passed from one generation to the next, are sometimes almost as important to us as the family members who pass those traditions onto us. This is true in the case of our family's long history of blessing people with a simple blessing, God guide and guard you, keep you safe from harm, and bring you safely back home. Cece's Grandmother blessed each of her eight children daily with this prayer. Her Mother, Cecelia, in turn blessed each of her seven children in the very same way invoking God's presence on them before they would leave for the day.

This tradition has continued in our own home as we eagerly bless each of our children in this very sacred fashion,

asking God to guide and protect them and keep them safe while they are away from us. When we give the blessing, it isn't just thrown out there like "bless you!" after a sneeze. Our blessing has commitment and is a deliberate, heart-connected full on blessing where we gently trace the sign of the cross on the recipient's forehead while saying, "God guide and guard you..." just as Cece's Mother and Grandmother did. We wouldn't dream of letting one of our children or our friends or even our friend's children depart without this special blessing. Blessing someone in this committed and heart-centered manner, asking God to be present in their lives, lets that person know that they matter to us and, more importantly, that they matter to and are loved by God.

We are so humbled and honored to be Chairing the 2018 American Association Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Choosing the theme of the Pilgrimage, God Guide and Guard You, is our way of sharing our family blessing with all of you in the Order; welcome to the family! Our hope is that each person who participates in this year's pilgrimage, whether they be Clergy, Dames, Knights, Auxiliary or Volunteers, might help us carry out the privilege of blessing our guests and each other. Taking a moment to invoke the living God by blessing our Malades & Caregivers, with our words and our actions, is letting them know that God is guarding, guiding and walking with them no matter what hardship they face. God's protection is by no means a magic, invisible force field that keeps sorrow from happening. Many times, God protects us by giving us a sense of reconciliation, peace and strength during our suffering. So many of our Malades have shared that they feel God's unconditional love and protection during our Pilgrimage to Lourdes. What a comfort we bring to the sick when we pour out blessings and prayers on them as they endure life's trials, especially during serious illness.

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As members of the Order of Malta, there are many ways we can bless others. Each one of us can participate in the pilgrimage in some way. If you would like to physically join us May 2nd through May 8th on the American Association's 33rd annual Lourdes Pilgrimage, please complete your application and submit it as soon as possible. We are close to capacity and we anticipate the trip is going to be over-subscribed. Please get your application in ASAP. You could also give the blessing of sponsoring a Malade on the pilgrimage. Malade applications are being reviewed in January so there is still time to get Malade applications into the New York office. Alternatively, you could sponsor a Malade in Spirit as a way to encounter the blessings of the Pilgrimage. In addition, please prayerfully consider sending a tax-deductible donation to the Lourdes Pilgrimage Foundation which will help underwrite the cost of our Malades and Caregivers at [www.pilgrimagefoundation.org](http://www.pilgrimagefoundation.org). Your prayers for the success and safety of the Pilgrims can also link you spiritually to the Pilgrimage. Each of these fulfilling ways to participate in the Pilgrimage is a privilege and blessing for all members of the Order of Malta. When we experience God's blessing in our lives, it can't help but lead us to want to bless others and be the bearer of God's presence for those around us.

We all need that sense of blessing and not just when we sneeze. We all need to be reminded, everyday, that we are not alone and that God is guiding us and guarding us wherever we are, whatever the circumstance. As members of the Order of Malta, we have pledged to practice charity toward our neighbors, especially the poor and the sick. We need to help each other by making it easier for one another to experience God's blessing. When we take the time to bless one another to actually invoke the living God in a heartfelt manner on a loved one or friend, it is a beautiful, powerful, precious gift for the person we bless and for ourselves.

We sincerely hope that you are able to participate in the Association's 33rd annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes in May of 2018. We are very grateful for your love and support and welcome your blessings.

God Guide and Guard You!

Our Lady of Lourdes Pray for us!

St. Bernadette Pray for us!



Cece Donoghue, DM  
Lourdes Co-Chair



Mike Donoghue, KM  
Lourdes Co-Chair



# DEPUTY AND MAGISTRAL CHAPLAINS, KNIGHTS AND DAMES INVESTED

## — DEPUTY CHAPLAINS —

Reverend Kevin Gabriel Gillen, OP, ChD  
 Reverend John W. Girotti, ChD  
 Reverend Alfredo I. Hernandez, ChD  
 Reverend Michael K. Jones, ChD  
 Reverend Thomas J. Kelly, ChD  
 Reverend Daniel P. Tuite, ChD

## — MAGISTRAL CHAPLAINS —

Rev. Msgr. Sylvester J. Cronin, ChM  
 Rev. Salvatore DiStefano ChM  
 Rev. William Platt, ChM

## — DAMES OF MAGISTRAL GRACE —

Lourdes V. Andaya, MD, DM	Gina C. Esposito, DM	Judith G. Liddy, DM	Kelly Anne Murphy, DM
Rubirosa H. Aguinaldo, DM	Cynthia C. Fagan, DM	Susan Szymanski Liguori, DM	Lenore Opalak, MD, DM
Sherry Anandappa, DM	Joan Maureen FitzPatrick, DM	Irene Lis-Planells, DM	Cynthia M. Pasciuto, DM
Carolyn M. Andree, DM	Sally L. Follett, DM	Maureen M. Lynch, DM	Danielle A. Rivoir, DM
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Marigle AV Barragan, DM	Robin J. Goldsmith, MD, DM	Joan A. Magner, MD, DM	Donna M. Roth, DM
Judith A. Behrens, DM	Marianne R. Gordon, MD DM	Jean L. Maloy, DM	Karen M. Skokna, DM
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Ann M. Dickinson, DM	Cornelia A. Kelley, DM	Maura G. Mudd, DM	
Mary A. Dollar, DM	Robin Lasnoski, DM	Edwardine A. Muraski, DM	

## — KNIGHTS OF MAGISTRAL GRACE —

Ignatius Anandappa, KM	Walter N. Fountain, KM	Thomas J. Liddy, KM	Michael Joseph Roth, KM
Lee D. Ashton, KM	Marc P. Gendreau, KM	Stephen J. Liguori, KM	Michael J. Rothmeier, KM
David M. Aversa, MD, KM	Renato Grandmont, KM	Thomas London, KM	Ritchie C. Schlette, KM
Joseph M. Barragan, KM	Edward W. Greason, KM	Emery A. Maddocks, KM	William M. Schult, KM
Daniel J. Bigaouette, KM	Angelo Grima, KM	Ricardo J. Martinez, KM	Thomas J. Smith, Jr, KM
Stephen John Bujno, KM	Ronald K. Hale, KM	David J. Miller, KM	John P. Sonnen, KM
Raymond Burns, KM	Gregory J. Hefner, KM	Robert B. Moorman, Jr, KM	Paul C. Utrie, MD, KM
Terence L. Cahill, KM	Vincent J. Hess, KM	Daniel H. Mudd, KM	Felipe E. Victoria y Grueso, KM
Anthony V. Calenda, KM	Paul E. Hoffman, KM	Kenneth James Muraski, KM	Nicholas K. Vita, KM
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John A. Das, MD KM	David G. Joyce, KM	Michael E. Opalak, MD, KM	Thomas M. Wynne, KM
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Carlos Ferran, KM	Herbert V. Levinsky, MD, KM	Zivko Pulisic, KM	





## The 2017 Investiture

*(continued from cover)*

At the Investiture Mass, three Magistral Chaplains also made their commitment to serve the members of the Order in their pursuit of spiritual growth. On the preceding day, at the Mass for the Blessing of the Capes and the Robes, six Deputy Chaplains were also charged with the task of serving the Association's members, within their Areas of responsibility. At that Mass, the Bishop was also the celebrant.

The Solemn Liturgy, with the support of the magnificent choir and organist, created an atmosphere that added a measure of beauty and strength to the level of commitment being made before God and so many attendees. With the Cross of the decoration of the Order held high, President Pohrer spoke the solemn and somber words of exhortation and admonition, "Brothers and sisters, we give you this Cross of the Order, this sign of Christ's passion, of His love for all. Let it always inspire you in love of your neighbor. Cherish and defend the Cross. Should it ever happen that, in the battle for Christ and his Church, you turn your back on this Cross or desert it, then in accordance with the ancient custom of our Order, this holy symbol must justly be taken from you, and you must be expelled from our community."

The robes and capes of the new members, (blessed the day before at an afternoon Mass celebrated by the Prelate),

gave witness to and served as a sign of the lay religious Order that was receiving a new class of members. As each new member processed forward to the altar, Bishop Laffitte and President Pohrer presented them with the Cross and wished him or her God's help as they were to go out into the world with the Sign of the Cross as their Standard.

On Thursday afternoon, the new preceded the old. Because of the closure of the Waldorf Astoria for renovations, the venue for many of the events surrounding the Investiture had to be moved. After Annual Dinners and many other events over the decades at the Waldorf, it was a new experience for many long-time members of the Association to find their way west of Fifth Avenue. The first major event of the weekend, the New Member Orientation, officially opened the doors to the Hilton Midtown Hotel. The new members and their families attended an orientation session where Chancellor Richard D. Milone, MD, coordinated a group of speakers across a variety of subjects, including the Lourdes Pilgrimage, the Regulations and Commentary, the role of the Order around the world and the latest communications plans for the Association. Meanwhile, in the next room, the Area Leadership meeting brought together Area Chairs, Area Hospitallers and Area Membership Chairs to listen and speak about issues of importance to the governance of the Association and the Areas.

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Immediately following the New Member Orientation, the new members, their families and many of the leadership team worked their way southeast to Saint Patrick's Cathedral; some hurried through the streets to get to the Mass of the Blessing of the Capes and Robes at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. And then, for the new members, their families and the Officers and members of the Board of Councillors, it was back to the Hilton again for a short reception. Out-of-town attendees soon learned that the cross-town blocks are much longer than the blocks along the avenues! Following the reception, many Areas hosted dinners for their new members after a long afternoon.

Friday morning's agenda began a full day; the Spirituality Committee Chair, George Molinsky, introduced the Prelate, Bishop Jean Laffitte, who delivered a talk on the Spirituality of the Order. The talk was originally delivered at the 2016 Chaplains' Convocation — Mr. Molinsky invited the Prelate to share his reflection with the members of the Association. The room was full at the Hilton for the talk. A transcript of the Prelate's very important message as presented at the 2016 Chaplains' Convocation address is available on the Association's website in the Spirituality section under Chaplains Essays.

Immediately following the Prelate's talk, close to four hundred members and guests attended the Association's Annual Meeting in the Murray Hill Suite on the 2nd Floor of the New York Hilton Midtown Hotel. President Jack Pohrer

provided a State of the Association report, election results were reported, a legal update, a Treasurer's report, a Lourdes Pilgrimage update were among the subjects reported during the two-hour meeting. Several members of the Board of Councillors were recognized as their terms on the Board were expiring — Dr. Anthony Gagliardi, Mr. George Molinsky, and Mrs. Deborah O'Hara-Rusckowski.

Outgoing Area Chairs, Leonard and Patricia Dino (Saint Louis), George Molinsky (Ohio), and Christopher J. Rutkowski (Michigan) were also recognized. Several members of the

Prison Ministry Apostolate were also recognized with Cross of Commander, pro Merito Melitensi Awards: Steven Caron, Joseph Feitelberg, John Santa, and Andrew Vissicchio. Msgr. Robert Ritchie was recognized with the Grand Cross Conventual Chaplain Award.

Several doctors were recognized with the President's Award for their years of work in Haiti: Dr. David G. Butler and Dr. H. Stephen Fletcher. Father Robert Dunn was recognized with a President's Award for his years of contribution to the Lourdes Pilgrimage and the Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage. Jack Pohrer, leaving the Presidency after six years in office, was gifted a beautiful chair by the Association for his use in retirement.

Not much time was left for lunch as the group and several thousand more people assembled for the Investiture Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Following the Mass, more than five hundred people gathered for the *(continued on page 8)*

Hundreds filled the pews where Msgr. Ritchie and a group of chaplains concelebrated the Mass and provided the rich spiritual benefits of the anointing of the sick to the grateful participants.



## The 2017 Investiture

*(continued from page 7)*

Reception and Annual Dinner in the Grand Ballroom on the third floor at the New York Hilton Midtown Hotel.

On Saturday morning, Saint Patrick's Cathedral was the setting for the Annual Mass for all Malades and Caregivers. It has become a tradition which brings together many past Malades and Caregivers and Knights and Dames who have or hope to experience the Lourdes Pilgrimage. Hundreds filled the pews where Msgr. Ritchie and a group of chaplains celebrated the Mass and provided the rich spiritual benefits of the anointing of the sick to the grateful participants.

After the Mass, the Holy Family Hospital Foundation hosted a brunch at the Hilton in a room finally large enough to accommodate the annual crowd. Malades and their caregivers were guests while Knights and Dames made a contribution to the Holy Family Hospital Foundation.

In the afternoon, members of the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes and many others gathered at the beautiful Church of Saint Francis of Assisi on West 31st Street in New York City where Frá Nicola Tegoni renewed his simple vows as he continued his preparation to take his final vows as a Knight of Justice. Making her Promise of Obedience was Nancy Davies, DMOB. Bishop Jean Laffitte was also the celebrant at this liturgy. The Homilist was Reverend Joseph Cavoto, OFM, Magistral Chaplain of the Order of Malta. ■



## ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

**December 25**

Christmas

**January 10**

**Palm Beach, FL**

Board of Councillors Meeting

**January 18-19**

**Washington, DC**

Pilgrimage for Life

**February 11**

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes,  
World Day of the Sick

**March 2-4**

**Lutz, FL**

Association Retreat

**April 1**

Easter Sunday

**April 10-11**

**New York City**

April 10-11

**May 2-8**

Lourdes Pilgrimage

**May 17**

**New York City**

Board of Councillors Meeting

**June 19-20**

**New York City**

Area Leadership Meeting

**June 24**

Feast of Saint John the Baptist

**August 2-5**

**Wisconsin**

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help

**September 6**

**New York City**

Board of Councillors Meeting

**September 7-9**

**Medway, MA**

Association Retreat

**October 25-27**

Investiture Weekend Events

**October 25**

**(New York City)**

Board of Councillors Meeting

**October 26**

Investiture, Annual Dinner





## Our Lady of Good Help: An Icon for the Pilgrimage

*Catherine Stevenson, MD, STL, DM*

Last fall Kate Signorelli, DMOB, the extraordinary Hospitaller of Houston, and the co-chair of the pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, asked me if I would make an icon for the pilgrimage. I took the project back to the St. Elizabeth Icon Studio in Lafayette, Louisiana, where I have painted and studied for many years under the direction of iconographer Faye Drobnic.

Iconography is not an art of individual creative expression. Its goal is to create an experience of transcendence to draw the viewer closer to God. Focused on transmitting orthodox theology, iconographers reinterpret the classical images of our faith tradition. But this is not mere historical reproduction. As the church is living faith, iconography is a living art.

There are new saints and new lived experiences to be represented. The apparition of Our Lady to Adele Brise is just such an event.

The challenge was to represent the apparition faithfully while adhering to the orthodox traditions of iconography. The creation of the icon was undertaken with prayer and discussion in the studio. A drawing was created presenting the figure standing, with hands in the orans gesture, which conveys prayer, supplication and actively engages, invites and encompasses the viewer.

Adele saw a lady clothed in dazzling white, with a yellow sash around her waist, and loose wavy golden hair falling around her shoulders. She was surrounded by radiant light, and had



a crown of stars around her head. In the icon a background of 24 karat gold evokes the radiant light; gold in icons always stands for the divine. White is the most difficult color to render in an icon, easily becoming flat and dull. To convey dazzling white, the technique of the crystal garment developed by master iconographer Vladislav Andrejev of the Prosopon School of Iconography was used. White is the sum of all colors, and the garment was painted layers of blue, pink, yellow and green to attempt to represent light broken up as it passes through a prism.

The two unusual elements of the icon are the blond hair and absence of a veil, but these are faithful to the recounting of the experience by Adele Brise. The crown of stars is represented by yellow gold stars placed in a halo of white gold. The stars

have the traditional eight points which are associated with the Virgin Mary. They are slightly irregular as starlight is soft and amorphous.

The journey of iconography is a vocation and a spiritual path. From January to July as I painted the icon I had the astonishing experience of basking in the starlight of the Queen of Heaven. The icon was blessed by the Bishop of Green Bay, David Ricken, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help on 5th August, the eve of the Feast of the Transfiguration.

*Pictures of the stages of painting, the color palette for the crystal garment, and another version of the icon (one with a veil) can be found at [stelizabethiconstudio.com](http://stelizabethiconstudio.com).*

# Malteser International Provides Relief, Restoration and Hope

In the American Association of the Order of Malta, we seek opportunities to fulfill the Order's mission of helping the sick and the poor through our Hospitaller works. While much of our work is in our neighborhoods and our own parishes, we are also blessed to be able to have a far-reaching impact throughout the United States, across the Americas, and around the world, through the activities of Malteser International. In fact, we are fortunate to have Malteser International Americas, the U.S. headquarters, located right next to our offices in the Archdiocese of New York.

Malteser International Americas is the humanitarian arm of the Order of Malta in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Through their life-saving work, the Order plays an integral role caring for the sick and the poor, and helps serve the needs of more than 1.6 million people around the world.

The relationship between the Order of Malta and Malteser International is highly unique, as it is a vehicle for the Order of Malta to have its finger on the pulse of global humanitarian issues, in ways that no other Catholic organization can. The Order's humanitarian relief agency was conceived to allow our faithful membership to give back boldly, live by our devotion to care for our brothers and sisters in need, and to give the Order more opportunities to extend their hands in meaningful ways during times of great need and suffering. Malteser International and their competent and devoted staff carry on what the Order was established for nearly a 1000 years ago — to care for the sick and the poor.

You have read the moving stories of children and families impacted by conflicts and natural disaster — those whose lives have been transformed by Malteser International's relief — from providing the families of Cite Soleil, a slum in Port-au-Prince, Haiti with essential hygiene kits after Hurricane

Matthew, to teaching new farming skills to Colombia's displaced farmers so they can sustain their livelihoods and feed their families, to making sure the elderly and sick have money to buy food after Hurricane Harvey. The organization's mission is not merely to provide disaster relief, but also to implement rehabilitation measures that involve the people they are helping, and the communities themselves, to create healthier, more dignified futures.

Malteser International is committed to provide relief to help the poorest of the poor who need the greatest help. It has successfully met the challenge of working in partnership with those affected by disaster by creating opportunities for rehabilitation and development while ensuring that the most basic human needs are met. In the face of enormous challenge, it has consistently risen to the task, creating and expanding its programs in the wake of truly catastrophic events.

This summer alone, Malteser International Americas responded to five natural disasters. Harvey...Irma...Maria... this powerful trifecta of hurricanes brought record-breaking, monsoon floods and destructive gale force winds that heavily damaged cities and towns in the United States, flattened entire islands in the Caribbean, and left our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico without shelter, food, water and power. In the midst of these disasters, two powerful earthquakes struck Mexico within two weeks of each other.

In the several months since the first major disaster in the Americas struck, the Order and our membership has had a tremendous effect on healing broken hearts and helping the suffering and the forgotten to get the relief they need. We are living the charism of the Order through the tangible relief and recovery efforts Malteser International Americas has initiated in the countries, states, counties, and communities in greatest need.

The sheer interest and outpouring of charitable support to the relief efforts from our membership has been heartening. We have provided life-saving assistance on North American soil. It is in these times of need, we are guided by our faith to help. And, that is what we have done...together.

In the humanitarian world, there are clear phases to



which organizations adhere to following disasters of this magnitude. In developing countries, like Haiti, where Malteser International Americas has been present and has established an extensive network with local partners and communities, they are able to provide immediate emergency relief because the disasters conditions are so extremely dire. In developed countries, like the United States, there is an exceptional first phase of response, be it from governments or from organizations who focus on immediate disaster relief, like the American Red Cross. These organizations operate with a wealth of resources that provide immediate shelter, food, clothing and other aid immediately to disaster survivors.

In the instance of the three hurricanes and the earthquakes, there was sufficient local emergency relief and it was paramount that first responders can do their job without obstruction in the first phase. But, ultimately, those first responders complete their job and move on to the next disaster, leaving a swath of continued need for relief in the disaster area. In the wake of every disaster, there is always such great need, more need than can be filled in the immediate weeks of a disaster. That is why there is always a second phase of relief that infuses the hardest hit areas.

In the United States, it is that extremely critical second phase where Malteser International greatly excels, and where our support has the greatest impact. It is in this second phase that we enter the most affected areas, help those who have fallen through the cracks, pick up the pieces, find the gaps in relief, and continue ongoing assistance for those in need. It is in this phase that the Order makes a difference.

Malteser International Americas, with the Order's support, is creating a lifeline of relief, hope, opportunity, and future development following the recent disasters. In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and following the earthquakes in Mexico, the following efforts are underway or have completed:

- Working with the Order of Malta network in Puerto Rico, we are supporting the distribution of bottled water and warm, nutritious meals in Punta Santiago and Guaynabo. To date, over 15,000 hot meals have been served, nearly 20,000 bottles of water have been distributed, and over

- 7,000 non-perishable food items have been distributed.
- Providing assistance to the Mexican Association of the Order of Malta to rebuild a school that was heavily damaged by the earthquakes, ensuring that children can continue their education in a safe environment. An elderly center in Mexico City is also receiving rebuilding help.
- Working with faith-based partners and the local St. Vincent de Paul in the Rockport-Fulton, TX region, we are helping 750 of the most at-risk families purchase food for their families, and regain their dignity along the way, with grocery cash cards.
- Ensuring that the Salt Lake Church Relief Center, a former church in the forgotten parts of Rockport, TX, has food and supplies to feed 1,000 hungry families with nutritious meals, and also provide families with basic household necessities lost in the hurricane.
- Rebuilding the lives of Aransas County's large Vietnamese population in Rockport, TX by providing financial assistance for the reconstruction of St. Peter Catholic Church, the heart and spiritual soul for 200 people in the tightly knit community.
- Distributed 1,000 household kits in Beaumont, TX for up to 5,000 people which included critical cleaning supplies, food, and toiletries. We are also continued our relief with the distribution of cash cards for 1,000 desperate families to purchase food and hygiene essentials through Catholic Charities.
- Supported the distribution of hygiene and cleaning kits, food items, medicine, milk, blankets and tarps to 5,000 needy families in Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Morelos who desperately need assistance.

While their role in response to natural disasters varies from country to country, one thing that never wavers is the opportunity for the Order to work through Malteser International Americas to relieve the oppressing grip of poverty, malnourishment, inadequate resources, the changing environment, and unpredictable crises, from vulnerable children and families in the Americas and beyond.

*To learn more about the Order's humanitarian arm, Malteser International Americas, visit: [www.orderofmalta.org](http://www.orderofmalta.org).*



## Reflections from the American Association's Fall 2017 Retreat

*Bishop John O'Hara led the American Association's retreat in September and provided significant thoughts for spiritual reflection. Richard Feil, KM, was kind enough to capture many of them and prepare this summary.*

The theme of the Fall American Association Retreat at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception was "DON'T BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING, CHRIST IS VICTOR", quoting Fr. Benedict Groeschl. We are all in dire of need of a real true hero which is Christ Himself.

Even upon arrival at the empty former huge seminary, we were reminded of the dramatic changes in our church, with long vacant floors. Only the photo galleries of former key bishops and diminishing ordinations remain from the once huge European waves of Catholic immigrants and the evaporated expansion from post WWII in Southeast NY.

To introduce this new norm, Bishop O'Hara immediately refocused us during his Friday homily that we are in a similar age as the Fall of the Roman Empire. Amid its unmerciful turmoil and disregard for human life, civilization not only survived but prospered, as Bishop convinced us, because of the very courage and the tremendous emerging Faith of the early Christians persecutions.

### GIVE GOD PERMISSION — SURRENDER

In his first conference, Bishop O'Hara encouraged us with news of many young people attending St. Agnes Church in Mid-town Manhattan; he likened them to roaming Catholics since many sample several local parishes "looking for SOMEONE"! He emphatically reminded us that, "IT IS HE, THE GOOD SHEPHERD who searches for the one lost sheep." that they need to find through the example of the good deeds of the Order of Malta.

Bishop himself reflected on how he learned to STOP, LOOK & LISTEN, some sad and some good incidents. For example, what could have been only a sleepy express bus ride to Staten Island became a faith opportunity with the female bus driver. With their casual conversation, she became convinced after years of inaction, to get married in the Church by his priest friend. It may take time to bear fruit, but "GOD'S LOVE is PATIENT, is KIND, slow to anger, it keeps no record of wrongs." Give God permission in your life.

Bishop described other powerful images. In particular, about the suicide rescue literally at Notre Dame Cathedral on Christmas of Paul Claudel, the brilliant Catholic literary scholar. He later became known for his vivid 20th Century poetic interpretation of the Stations of the Cross. Another powerful personal image was the Sistine Chapel mural of God the Father reaching not

just for Adam's finger. But "YOU AND ME being raised by the Father through the gift of HIS ONLY SON." We will also be "lifted out of the formless wasteland, to dispel the clouds of darkness and mud which overshadow our world today." from another central Vatican painting. Like the fire of the Pentecostal Spirit, "prayer is the irresistible gust to blow away the cloud." From a quote by John Elan, "It is the obsession that overturns everything in its path".

From the Fire of Pentecost, Bishop O'Hara asked us to meditate on "How has God touched you?" During several instructions, he reiterated the command of St. Theresa of Calcutta, "GIVE GOD PERMISSION, SURRENDER TO HIS WILL., ONE SOUL AT A TIME". See ourselves with humility as GOD sees US! The first session ended with "The commitment of ancient Rome martyrs changed the course of history." VOTE for the GUY who rose from the Dead.", quoting Fr. Benedict a week before his death. "We, the Order of Malta, specifically, are called not to stand under the cross but to hang on the cross to experience and share in the Resurrection story."

### FOREGIVENESS

Quoting from Paul Claudel again, Bishop opened the second conference with the theme: "Forgiveness from the Heart gives us the inner strength to move forward." Or as Father Flanagan, Servant of God, created the Boys Town slogan: He ain't heavy, he's my brother. "Make me patient with the wood you wish me to bear, to carry the cross before the cross carries me." Like the namesake of His Holiness Francis, make us the Order of Malta a channel of His love.

Between the periods of prayerful spirituality and personal reflection, Bishop inspired the Knights and Dames with recollections of several legendary 20th Century NYC Church leaders, almost in a gospel-like Evangelist fashion, reminiscent of unexpected Jesus events. He portrayed many acts of kindness and humility in intimate personal detail about Cardinal O'Connor, Cardinal Cooke (affectionately called Cookie by his friends, we learned!), and his close associate Fr. Benedict Groeschel for whom Bishop O'Hara celebrated his Requiem Mass. Again, the Order needs to be like the Gospel Christ, like these contemporary CATHOLIC Evangelists to STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN. As one Cardinal suggested after a terrible reaction to one of his decisions, "not their fault, I didn't communicate myself very well."

Maybe the Order members need to communicate our mission better too. LISTENING and ACTION, one on one. "Holy people don't lose concern for others. They don't give up, don't despair. The Order has been chosen." The Divine Heart calls us to come out of ourselves, give love without reserve." quoting Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. The

Order is the deep well of care and kindness by example. Despite the appearance of a troubled world, there many hopeful signs in the church, besides the young people and marriages, with increased vocations to the Priests and Sisters of Life, and the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia (aka the Nashville Dominicans) who are powerful witnesses to the sacredness of Life.

The rewards of suffering have always been mystifying. Bishop offered a special image of "Hide in the wounds of Christ, the devil is afraid to go there." St. John Neumann, the great American bishop saint, was quoted, "God CALLS YOU by name, UNDERSTANDS YOU, KNOWS what's in you." BE NOT AFRAID . . . We have the words of many saints whose lives proclaimed the will of God in them. Bishop recommended the classic "Introduction to the Devout Life" for lay people, deep but simple by St Francis de Sales. Also, the fascinating story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor and theologian, who returned to Germany to do the right thing by participating in the German Resistance against Nazism, and by founding the Confessing Church. He was subsequently executed in April 1945, willingly and peacefully, shortly before the war's end. His view of Christianity's role in the secular world has become very influential, "The Cost of Discipleship".

We talked about several notions from Bishop Sheen, Servant of God, who loved parish ministry. His powerful and still shown TV shows expressed deep concern for the end of Christianity. "The faithful swimming upstream amid the debris and bodies." paints a quite vivid picture and many of his predictions are coming true and worse without our embracing the cross. Embrace the cross, the symbol of our Catholic faith as in the hymn "Lift High the Cross" because the flip side is the Resurrection. "By your holy Cross, you have the redeemed the world." Complete suffering and forgiveness as expressed in the 14th Station of the Cross by Paul Claudel, "No cross that He will not fit, the Redeemer comes to us."

### **IN CONCLUSION: COUNTER CULTURAL ORDER**

The Order has it right. The Order celebrates LIFE by showing total respect and dignity for all Malades. We are the two apostles on the Road to Emmaus. We need not visit the Holy Land geographically, we have it right here in the Tabernacle. Jesus is known to us in the breaking of the bread, here and now, in the precious Eucharist. Bishop expressed the symbolism beautifully when "Jesus vanished from their sight" exactly because they took, as we do, His body, the Bread of Life, internally. Without Christ in the Eucharist, the cathedrals are nothing but cold empty stone without the Risen Lord, the great mystery of our Faith.

*As if in stark contrast to the empty seminarian rooms, a group of 25-30 young people filled the rear of crypt chapel to capacity to celebrate*

*the Saturday Mass with the Order. After closing the Mass, Bishop providentially asked what the young people were doing at the seminary. To our astonishment, the leaders spoke up and said they are working on "THE CULTURE PROJECT". Their youth movement partners with schools to offer the students the opportunity to work in missionary teams. These NEW YOUNG LAY MISSIONARIES dialogue, "To encounter with young people regularly who are living witnesses and who demonstrate that a life of counter-cultural virtue which respects the dignity of life, is possible." To investigate their proposed programs, go to [restoreculture.com](http://restoreculture.com) and encourage their courage.*

In closing, Bishop encouraged us to spend quality time with the gift of the Eucharist in Adoration. Surrender to Him as on the Road to Emmaus. He recommended the 40 Hours of Adoration devotion which has been lost over time. During the Know Nothing riots of 1844, St. John Neumann was warned that the introduction would cause the hatred against the Catholics and expose the Blessed Sacrament to desecration. A strange incident occurred which helped St. John decide. One night, he was working very late at his desk and fell asleep in his chair. The candle on the desk burnt down and charred some of the papers, but the devotion was still readable. He fell on his knees to give thanks to God for protection, and heard His voice saying, "As the flames are burning here without consuming or injuring the writing, so shall I pour out my grace in the Blessed Sacrament without prejudice to My honor. Fear no profanation, therefore; hesitate no longer to carry out your design for my glory." He composed a special booklet for the devotions and obtained special indulgences for the faithful attending them.

The Forty Hours Devotion provides a wonderful opportunity for the spiritual growth of each person and the parish as a whole. In a world where temptation and evil abound, where devotion to the Mass and our Lord in the Holy Eucharist have declined, where the practice of penance and confession have been forgotten, we need the Forty Hours Devotion more than ever. The Order of Malta needs to take the lead.

In the 2016 Tampa retreat, Bishop Caggiano called the Order, the MARINES of the Church. RETREAT is NOT A DEFEAT! It is a time to pause, step back, examine ourselves and change strategy. To become nothing less than BATTLE READY as Doug Barry preaches on his EWTN shows and Life on the Rocks. Bishop O'Hara equipped us with examples of leadership to be counter-cultures like the young people and challenge the darkness in the world today. Besides the most powerful weapon in the Blessed Sacrament, he urged all Knights and Dames to pray the daily Office as a reminder "Be NOT afraid of anything, CHRIST IS VICTOR".



## The Pilgrimage for Life – Are You Coming?

The Pilgrimage for Life Was born exactly eight years to the day of this year’s Investiture. It was in 2009 when Karen and I were invested in the Order and the dinner speaker was the new archbishop of New York, Timothy Dolan. He spoke of being the chaplain for the American Association and gave us a report card on the three charisms of The Order. Concerning personal piety, he said that though he could not look into our hearts, from what he could see of our behavior he would give us an A. In serving the sick and the poor clearly with our pilgrimage to Lourdes, the prison ministry, and the other good works he would give us an A. When it came to defending the faith, he said he didn’t see us out there and would give us an F. An F?!? Not even a D-? This hit Karen hard. She had been in the Order for all of five hours and she already had an F on her report card.

For many years we had attended the March for Life in Washington, DC. Karen knew many members of the American Association would attend and march but she hadn’t seen the Maltese Cross in the procession and felt we needed

to be there as an Order. If the Order of Malta couldn’t defend life, what could it defend? This shy woman then wrote the new Cardinal and shared her idea. A week later, she was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. However, that was hardly a reason for a Dame or Knight of Malta not to defend the faith in Karen’s mind.

Jeff Trexler called and was supportive but said there was no money in the budget for her idea. She said she didn’t want any money, just the support of the Order. Jack Pohrer called and shared his support but reminded her that the Association had procedures, policies, and committees to deal with new ideas. Karen listened with respect. Certainly, she had been a bit of a rogue in how she had introduced this. Jack finished and said,

*“Anything else, Karen?”*

*“Just one thing,” she replied.*

*“What’s that?” asked Jack.*

*“Are you coming?”*

*“What?”*

*“Well, have you ever been?”*

*“No.”*

*“Then you need to come.”*

And Jack Pohrer came. For three years, Karen led the Pilgrimage for Life watching it grow every year, but she knew she was dying and prayed fervently for a successor. God never fails and along came Nancy Graebe.

When you come on the Pilgrimage for Life, you will join with our brothers and sister Knights and Dames of the Federal Association in two days of personal growth and corporate action. You will have the opportunity the day before the march to receive a reflection from the Sisters of Life. That evening, some of you will serve as ushers for persons with disabilities at the Vigil Mass in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception and will assist persons with disabilities as they bring the gifts forward. The following morning, you will attend the Order's Mass presided by Bishop Edward Scharfenberger of the Diocese of Albany, a Chaplain in the Order.

No doubt, you will be joined by bus loads of blurred-eyed students who have ridden their buses all night from places in Ohio, Michigan, and elsewhere. Together we will have a boxed lunch before boarding a bus to take us to The March. On the bus, we will pray to end abortion and for all those who will march with and against us that day. We will then join hundreds of thousands of (mostly young) people marching for life up Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court.

Last year we were met at the Supreme Court by hecklers with bull horns. Bishop Ed did what Karen always did and stepped in front of the group and led us in the Rosary. When we were done, the hecklers were gone. After praying in front of the Supreme Court, we will board a bus to a church hall where we'll feed marchers before their long bus rides home. One year, it was 9 degrees outside, few people came to the reception and we had all this food left over. Karen called around and found a homeless shelter three blocks away and on the coldest night in Washington, DC, that year, the Order of Malta fed hot soup and sandwiches to the homeless. That's Pro-Life!

So come join us this year as we pray, serve, and defend the faith together at the Pilgrimage for Life. I can still hear Karen's voice asking us all, "Are you coming?"

These remarks were delivered at the Annual Meeting by Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky about the start of the American Association's involvement in the March for Life in Washington, DC. For more information about the 2018 Pilgrimage for life, go to the Association's website or call the New York office. ■



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# That time I went to Lourdes and God whacked me upside the head



Posted on June 19, 2017 by AJ Cattapan

Everyone who goes to Lourdes and enters the healing waters of the baths has a story. I guess it's time I finally told mine. In case you haven't already heard, I had the opportunity to visit Lourdes, France on a pilgrimage with some of my fellow members of the Order of Malta. Every spring, Knights and Dames of Malta from around the world take "malades" (the French term for sick people) to Lourdes for spiritual and physical healing.

When I became a Dame of Malta in November of 2015, many people at the Investiture ceremony asked if I had participated in the Lourdes pilgrimage yet. "Um, no."

"Oh, you must go," they all said. "It's an experience you won't forget, and the candlelit rosary procession is so beautiful!"

I'd heard stories from people who'd been to Lourdes. My own sister-in-law had told me how she had visited Lourdes when she'd had a skin rash. The water was ice cold, she said, but when she came out her skin felt like it was on fire and she dried instantly. In fact, everyone I talked to who had been in the baths said they dried off right away. Hmm, it sounded like a cool pilgrimage. Still, it would be expensive, and I'd have to save up personal days to get enough time off of work.

Less than a week after my investiture into the Order of Malta, my fellow YA author friend, Stephanie Engelman, posted shocking news. She had woken in the middle of the night to nurse the youngest of her five children and ended up finding her husband on the floor. He'd had a massive heart attack.

As news unfolded over the course of the next few days, details surfaced that felt like God was whack-

ing me upside the head and saying, "Invite them to Lourdes! Sponsor her husband, Ray, as a malade." You see, Stephanie's first book, about the power of the rosary, was less than two months away from its release date. Ray had gone into a coma, and it was while his parish community was holding a special rosary prayer session for him that Ray's condition began to improve. As I heard details of all this, I kept thinking about the candlelit rosary procession at Lourdes.

Long story short, I eventually asked Stephanie if she and Ray would be interested. Due to timing, we couldn't get into the 2016 pilgrimage. We had to wait to file for the 2017 pilgrimage, which was probably for the best because I needed time to save up some personal days at work. Luckily, Ray was accepted as a malade, and so off we went.

Each malade at Lourdes gets his or her own "pod." This is a group of people who helps care for the malade during the trip. That pod consists of a caregiver (usually a family member), a host (who keeps us all in line), a charioteer (who pulls the *voiture* the malade sits in), and a few other Dames, Knights, and volunteers to help push the *voiture* (that was my job) and/or fetch whatever the malade needs (water, umbrella, etc.).

The malades and their caregivers visit the baths on the second day of our pilgrimage. Anyone else on the pilgrimage has to wait until the last day. Since I had been on a pilgrimage to Rome three years earlier, I knew not to expect any major religious experiences. They just don't seem to happen for me when I'm with a group. I think it's due to the same reason I don't get much out of group retreats anymore. I'm much more ready and open to listening to God when I travel alone or when I go on a silent retreat. Maybe it's because I have such an Energizer Bunny sort of lifestyle. I go, go, go. And all that "going" means it's hard to slow down and have profound moments. In fact, as we processed from



one event to the next in Lourdes, one of the thoughts that ran through my mind often was, “I am your worker bee, Lord. Just put me to work.”

And when it came time to pray, the only prayer I could think of went a little like this: “Listen, Jesus, you know I’m not good at this pilgrimage thing, so I don’t expect much for me during this time. Besides, there are a lot of really sick people with us on this trip, people who need a lot more healing than I do. So whatever graces you might have had planned for me on this pilgrimage, why don’t you just pass them along to someone else who needs them more?”

In a way, it took the pressure off of me. On my previous pilgrimage, I’d felt incredibly saddened when everyone else was having profound encounters with God, and I was not. That’s why I ended up returning to Rome three months later on a solo trip, so that I could sit in silence with God and feel His presence again. This time around I didn’t want to feel bad if other people had profound experiences with God, and I didn’t. Let them have their healing. I’d find time later to sit in silence with God.

Despite all that, I still decided to try to get into the baths on the last day. I had been warned that you sit and wait outside the baths for hours. In fact, I’d witnessed that for our malades three days earlier. It took a great deal of time to get them through, and we’d even had a reserved time for them.

So on that last afternoon of our pilgrimage, I headed to the baths with some of my fellow Knights and Dames of the American Association. We lined up outside the baths and took our turn shuffling along the benches outside while we listened to the rosary being recited over and over again. Usually, the rosary is recited in a variety of languages. However, the people volunteering to lead the rosary that day must’ve been Italian because Italian (and a little bit of Latin) was all we heard. For nearly three hours!

This is the entrance to the baths.

Do you see that long line of people? Yep, that’s how long you wait! On the bright side, I finally got the Hail Mary memorized in Italian.

While I prayed along as best I could, I settled myself in for the long wait. I’d been told that waiting is “part of the process.” Honestly, from the tales I’d heard, it sounded like this “process” made people either so sleepy or so anxious that by the time they got into the baths, they were a bit disoriented. Everything inside the baths themselves happens very quickly, and lot of people felt like their time in there was more of a blur than anything else.

I was determined to “rest up” during my prayer time so that my senses would be alert and ready to take it all in. I didn’t want my bath time to rush by so quickly that I felt I missed it. After hours of praying the rosary in Italian, it was finally time to enter. First, just a couple pilgrims at a time enter the building and sit on yet another bench. You are seated across from a number of booths that have closed curtains. When a curtain is opened and a guest leaves, another person from the bench is invited inside.

Once inside the curtained area, you notice that this is really just an antechamber to the bath itself. This is the “dressing area.” It’s maybe 8x8 feet. Along the walls to your right and left are rows of plastic white chairs. Above the chairs are hooks. Several volunteers in blue and white striped aprons stand around “shielding” women by holding up blue robes to cover the women as they undress.

I was instructed to hang all my clothes on one of the hooks and place my shoes under the chair while a volunteer held a blue robe behind me. When I was ready, she wrapped the robe around me, and I stood by the plastic chair for a moment until the curtain on the other side of the antechamber opened, and I was led into the bath itself.

The bath room is not much bigger than the antechamber. On the opposite wall was a square depiction of Mary.

Between that wall and where I stood was a small, shallow pool. It was maybe three feet wide and five feet long, and only a couple of feet deep.

The blue robe was unwrapped and somehow the women volunteers simultaneously wrapped me in a white sheet that had been dipped in the bath water. Already I could feel how ice cold that water was going to be. In fact, I’d heard so many stories about how shockingly cold the water was that I think that had become one of my chief concerns. I had visions of shivering madly like when I took swim lessons in the summer as a child and had to jump up and down in the pool to stay warm. As the ice cold sheet was wrapped around me, I took in a deep breath. Everyone said my time in the bath would fly by, so I told myself I could handle the cold. It wouldn’t last long.

The lead volunteer instructed me to step onto the first step inside the bath, to make my prayer intentions quietly, and then to make the sign of the cross to indicate when I was finished. I stepped down. The freezing water hit me, but I was intent on making my prayer intentions. I’d prepared for this for days, so I wasn’t going to let the moment slip by. When I was finished, I made the sign of the cross, and a volunteer on each side guided me down the remaining steps into the water.

I breathed deeply and slowly as I plunged further and further step by step into the ice cold water. Amazingly, I didn’t start to shiver. I simply breathed my way through the painfully cold water. “You can make it,” I told myself. “This won’t last long.” After taking a few steps closer to the opposite wall, the volunteers told me to sit down in the water. I took another deep breath and exhaled as the icy water rose above my waist. Then the volunteers gently leaned me back into the water until it came up to my neck, being careful to keep my head above water.

Immediately, they brought me back up. The volunteer on the right lifted my hand onto a *(continued on page 18)*

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horizontal silver bar that was fastened to the wall below the square depiction of Mary. The volunteer on the left did the same with my left hand. Then the volunteer on the right grabbed my left hand and pulled it over the right.

What kind of a game was going on here? Then I realized she was getting me to turn around. My time in the bath was over. I simply had to walk back out of it. When I got to the top of the steps, I thought, “Well, here it comes—the instantaneous drying.” I didn’t expect my skin to feel like it was on fire like my sister-in-law had. She was the only one I’d heard that happening to, but everyone talked about drying off right away, so I stood there while they removed the white sheet and re-wrapped me in the blue robe.

Hmm. Something was wrong. I wasn’t dry immediately. “Oh well,” I thought, “maybe people didn’t actually mean immediately immediately. Maybe they meant back in the antechamber.”

So I let the volunteer guide me back

into the antechamber, where another woman held my blue robe open to shield me while was instructed to put back on all of my clothes. This meant donning, once again, my entire uniform for the Order of Malta, which included a white skirt, a long sleeve white blouse, a red cardigan, the long black and red Order of Malta cape, my shoes, and the white veil for my head. As I put my shirt back on, I thought, “Huh, that’s funny. I’m still not dry.”

I put on the skirt. Nope not dry yet. I put on the red cardigan. Still dripping. I put on the cape. Not dry yet. I put on my veil. I’m still dripping. I can feel it running down my legs. For crying out loud, I’m going to have to put on my shoes now, and my feet are all wet. Why have I not dried off yet?

And that’s when I heard a voice say, “You told me I could pass it on.” Heart stopped.

God had just figuratively whacked me upside the head again. Don’t tell me to pass it on and then be surprised when I do it. You see, God let me stand

there and drip as a sign that he had taken my prayer seriously. He had passed on whatever graces He had planned for me to someone else. I’d received a physical sign of the spiritual graces someone else would get. God just had to sort of “whack me upside the head” to get the point through my thick skull.

And so I put my shoes back on my wet feet. And I squished my way out of the baths. And I walked around the grotto where, in 1858, our Blessed Mother had appeared to Bernadette and told her to bring people to the spring she would find when she dug through the mud.

And my heart was full.

*The title of this blog post is a bit of a tongue-in-check nod to the absolutely beautiful blog post “That Time I Went to Lourdes and My Son Got Healed,” written by the mother of the Malade that I cared for while in Lourdes. Her story was published in the last issue of the Hospitallers You will not regret taking the time to hear her Lourdes story!*

## ■ HIGHLIGHTS

### Legacy of Josephine “Nicky” Benz Carpenter, DM, honored in Holy Land



An olive tree was planted in a centuries-old grove in Tantor, Israel, September 7 in honor of Nicky Carpenter, DM, an active Dame of the American Association in the Minnesota Area from 2005 until her death on August 14, 2017. She was a most generous and energetic member of the Board of Directors of Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation, which supports this primary work of the Order world wide. It is the only maternity hospital in the West Bank.

Rev. Anthony Maraccio, ChM, from the Federal Association, blessed the olive tree and helped plant it. Thomas E. Driscoll, KM, pictured at the rear of the photo, is a member of the American Association and a Board member of the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation.

Holy Family Hospital’s life giving works will benefit from a most generous and deeply appreciated grant by the Order of Malta, American Association in commemoration of this occasion. Nicky and her fellow Knights and Dames in the Minnesota area have organized several very successful fund raising events for the Hospital. Christmas cards to benefit the hospital are available on our website: [birthplaceofhope.org](http://birthplaceofhope.org).



*(continued from page 2)*

ity that was based in Connecticut for ten years, from 1998 to 2008. Its purpose was to improve the lives of young boys from the streets of Haiti, offering them education, food, and a place to live. In 2008, Douglas Perlitz, the executive director of the Project, was accused of abusing students at the school; he was later prosecuted in Federal Court in Connecticut, and pled guilty to crimes relating to sexual abuse of minors in 2010. The American Association was named in the lawsuit based on two charges, 1) that we operated the School and 2) that we also had the authority to hire and fire the employees of the school.

Let me say that the plaintiffs' claims are wrong. The American Association did not operate or oversee the school or the charity, or have any authority to hire or fire employees or workers at the school. The only connection between the American Association and the Haiti Fund, or the school, were charitable grants made periodically as part of our standard grant-making process. This is the same relationship that the Association has with many charitable endeavors around the world. It is the same relationship that many of us have individually in contributing to non-profit organizations with the missions that we believe in and want to support.

Mr. Brad Babbitt, our attorney, gave an update on the status of the case — the Association is currently awaiting a ruling on a motion for summary judgment.

### OUR 2017 GRANTS PROGRAM

The available money received from our Malta Human Services Foundation for the 2017 Grants program was \$571,852. From that amount, Grants were made as follows; Prison Ministry received \$113,000. \$50,000 was distributed to Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, and another \$50,000 was distributed to Malteser International. Most of you are very familiar with the work of Holy Family Hospital but many ask about Malteser International (MI), which is the Order of Malta's first responders worldwide to any catastrophe, such as typhoons, hurricanes and calamities.

Malteser International has responded to the recent series of hurricanes and is working with the US Associations, operating in Texas, Florida, and Mexico. Doctors, nurses, and supplies are going to St. Thomas of the Virgin Isles, which is one of the American Association Areas. I am delighted to say that Ed Delaney, an American Association Knight and member of our Board of Councillors, is the Vice President of Malteser International Americas.

In addition to Malteser International, Holy Family Hospital and Prison Ministry grants, the Areas received over \$340,000, which was distributed based on the number of dues paying members in each area. The Areas in turn support their local works with the money they receive.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE ORDER

One of the activities which allows our members worldwide to gather together in one location of the world every year in

Lourdes France is the Order's Annual Lourdes Pilgrimage. This event is an opportunity for our members not only to gather in fellowship with the Order's members worldwide, but it permits us to share with our Malades (our sick guests) the opportunity to experience and partake of this special holy place where our Blessed Mother appeared to Bernadette many years ago in 1858. Throughout the years since that apparition, pilgrims have come to seek healing in many forms, and many have come away with a sense of healing...some physically but from my observation, mostly spiritually. Our Co-Chairs for the 2018 Lourdes Pilgrimage are Michael and Cece Donoghue.

### GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

Last year at our Annual Meeting, I mentioned that we were searching for a site in the United States that would satisfy and accommodate our plan to take malade children who are unable to travel to Europe for the annual summer disabled Youth camp. We had found a campsite outside of Green Bay, Wisconsin, last year, and were very impressed by what we saw and learned. This year, we were hoping to sponsor malade children from Green Bay but both the camp management and our team decided there were a few more items that had to be ironed out. The plans for next year look promising to execute the Camp plan.

Along with the Federal and Western Associations, we had a 2017 pilgrimage to Wisconsin, where our Blessed Mother appeared in Champion, Wisconsin and is known as Our Lady of Good Help. Bishop David Ricken, the Bishop of Green Bay, celebrated all of our Masses at the site and was a most gracious host during our entire pilgrimage. In 2018, we have reserved 90 hotel rooms in Green Bay for a bigger Pilgrimage.

### CONCLUSION

The longevity of our Order is a sign of the strength that comes from commitment and responding to the call of our Lord. As we are committed to the Order and our mission, our Association will continue to increase and to provide a haven for our members to grow spiritually in love and service to God.

As this is my last "President's Message", I thank you for your support, prayers and friendship during my time on the Board and as your President. It has been a blessing and privilege to serve you and I look forward to a bright future for the American Association because of all the good works you do! May you and your families share the peace, joy and love of the coming feast of Christmas.

God Bless!



Jack E. Pohrer, GCM

## ■ AN INVITATION

### Join the Pilgrimage for Life



We would like to extend to all of you our personal invitation to join your fellow Knights and Dames to “Come and Pray with Us” in Washington, DC, on January 18th and 19th on the Pilgrimage for Life at the March for Life.

As members of the Order of Malta it is our mission and responsibility to defend the faith just like so many of our ancestors have done. We have been blessed to have inherited a strong legacy of faith and we honor them for their sacrifice.

Now is the time for us to pass on that legacy to the next generation — not just through our words but through our actions. The Pilgrimage for Life is a perfect opportunity to meet that responsibility.

If you have ever had the good fortune to attend the March for Life you cannot help but be impressed by the 100's of thousands... yes 100's of thousands of beautiful, dedicated and faithful high school and college students from all across the nation who come to Washington DC to show their commitment to the protection of life.

These brave young Catholics who call themselves the “pro-life generation”, are not just talking the talk, but literally “walking the walk” and are taking up the mantle and proclaiming the principles of Catholicism...the sanctity and dignity of every human life.

They need to know they have our support and that the Order of Malta is alive and well and will be there for them now and for years to come. They are our future and the future of the Church. Many of them, God willing, will someday be sitting were we are today and carrying on the works of the Order of Malta. Let us be an example and an inspiration to them.

I cannot guarantee the weather will cooperate in January but I can guarantee that there will be an abundance of graces flowing and you will come away emotionally and spiritually renewed. For those of you who are unable to join us in person you can join us in spirit with a donation toward the Pilgrimage or sponsor a Pilgrim to walk and pray for you.

You can also go onto the Order of Malta website to register or call the New York office. We hope that you will “COME and PRAY with US” in Washington, DC.

*Nancy Graebe, Co-chair for the Pilgrimage of Life, delivered these remarks at the Annual Meeting in November.*

### Our Mission

The American Association of the Order of Malta, carefully observing the centuries-old tradition of the Order, has as its mission, to enhance the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, through dedication to and defense of the faith and the Holy See and through service to our fellow man, especially the sick and poor.

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*Photos for this issue have been graciously provided by Michelle Babyak, and others.*

#### Change of address (physical or virtual)?

Please notify the New York office of all changes of address.

As the American Association continues to advance its communication efforts, the New York office has created the new Member Contact Information Update Form. This form provides members with a quick and simple way to update any, or all, of their information online. 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.

Want to try it out? After logging in as a member, visit [orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/update](http://orderofmaltaamerican.org/members/update) and submit your full name and birthdate, along with any information that you would like us to update in our database. We hope that you will utilize this new method and help keep the American Association's records up to date.

You can also send a note to the New York office or send an e-mail to [Miquan@orderofmaltaamerican.org](mailto:Miquan@orderofmaltaamerican.org) or call our office at 212-371-1522.