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Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help: *A Place of Help, Healing and Peace*

"The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help is a place for all who seek help and healing through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Whether you are Catholic or not, whether you believe or are still searching for faith, you are welcome here. Following the example of Adele Brise, who first encountered the Queen of Heaven at this site, we journey together, seeking a deeper relationship with Christ through Mary."

Pilgrims from around the world have been experiencing the Shrine for over 150 years. The Catholic Church officially confirmed the Marian apparitions in 2010. And in 2016, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) officially designated these grounds as a National Shrine."

— from the website of **Our Lady of Good Help**

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Please visit our website at:

www.orderofmaltaamerican.org to find the latest information about the American Association, our local Areas, and the Order of Malta. Links are also available to other Association websites and the Sovereign Magistry in the "About the Order" section.

Since its redesign last fall, the Order of Malta, American Association mobile app continues to be updated regularly with new photos and user friendly improvements to its features such as daily prayers and the member directory. This app is available for Android and iOS devices in the app store when you search "Order of Malta, American Association".



As I write this message I am still enjoying the afterglow of our pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help in Wisconsin this past weekend. Throughout the weekend I was contemplating how I could best describe the experience to all of you. It is certainly not Lourdes or a mini Lourdes but it is just as powerful spiritually.

It is a pilgrimage that allows us time to reflect as you would on retreat. There is a rosary procession, stations of the cross, anointing of the sick, multiple opportunities to receive the sacrament of reconciliation, daily mass and a Eucharistic Procession that was the highlight of the weekend for me.

One of the amazing aspects of this pilgrimage was that all 3 associations participated as one. We stayed in the same hotel, ate meals together and shared a joyfulness that one only finds in the Order of Malta.

Multiple people approached me asking if they could have a list of the attendees from the Federal and Western Association since they were meeting so many new people from each association. Next year we will have just one list of everyone attending.

At the last dinner, Bob Signorelli who is the Hospitaller for the Federal Association and who started this pilgrimage 5 years ago, stated to all of us, "Welcome to the Order of Malta USA." I do believe that this pilgrimage may be Our Lady's way of bringing us all together as one Order of Malta in the USA.

Another aspect of this pilgrimage was the presence of children and grandchildren of members of the Order. It is a great family experience and what a wonderful way to introduce our children and grandchildren to the Order of Malta. What a simple way to grow our Order.

Please consider joining us next year. It fulfills the Lourdes requirement for new members and is less demanding of your time and finances since it is only a weekend.

I know you will enjoy the articles in this edition of the Hospitaller. They illustrate our path to increasing our spirituality by performing our ministries and living the charism of our Order.

God bless you and all that you do,

Peter J. Kelly, MD, KM
President



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LOURDES 2018 Pilgrimage Review

*“God Guide and Guard You –
Keep you safe from harm and
bring you safely back home”*

Thus, began the American Association’s 33rd Pilgrimage to Lourdes. We were honored as Co-Chairs to welcome the 400+ Pilgrims as they boarded the plane at JFK with this simple yet powerful family blessing. As we traced the sign of the cross on the foreheads of Dames, Knights, Malades, Caregivers and Volunteers and said this blessing to each Pilgrim, it marked the beginning of an incredible, celebratory, spiritual journey together.

It is our pleasure to share some of the highlights of this year’s Pilgrimage. It certainly is difficult to choose a main focal point as there were so many amazing moments. The Pilgrimage was spirit-filled, sometimes challenging, joyful and brimming with emotion. When we reviewed the feedback from this year’s Pilgrimage, there were many favorite Lourdes moments for our Pilgrims: the beautiful candle light procession in the Domain, deeply moving Masses in the Basilica and in the Grotto, the morning of recollection, sacrament of the sick, cherished and meaningful service to our Malades, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the closing Mass in the Upper Basilica and of course the Baths. This year there were a few new events added that were well received. Fr. Ian Jeremiah, ChM, celebrated a youth Mass on Sunday morning outside on the lawn at the Hotel Alba that was specifically for our child Malades, their families and their pods. The children were invited to do the readings and participate in the music and thoroughly loved being involved in the liturgy. There was also a Sunday evening sing-a-long in the Hotel Alba Lobby led by our talented Music Maestro, Mac Cooney, which was a huge hit. Mac entertained a very large group of all ages and inspired everyone to sing, dance, share joy and build camaraderie. *(continued on page 4)*



(continued from page 3)

As always, the pilgrimage was a success due to the phenomenal efforts of our medical team, led by Dr. Tony Gagliardi and Patti Vera Hickey, RN. Their tireless dedication and hard work was the foundation of securing our guests, the Malades and Caregivers, and aiding the Blessed Mother as she called those whom she wanted to come to Lourdes. The selection and planning process is long, meticulous and detailed and ensures that each Malade's needs are cared for before we even leave JFK. Patti shared some brief thoughts with us:

"Over the past 21 Pilgrimages I have been on, our fine team of doctors and nurses has grown in number and in quality. They are a unique group whose expertise and faith are blended to create an exceptional relationship with the Malades and their caregivers. Dr. Gagliardi, Medical Director and I are proud of the way our volunteers work with the Malades before, during, and after the trip. Many of us have made lasting friendships with those we serve.

Each year, I am truly amazed at the strength of the Malade's faith in God and Our Blessed Mother, to venture far away, given the complex issues they have. We leave as strangers and come home as friends!"

We had the privilege of meeting many of this year's Malades at a few of the orientations we attended prior to the Pilgrimage. When we shared our experience with them we would mention, "You may not get the miracle you are hoping for but everyone comes back with some sense of healing." Do people come expecting miracles? Perhaps some do. In our experience at Lourdes, this year included, we can't really say that we have ever seen a miracle occur, however, we can say that being part of the Lourdes Pilgrimage is a miraculous experience in and of itself. We find that the miracle of Lourdes is being surrounded by people whose primary motivation is to serve others and let Christ work through all of us to share His everlasting and unconditional love with all those we encounter.

Often when we return, people ask us the same questions, and this year was no different, "Don't your Malades and Caregivers get disappointed if they come home without being miraculously cured?" Our answer is always the same, "Not in our experience." On the contrary, our Malades and Caregivers tend to come home with a serenity and peacefulness that they weren't expecting. In Lourdes, our Malades and Caregivers find a sense of relief in their afflictions. Amidst their insurmountable suffering, the Blessed Mother wraps them in her loving arms and gently places them in the arms of her Son, for guidance during their illness and for protection. Without question, this year our Malades' unshakeable faith, courage and perseverance served all of us as examples of how to endure physical and emotional hardships and still be uplifted by the love of our Blessed Mother and the guidance, protection and love of Christ. We would like to share the experience of two courageous families from this year's pilgrimage who journeyed with us:

CATHY AND GREG FRIERSON:



Intense anticipation, excitement and a bit of anxiousness filled our days prior to leaving for our pilgrimage to Lourdes. We were counseled in advance to "surrender to the experience." I thought then that that would be a very difficult thing to do. My husband's illness had been an intensely

private matter, even among our closest friends, and we lived our lives with a quiet resolve not to surrender to it. And so off we go...living our lives on a very public stage seemingly surrounded by strangers. But these strangers very quickly became our angels...extending to us their love, devotion, compassion, service and open hearts. "Surrendering" to the experience was effortless, safe — not scary, and immensely joyful. The Holy Spirit was so profoundly evident in our every experience and encounter. And it was the Holy Spirit that brought a heaven-sent connection between ourselves and our Order of Malta hosts. The sense of community was so very powerful...together we navigated our way through this extraordinary spiritual journey. The daily Masses, receiving the Sacraments, participating in the pilgrimages, the opportunity for reflection and sharing, and of course the Holy Baths...each experience anointing us with God's graces and special blessings. A very special thank you to the Order of Malta, the volunteers, clinicians, clergy, team leaders, hosts and charioteers who were so very present and so very giving throughout this remarkable pilgrimage. Greg and I will be forever and eternally grateful. And to our fellow Malades and Caregivers, you will be forever in our hearts and prayers.

JENNIFER, MICHAEL, LUCA AND TONY VITELLI:

We knew we were with some of God's greatest earth angels (aka: the Knights, Dames, Volunteers of the Order of Malta) from the moment we were greeted curbside at the airport in New York. I turned to my husband and said "Let Go, Let God" As the caretakers & parents of two of the malades (Luca & Tony), it is not easy to "let go"...that might have been our first miracle of Lourdes...



We honestly felt Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette handpicked our team just for us...I know everyone says their pod is the best but truly our "super pod" was made of some of the most exceptional human beings. These magnificent people went from *(continued on page 6)*





LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

“

The Pilgrimage was a very thought provoking spiritual journey led by some amazing clergy members. A few quotes that resonated with many pilgrims are below:

“It is a privilege to be with our Malades in this beautiful place. Leave your baggage behind and share God’s mercy with one another”

— Archbishop William Lori

“All healing begins in the recognition that we are never alone. Let Mary take your hand and bring you to Christ”

— Bishop Frank Caggiano

“We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures — you are a masterpiece of God”

— Fr Joseph Johnson

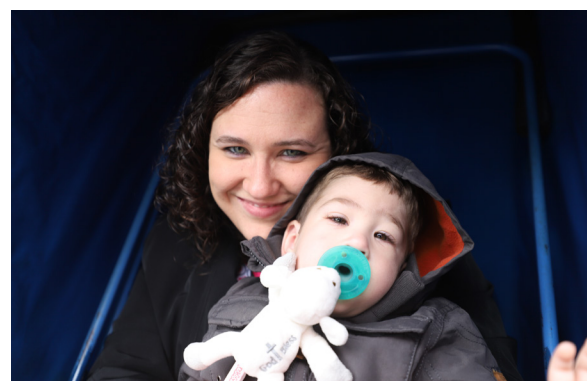
“Even healing miracles are temporary”

— Fr Paul Murphy

“I don’t know if I’ve ever been with a group so joyful. Continue to be beacons of light wherever you are. With Jesus, we can scale any wall”

— Bishop Peter Rosazza

”



(continued from page 4)

being strangers straight to being part of our forever family in a matter of hours. Another Lourdes miracle.

When chatting about Lourdes we all are somewhat at a loss of words to describe this nearly indescribable place on earth; it's so personal and we all walked away with something different and yet the same....some quotes from Luca, Tony and Michael:

Luca said to me while we were still in Lourdes after the Baths, "Mum, I felt peace in my heart" and on our flight home, he leaned over to me and said "Mum, I always knew God is with us but now I feel closer to Him." Luca's top two favorite experiences in Lourdes were going to the Grotto on the first night we arrived and then doing the Steps of Bernadette.

Tony was blown away by the Order and specifically our "super pod"...he kept saying "I can't believe they are here for me; everyone is so kind". He asked Michael and me on the trip if we could get him a special glass cabinet to hang by his bed. The reason, he wanted to keep all his special Lourdes gifts (medals, rosary beads, etc...) close to him so he could continue to have the feeling of peace he was experiencing in Lourdes back home. A couple of Tony's favorite moments were the Stations of the Cross (lower stations) and being with all the other malade children.

As a mother, it was so beautiful to see my sons soaking in all of Lourdes and finding joy in each and every part. Being active and embracing their faith with open hearts. I was bursting with pride to see them sincerely partaking in all of it. Both boys upon leaving wanted to know how could they become knights and help others someday in Lourdes.

When reflecting with Michael, he shared "I felt a peace in my heart in all the services/Masses and in the Domain. A peace, I have never experienced before and certainly not since our boys got sick 8 years ago. I was also moved beyond words in the "children's caretaker reflections"...what amazed me is although we are all caring for sick children with all different backgrounds, different illnesses and or needs, we all had so much in common: the love of our children, the guilt of "are we doing enough?", searching for peace for our children's and our hearts and how does our faith play into all of this? Father Ian did a beautiful job leading us over the two days working through some of these queries. I thought it "awesome" how the caregivers instantly bonded and helped one another through some of these incredibly difficult questions. I drew a lot of strength from each of them. They really amazed me."

For me, I am not sure where to even begin. I honestly felt like we were called to Lourdes at the most perfect time and am forever grateful to our sponsor, Karen Deane. It has been a long 8+ years with our sons' medical journey (all four are sick). There is no question my faith in God and Our Lady has

This pilgrimage restored me mentally and, most important, spiritually.

carried me through. My mantra is "Mother Mary, mother me so I may mother them." And I keep my chin up and face each day with a smile, forgetting the challenges of the day before and having faith we are on this journey for a reason. However, I had been getting weary and there were days I was starting to struggle "are my prayers being heard?" This pilgrimage restored me mentally and, most important, spiritually. Starting with reconciliation, there is too much to say but it was incredibly powerful and healing. Then we moved to the Baths. It was the most spiritual experience of my life. When I stepped into the bath, I, literally, felt Our Lady hug me. It seemed like time stopped for a moment and it was just me and the Blessed Mother. When I stepped out (of the bath), the volunteer working there grabbed my face with her two hands and stared me in the eyes (I was looking into the eyes of an angel); she then hugged and held me. We wept together. I have no idea how long we stood there. I heard in my mind the Blessed Mother saying, "It's all right, you are going to be all right, continue to trust" and I sensed this

rush of heat/warmth run throughout my entire body. It was cathartic and I could feel my soul being healed. No real words can describe my experience but I walked out of the baths with profound peace in my heart and felt God's love soaking my innermost being.

And the trip continued this way, whether it was at a Mass, Adoration, the Stations of the Cross, meals, in procession, I felt the Blessed Mother and our Lord speaking continually through not only the scriptures but in music, the people, in the landscape of Lourdes and sometimes in the least expected places, such as the Jeanne D'Arc.

The Order of Malta (its Knights, Dames, Volunteers) are the most kind-hearted, genuine benevolent souls.

It was a gift as well as honor and privilege to have been able to experience Lourdes but the real reward was seeing the Holy Spirit shining through everyone we met. We will forever carry Lourdes in our hearts, minds, and souls. And look forward to returning...I don't know how we can stay away; it is a slice of heaven on earth.

As Co-Chairs, we served as Hosts of the Pilgrimage but the planning process, which goes on for nearly a year, is an extraordinary collaboration with many exceptional people. With heartfelt gratitude, we would like to thank the following people and their respective committees:

American Association Chancellor, Dick Milone, was ultimately responsible for administering and overseeing the Pilgrimage for the past 6 years. Dede Milone joined Dick as a valuable partner in making sure the Pilgrimage ran smoothly in helping with Malade selection, managing the registration pro-

cess, assigning hotel rooms, and creating teams and pods. We owe so much of the success of this Pilgrimage to Dick and Dede.

Co-Presidents Ken Craig and FJ McCarthy eagerly worked on so much of the pre-planning as well as all the logistics during our time in Lourdes. Moving 400 people around seamlessly is no easy task. They traveled to Lourdes in February to secure venues for the American Association events and organized many calls and meetings to ensure that every logistical detail was addressed and handled. We are very thankful for their abundant talent and tireless effort.

We are so grateful for the energetic, committed and dedicated efforts of all those on the Medical team. This amazing group of experienced and compassionate doctors and nurses gave their time to ensure that the Malades could be comfortable and cared for during this journey. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Tony Gagliardi and Patti Hickey led the Medical team and worked diligently for many months in advance of the trip.

Many thanks as well to this year's Team Captains. They led their teams with boundless energy and enthusiasm and a tireless dedication to ensure everyone's safety. They all worked hard to prepare for the trip, connecting with team members before we left and managed daily issues during the Pilgrimage with smiles and patience. We were happy to receive such positive feedback on all the Captains and happy to see the "spirit de corps" that developed on each team.

We were so blessed to have an amazing group of clergy members, led by Monsignor Ritchie, who were integral to the success of the Pilgrimage. Their thought provoking and faith enriching recollections at the many Masses and events were outstanding as well as the quiet one on one inspiring talks many pilgrims shared with the clergy during processions, dinners, etc. We are so lucky to have the "best of the best" join us on this spiritual journey.

The New York Office staff of the American Association are an incredible gift to us all. We can't thank the staff enough for the dedication, love and commitment they put into planning and executing the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

We also would like to recognize and thank our Music Director, Mac Cooney. Mac's enthusiasm, energy and passion to transform lives and serve with music is a highlight of the Pilgrimage. Mac's liturgical music combined with the voices in our choir was the perfect accompaniment to all the Masses. When our day's work was complete and many of us were winding down for the evening, Mac was just getting started, continuing his ministry by lifting our spirits and voices in song at our sing-a-long. We are so grateful for Mac's dedication and desire to fill our hearts with song.

Most of all we want to thank the Malades and Caregivers who attended the 2018 Pilgrimage for the opportunity to spend the week with you in Lourdes. Please know that the Pilgrimage did not end when we returned home as the camaraderie and spirit of Lourdes is alive in all of us each and every day. You are always in our thoughts and prayers.

We will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Co-Chairs for the American Associations 2018 Pilgrimage to Lourdes. We will treasure the experience for years to come. Our hope is that all of the Pilgrims were able to grow in faith and find a sense of peace that they may not have known before going to Lourdes. We look forward to future pilgrimages and serving Nancy and John Murphy as they lead the charge as Co-Chairs for the 2019 Pilgrimage. We know they will be phenomenal leaders and we wish them the very best of luck and many, many blessings as they begin their planning.

May God Guide and Guard you all, Cece & Mike



Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help

(continued from cover)

In early August, Wisconsin is in the middle of a glorious mid-summer stretch. Riding in a caravan of buses from Green Bay to Champion, site of the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, many of the more than two hundred pilgrims survey the countryside and feel the sense of peace that comes when one gets outside of the bustle of daily life. The American, Federal, and Western Associations combined together to bring enough pilgrims to fill the small church at the shrine that sits between the cornfields in the countryside in this rural area sixteen miles from the heart of Green Bay.

In 1859, when the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brice, a young Belgian immigrant, much of the area was covered in woods, sparsely inhabited by farmers, their families and their livestock.

Champion received its name from immigrants who came from a city of the same name in Belgium. Today, the area is still very rural but the woods are gone, replaced by silos, farmhouses, cows and cornfields that stretch seemingly forever — some call such a landscape, “God’s country.”

The connection with God grows stronger as one approaches the shrine — the church is a prototype of a small country church with the blessed addition that it sits on hallowed ground. In the lower level, the Sanctuary marks the spot where the Blessed Mother appeared. The current chapel was dedicated in 1942; it was the fourth chapel built on the site — the first was

built in 1859 by Lambert Brise, Adele’s father, no doubt to celebrate the apparition and preserve the sacredness of the grounds.

For the American Association, this is the third Annual Pilgrimage to the site. From forty-eight pilgrims in 2016, the Association had nearly one hundred join this year with over one hundred twenty-five pilgrims from the Federal and Western Associations. Meeting in Green Bay at the Hyatt Hotel, the pilgrimage began with a short journey to Saint Francis Xavier Cathedral for the opening Mass with Bishop David Ricken, Conventual Chaplain and Bishop of the Green Bay Diocese, celebrating. The Mass included a special blessing for

the pilgrims, asking for the grace to accept the healing and love of Jesus during the pilgrimage. American Association President Peter Kelly noted that the Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help is a different experience from the Lourdes Pilgrimage — in many ways.

First and foremost, it is a spiritual

journey that is accessible in so many ways — travel, cost, much closer than other Apparition Sites in Mexico and Europe.

The modest schedule on Thursday afternoon was followed by full schedules on Friday and Saturday. Buses conveniently transported the pilgrims from place to place; the morning began with a trip to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help for Mass and a visit to the grounds of the shrine. Confessions were also available; most pilgrims made the short walk down the ramp to the chapel beneath the chapel which was built on the place of the apparitions. Pilgrims enjoyed the silent moments spent in this place of grace and beauty.

The connection with
God grows stronger as one
approaches the shrine.



After the morning visit to the Shrine, the pilgrims departed by bus for De Pere to the campus of Saint Norbert College. After lunch in the dining hall, they walked across the campus to Old Saint Joseph Church which houses the National Shrine of Saint Joseph. The Shrine's rector, Father Michael Brennan, gave a short presentation on the history of the National Shrine. The talk was followed by the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick — a very moving and spiritual component of the pilgrimage for many participants. The Anointing was followed by Adoration with Vespers and Benediction.

After a day at two national shrines, the pilgrims returned to the Hyatt for dinner and for some, a relaxing evening in downtown Green Bay and for others, a good night's sleep.

On Saturday, another full day of events was facilitated by door-to-door bus transportation from the hotel to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. Bishop Ricken celebrated the Mass of Our Lady of Cana. During the Mass, married couples on the Pilgrimage renewed their commitment to their marriages and consecrated their marriages to the Blessed Mother.

The afternoon at the Shrine presented the opportunity for both formal and informal spiritual activities. Stations of the Cross took place in the church, with time following to visit the shrine and pray in silence. Fr. John Broussard, rector of the Shrine, led the group in Adoration and a Healing Service. A Sunday vigil Mass was added to the schedule to accommodate Sunday morning travelers.

After the bus ride back to the hotel, the closing dinner provided the opportunity to celebrate the fellowship and camaraderie that brought everyone together from around the country to share the joy and peace of the Pilgrimage to the

Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. While some pilgrims left on Saturday night and some, early Sunday morning, many gathered at the Cathedral where the pilgrimage began to celebrate Sunday Mass before departing for home.

The Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help has been a truly spiritual journey where pilgrims brought their prayers and petitions to her and sought her intercession to bring peace and understanding to their lives. Pilgrims from the three Associations joined together in faith, hope and charity to be where Mary appeared, to seek her intercession and to share in the joy of her apparition and Adele's response to Our Lady's request.

One of the distinguishing characteristics for this pilgrimage is the presence of children. The pilgrimage is an ideal place for families to come together to pray, to share time, and to experience the spiritually calming presence of the Blessed Mother. The pilgrimage is also a venue where multi-generational families can come together — grandparents, children and grandchildren can spend time together in prayer, in fellowship, and in the company of Knights, Dames and Special Pilgrims.

Pilgrims came from Arizona, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, Washington, DC, and Wisconsin.

For more information on the Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, visit the Spirituality in Action section of the American Association website:

<https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/annual-pilgrimage-national-shrine-lady-good-help/>

■ HIGHLIGHTS



Blessed Gerard

Because Blessed Gerard came from Amalfi, it should be no surprise that his heritage would be honored in his homeland. Traveling in Italy, Mr. Edward Delaney came upon the painting of Blessed Gerard in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Amalfi.

The plaque in the Cathedral of St Andrew in Amalfi reads:

Blessed Gerardo Sasso of Scala, founder of the Order of Malta.

Blessed Gérard is represented in this fresco painting as being a Knight with a sword. As the painting is from the 13th century, it is likely that the Knights of St John had become militarized by that time.

The Cathedral is magnificent and has the remains of St Andrew, the Apostle. The town of Amalfi has the eight-pointed cross as its emblem in recognition of the fact that Blessed Gérard is from Amalfi.

Thanks to Ed Delaney for sharing this connection to the Order of Malta. You can learn more about the Cathedral by searching on the web.

Reflections on the 2018 Lourdes Pilgrimage

The newsletter is blessed to be able to provide three different reflections from a Malade, a Caregiver and a Knight who participated in the 2018 Lourdes Pilgrimage. We are grateful for their permission to share these reflections with you.

The first reflection comes from a Knight on the Pilgrimage from the Northeastern Florida Area, Thomas Egan, making his first pilgrimage to Lourdes:

I thought that one day we would take a trip to Lourdes. I imagined it would be pleasant, interesting, inspiring—not unlike excursions to other destinations with history and faith components. We would plan it; hone it to our preferences in scheduling, transportation, accommodations, itinerary. As always, there would be an atmosphere of leisure, and free time, along with prayer and contemplation. We would get around to this trip one day.

One day would not wait. While winter yet lingered and we made our own plans for the spring, we received word that we would shortly travel to Lourdes, in April. It was not the trip we mused about, but a pilgrimage; and a working pilgrimage at that. Scheduling, transportation, accommodations, itinerary—all neatly in place. World class planning was already largely complete when we received our notice. Thorough and efficient instruction was ongoing well into April. We were introduced to our fellow pilgrims and our dear malade well in advance of departure.

Distinguishing a pilgrimage from a trip, the journey began at home with practical and spiritual preparation; it continued during travel from Florida, intensifying upon joining the Order at New York. It was at once evident from the crisp efficiency and impressive logistics that a serious undertaking was afoot. No mere tour group, this synchronized uniformed movement absorbed us and conformed us into its single-minded pilgrimage mission. An Adoration Chapel on hand even before airport security portended a journey rooted firmly in Faith.

Emerging from the hotel in Lourdes that first time, in uniform, in unison with hundreds of Knights and Dames with lengthy pilgrimage pedigrees, is an indescribable privilege all its own. We fear we are conspicuous and out of place. Are we worthy to participate? The question is shattered as the business—the work — of the pilgrimage begins abruptly and proceeds unceasingly. It is immediately clear that we are also malades; learning, watching, listening, moving, tending, caring-- for another. We are worthy only if we are prepared to serve, and to obey. We are worthy if we will stoop in servitude to reach the

heights of Christian charity; if we bend to toil in the service of others; if we deign to obey those of greater humility than ourselves. The Pilgrimage demands surrender; it demands service and obedience. We gladly follow and obey the example of this Order, being as it is an instrument of the Lord Himself.

The Lourdes Pilgrimage is not just a trip. It is at once a grand global undertaking, and a private personal moment; the horizontal unity of our worldwide Order, immersed in the vertical unity of our Faith; lifting high that which should be exalted, and laying low the divisive trappings of this world. We are confronted with the yawning chasm between us sinners and Holy Mary, the pinnacle of all creation. How much greater still is the gulf between us and the Almighty, Who deigned to draw near us through his beloved Son. All the while, Mother Mary manifests herself at Lourdes, to the least among us, as a bridge to the Almighty and eternity. Can we do other than serve and obey?



The second reflection is from Robert Klein, a Malade from the Upstate New York Area, who sent this message to his sponsor, which included an email he shared with family and friends about his experience:

Hi Peter,

This email is long overdue. I cannot thank you enough for sponsoring us for the Lourdes Pilgrimage and for pushing us to make the RIGHT DECISION. We feel so fortunate to have been selected. Below is a note I have been sending to family and closest friends. I hope it does justice to the experience.

Every day I think of my fellow malades and the wonderful Knights and Dames we met on the trip. We had the perfect POD.

Thanks again,
Bob



What follows is the email Bob sent to his family and friends after returning home from Lourdes:

If I were to describe the Pilgrimage, it is a merging of the Love of God — the joyful environment created by the Dames and Knights of Malta — at a place where Mary, the Mother of God, chose to speak to us. Your faith provides the insight to understand the many personal miracles that are taking place. To observe the love, support and commitment exhibited between husband and wife, parent and child, young adult and parent, brothers and sisters and friends is a real privilege that is indescribable. While observing these supportive relationships I am constantly reminded that in many cases this support is a lifelong commitment. It does not start and end with the Pilgrimage.

The joyful environment created in large part by the Dames and Knights provides the Malades (patients) and their Caregivers with the ability to connect with God and Mary on a very personal level through the Masses, confession, Stations of the Cross and other pilgrimage activities. There were 52 Malades and 52 Caregivers. We were supported by 300 members of the Order of Malta. There were many doctors and nurses to care for the sickest Malades. There were several Knights and Dames in their late 70's and 80's. Many have been on 20 to 30 pilgrimages. The core group of volunteers are young couples deeply committed to their faith in a joyful way. They come from all over the U.S. and provide the leadership structure. It is very impressive and gives you hope for the future of the Catholic Church. The Order of Malta pays all the expenses of the Malades and Caregivers. As well, they pay for all the priests and bishops who tended to our spiritual needs.

All the volunteers are so humble and giving of themselves. Many of them are executives of major corporations and owners of substantial businesses. My Charioteer (Knight assigned to pull me in a "voiture"/cart) as an example, is an orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery in NYC. He is about 60 years old and was on his 17th pilgrimage. His mother and 2 of his brothers also attended. He is

so dedicated that he serves as a general volunteer during the summer. The stories could go on and on. They treated you as if they had known you for years.

We were so lucky to be selected to go — only ones from the Capital Region. I realize that there are thousands of personal miracles and acts of kindness in many programs and facilities throughout the U.S. performed by "Saints". I think what makes this experience so unique (not better or worse) is the merging of God's love with the joyful environment in such a special place. We trust the pilgrimage will help to give us the strength to face our challenges and be of service to others.

It is an experience we will never forget. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Sincerely,
Bob Klein



The final reflection is from a Caregiver, Jo Senecal, who was on the trip as the caregiver for her friend, Julie, who was a victim of the San Bernardino shooting. Jo is a clown with the Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit and writes frequently about her experiences working with dying children.

I was raised hearing sweet sentiments like "you have a face only a mother can love" and "your mama wears granny combat boots" (it's ok. It was always from Dad. He didn't mean it!) I was raised being marched to Mass every Sunday, where I'd watch families process down the aisle for Communion, growing up right before my eyes. Little girls with ruffy dresses one week, teetering on Dr. Scholl's mini heels the next, some finally reaching the finish line of pure adolescence in stilettos, their stunned parents walking behind them, as if they too can't believe their babies are growing so fast. Too fast. (and for some, not fast enough. Or not at all. For those parents, it would be a different kind of "stunned".)

My parents held hands during Mass. Dad would sing off-key, Mom would find her register and lower it. Eventually, she'd become a Chaplain at Mercy

(continued on page 12)

(continued from page 11)

Hospital and would have a beeper clipped to her sexy little fanny pack, which inevitably went off during a homily by a not-very-understanding Fr. Mooney, and she'd fluster away to minister to someone in need, probably in the AIDS/HIV unit, as that was her domain. (My God, she loved them! And they, her). I would squirm with my brother and sister, bored out of my gourd, unless I caught a glimpse of a boy who used to gross me out by being himself, but now was miraculously cured of his ew-ness by being a foxy hunk of PG Plus rated goodness. Or I'd sing in the folk group, which freed me from my restrictive, archaic, old-fashioned parents and let me sing the song of my people - other teens and cool adults, led by the man who would later sing at my wedding plus both funerals of my miraculously marvelous, free-spirited, incredibly intelligent and gifted parents.

My entire life I'd search churches like a water bug darting in and out of faucets. Wanting to capture the perfect harmony of cool priests, friendly "pewple", guitar music, a hip vibe speckled with the old flair of incense and maybe a dash of Latin. With people who wouldn't blast my doubts and disbeliefs and questions about Transubstantiation and things that would make me go, "Seriously, wha?" I'd "drag" my own babies to Mass in Montclair, sitting up front to keep us all in place, forcing myself to surrender to all the things I'd struggle to understand but like to try to get out of my way. I've always said I like mystery and surprises. (I also like the sense of control, but I deny it because it's not sexy, I know, and yes, I'm sure it's why I cut my daughter's cord at birth, though I'm sure I thought I was reaching for the symbolism of severing a tie "just this once") (it WAS pretty cool, though, and I'm so glad I did it, control freak or not) (serously. I cut her cord. So cool! I'll remind her of it if she tries to pierce her belly button).

All this rambling stuff to segue into the here and now, when I'm finally coming down from this pilgrimage in Lourdes. The most awake sleepy little old town in the south of France, where nothing and Everything happened to a nobody and because of it, to Everybody. Google Lourdes and read about a grimy little peasant girl named Bernadette who, like all the best people, said "Yes" to something that just doesn't make sense on paper. Cut to, this old fart of a wayward catholic who felt a shift in Lourdes, a connection to the rawness of the human's fallability, to stuff no one really talks about, but stuff that cuts to the heart of every matter: a faith. A something. A little tug or a pull or an itch that something greater than even the parts we like best of ourselves is "out there in here". Of course, I "know" nothing. I've always believed in a great and loving force that bends in the wind because it IS the wind, that sings like the birds because it IS the songs, that takes care of all people because it IS care of all people. The hurting, the poor, the sick, the terrified, the sad, the hilarious, the strong, the wobbly, the stoic. Us. All of us.

Fighting and healing and singing and swearing and wearing Birkenstocks and wearing stilettos (I mean in general, not in Lourdes...cobblestone streets), drinking in holy water and praying the rosary and praying for each other as if we are one and the same.

Dipping the vulnerable (and we are all vulnerable!) into the Baths, relying on another's strong set of arms and faith they won't get dropped (I didn't drop anyone!), eye contact with women in the Baths who spoke no English and bursting into tears and into my weeping arms, falling in love with older men and women who I will not see again on this side of the grass, falling in love with children who I will not see on this side of the grass; wanting to meet all 20,000 strangers in the Basilica, praying for all of you at the Grotto!, joining "strangers" in prayer and meaning every word, feeling safe in a dangerous world as the Order of Malta took great care of all, watching our youth reaching out to the most crippled- I mean, bodies that haven't felt the length of a full stretch in their entire lives- truly and devotedly seeing to their needs when no one was watching (I was. I am a nosy parker when it comes to watching people care for others. That stuff feeds the heck out of me); moms stroking their little ones without even realizing it; humble priests, nuns, bishops, archbishops, cardinals...if you're not Catholic, you might poooh poooh these mighty lovely people, but I urge you to give a quick nod to those who do a lot of work unearthing darkness to light; no sleep ("you can sleep when you're dead" seemed to be an unspoken theme); enlightening conversations and music, secret love notes passed along from stranger to best friend to stranger; taking care of, and being taken care of each other.

Karen Last Deane and Julie Swann-Paez are the reasons I was there. The rest of the people are the reasons I will never be the same. As for "Mother's Day"? The holy pilgrimage in Lourdes places you at the heart of the Grotto, praying to the Blessed Mother, which I NEVER say, because it's just never been how I roll. But I'll say it now. I mean, God is a big deal. But the Mother of God? I mean, come on! And all the mothering care I've had my whole life still comes to me.

After the sleepless plane trip home a few days ago, I waved goodbye to one of my youngest new best buddies and his Dad, who mothered his son like a BOSS, and my "malade", my Julie Swann-Paez, didn't say a word as my heart broke into 8 billion pieces in the uber and I wailed into her lap as her hands felt EXACTLY like my mom's. I didn't tell her this until now. But this woman, who is thriving and determined to keep rising and healing from her atrocious attack 2 1/2 years ago in San Bernardino, placed her hands on me like my own mother's. The profundity is not lost on me, and I know without doubt, that no matter our walks of faiths, our talks of hope vs despair, that God Is and All Is Well, and we are One. And I believe in miracles like crazy.

Dame and Knight Chris and Tom Kroeger – Naples Area



Chris and Tom Kroeger are an amazing couple in the Naples area who have taken the astounding extra step to form service projects for the Lee County members. They were invested 6 years ago into the Order of Malta and are Legatus members as well. What is so astounding about this couple is the passion they have to serve. Chris and Tom are the Area Hospitallers for Lee County within the Naples Area. They wanted a bigger opportunity to energize the Lee County members and combine both forces of spiritual life and helping others. So, tirelessly, this couple put themselves in the service of Sanibel Island and the Lee County members. They realized that the hour driving to and from Naples for all of the wonderful projects, Masses, and initiatives was a problem for many members in Lee County, especially in peak season when the snow birds frequent the beautiful beaches and weather of south Florida.

Along with attending the mini retreats in the Naples area, the fall retreat in Wisconsin, Chris and Tom twice have attended the Lourdes Pilgrimage, reinforced by the reward of the grace of Lourdes. Chris, with a master's in theology, feels that his faith was personally deepened by the pilgrimage. He remembers, upon returning to New York, a stranger who saw him care for his Malade at the luggage return area, asking if he was the Malade's servant. For Tom, that was the defining moment of why we continue to serve the sick in Lourdes and why we carry that service beyond Lourdes into our everyday life. With a heart filled with God's love, suffering and serving are both sweet. Tom and Chris seem to exemplify indescribable tenderness and comfort in providential, merciful moments like these.

Chris and Tom do not bury their talents; the gifts they bring have overflowed into the lives they have touched in Naples and Sanibel Island. Included in the many programs, projects and initiatives are the monthly Mass and dinner twice a year for the benefit of the Catholic Charities Human Trafficking Assistance Program for victims throughout the state. Dinners are planned with Mass to stuff the

backpacks from purchased and donated items, many coming because of notes in parish bulletins asking for donated items.

Several of the backpacks are immediately gifted to the Sheriff's department for emergency use. Comforting victims when they arrive in the sheriff's office with nothing in hand offers hope and a new life — the backpacks contain a generous number of items for personal items. Twice a year, this project supporting the Human Trafficking Assistance Program is coordinated and implemented by Chris, Tom and the Naples Area members. For information on the Human Trafficking Assistance Program, you can go to the website: http://www.catholiccharitiesdov.org/services/programs/human_trafficking.html

Chris and Tom work with members from Lee County to purchase, prepare, cook and donate dinners monthly for the Ronald McDonald House. These meals are for the children and families at the House to enjoy. This reminds us God's work is not bound by places or people — the families in the Ronald McDonald house come from many areas of the country and beyond. In Lee County, almost every member in the Area has cooked meals, taking at least one date a month to prepare three to four meals.

We hope that God looks upon our honest and holy gifts and blesses them.

Admiration is what I have for Chris and Tom Kroeger's great strength; their identity shows a treasure chest of spiritual jewels. With a little creativity and a lot of hard work, they and their fellow Knights and Dames continue to make the world they live in a better place as they follow the words of the Daily Prayer of the Order, practicing charity toward their neighbors. Thank you Chris and Tom ! Bravo

This article is one of a series, written by Linda Del Rio, member of the Board of Councillors and the Communications Committee. If you have a story of someone like the Kroegers, please contact me at Imariadelrio@gmail.com. Thank you for reading and God bless!

For more information on the Naples Area, see their section on the Association website: <https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/areas/naples-florida/area-home/>



The Year of Formation: A New Outlook for New Candidates



The Admissions, Communications, and Membership Committees have been hard at work on the American Association's update to the Year of Preparation Room, now known as the Year of Formation Program. In May 2015, the Board of Councillors established a committee led by Richard D. Milone, MD, GCM, focused on providing the basic information that a candidate should know while working through their Year of Preparation. Less than one year later, this committee debuted the Year of Preparation Room which consisted of 8 video modules accompanied by required reading materials. One main objective of this committee was to create a program that has the capacity to expand and improve as needed. In 2018, the idea of improvement was addressed.

Soon, candidates entering their Year of Formation will be given access to an online tool that provides them with a solid foundation in the history and hospitaller origins of the Order and a deeper understanding of what is expected in the lifelong commitment they will make as Knights or Dames. Hosted on EdX, an online educational tool developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, the Year of Formation Program will feature 8 modules made up of videos, photos, readings, and self-assessment quizzes that introduce each candidate to a variety of topics related to the Order of Malta, American Association.

This multi-committee project enlisted the help of some familiar faces, like Bishop Frank Caggiano, ChC, Father Joseph Johnson, ChM, and Ken Craig, KM, to explain important topics such as the history and spirituality of the Order of Malta. Peter Scudner, KM, Federal Association, of Triode Media Group, lent his video expertise and filmed all of our featured speakers in Lourdes, New York City, and Wisconsin. This program also includes the writings of authors such as W. Shepherdson Abell, author of *Malta Meditations*, to capture the true meaning of what it means to be a part of the Order of Malta. Insight from Edward Delaney, Admissions/Preparation Committee Chair, Camille Kelleher, Vice Hospitaller and Membership/Area Development Committee Chair, and Christopher Poch, Communications Committee Chair, helped steer the direction of this project in terms of program structure, featured speakers and readings, and topics covered in each module. Topics include a thorough explanation of the Daily Prayer of the Order, the eight pointed Cross and the Beatitudes, the Order's history, government and membership structure, and its focus on works and spirituality.

A preview of the new Year of Formation program was debuted at the June 2018 Area Leadership Meeting to our Board Members, Area Chairs, Area Hospitallers, and Area Membership Chairs, all of whom were excited for the new program and eager to assist in its ongoing production. Several Areas have debuted, or will be debuting, the program to local members since June to inform them of these upcoming changes. Not only will this program be available to new candidates entering their Year of Formation, all members will have the opportunity to use this new program as a "refresher" course for themselves.

Production for the Year of Formation is scheduled to conclude at the end of 2018 and a round of beta testing, which may result in new additions to the program, will follow shortly after. The Admissions, Communications, and Membership Committees are looking forward to premiering this program next year in an effort to continuously improve the experience of candidates and members of the Order of Malta, American Association.

Deceased Members: January 1, 2018 – Present

John Fleming Ball, KM	Greenwich, CT	Joseph J. Lucca, KM	Wantagh, NY
Constance Louise Bissonnette, DM	Providence, RI	Leo H. MacDonald, Sr, KM	St. Louis, MO
Elizabeth M. Dawson, DM	New Canaan, CT	Phyllis M. MacNeil, DM	Westwood, MA
Robert Lane Dillmeier, KM	Hobe Sound, FL	Daniel Desmond McCarthy, GCMOb	Rockville Centre, NY
Theodore J. Dubuque, Jr, MD, KM	St. Louis, MO	Jean Marie McLaughlin, DM	New Canaan, CT
Zachary Francis Endress, MD, KM	Traverse City, MI	James F. Mooney, Jr, KM	Needham, MA
William J. Flynn, KM	Garden City, NY	Morgan J. Murray, KMOB	Greensburg, PA
Dorothy M. Geisler, DM	Indianapolis, IN	Thomas M. Noonan, KM	St. Louis, MO
Thomas James Giblin, MD, KM	Wellesley, MA	Gregory P. Plunkett, KM	Hyannis Port, MA
Rev. Msgr. Thomas E. Gilleece, ChD	Chappaqua, NY	Victor J. Riley, Jr, KM	Cody, WY
Dolores Bernadette Grier, DM	New York, NY	James P. Slattery, KM	New Canaan, CT
Mary M. Houlihan, DM	White Plains, NY	Harold F. Tehan, KM	Dallas, TX
Michael Kraynak, Jr, KM	Ridgewood, NJ		

Prison Ministry

As you may know from earlier reports on prison ministry, the American Association is part of the world's largest Christian prison ministry apostolate. While it is partly a result of the disproportionately large prison population in the United States, the opportunity had to be seized and the American Association stepped to the plate. The Association's interest began when John Santa, KM, visited a prison some 15 years ago. A trusted adviser of his had stolen from his business, and John went to visit the man who, until he died recently, remained his friend. From that experience, a project was started in Connecticut to reach out to inmates beyond John Santa's friend, to a population underserved across the United States and the world. Like Joseph's coat of many colors, Prison Ministry has unfolded in a variety of different opportunities.

In 2006, Joe Miller, KMOB, when he was Chancellor of the American Association, asked Bob Fredericks, GCMOb, Ph.D., to come up with a project which would be both transformative and singular — one that could be deployed across the Association. The project became Prison Ministry and it launched in 2007.

The United States has the world's largest prison population with more than 2,000,000 incarcerated at any one time, equaling 25% of the world's total prison population while the United States has only 6% of the world's total population. More shocking is the fact that you must add the next four countries together to produce the next 25% of the prison total. Substance abuse and mandatory sentences are among the root causes.

Being of service "inside the walls" was recognized right at the start as a critical element of the apostolate. It also became quickly apparent that prisoners were hungry for Bibles and Prayer Books. Bibles and prayer books were produced, first in English and then in Spanish to reach the diverse prison population. In 2009, The Serving Brother (TSB) newsletter was published for the first time. It is now a quarterly newsletter with over 55,000 copies of each issue mailed throughout the United States, Canada, and more than 35 countries in the Americas. The newsletter is edited by Fr. George Williams, SJ, Ph.D.

Early in 2013, the Grand Master asked the three US Associations to work together on Prison Ministry. The work together began in 2014. The Canadian Association had been using a Canadian version of TSB in its ministry; they soon joined the three United States Associations, and the North American Prison Ministry Apostolate was formed with Bob Fredericks as its Chair.

The Apostolate created its first Strategic Plan in 2015. This year, the Apostolate surveyed its 100-person leadership group to document where it stands now. Besides its three publications which are read and used in prison ministries which ranked at the top in terms of importance to the active persons in the Apostolate, in close second place in awareness were inmate retreats. These retreats occur usually through Diocesan Catholic Charities resources with occasional Order of Malta Chaplains as participants. The critical success factor about the retreats is that they include the reconciliation process which then permits mercy and justice.

This article was contributed by Joe Feitelberg, KMOB, a member of the Board of the Prison Ministry Apostolate. For more information on Prison Ministry, contact a member of the Prison Ministry Apostolate Board, your Area Chair or visit the Association's website. Prison Ministry in the Spirituality in Action Section (www.orderofmaltaamerican.org)

ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

September 6, 2018

New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting

September 7-9, 2018

Medway, MA

Association Retreat

September 8, 2018

Feast of Our Lady of Philermo

October 25-27, 2018

Investiture Weekend Events

October 25, 2018

New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting

October 26, 2018

Annual Meeting, Investiture,
Annual Dinner

November 1, 2018

All Saints' Day

November 22, 2018

Thanksgiving

December 8, 2018

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 25, 2018

Christmas

February 1-3, 2019

Lutz, Florida

Association Retreat

February 12, 2019

West Palm Beach

Board of Councillors Meeting

February 25-26, 2019

New York City

Chaplains' Convocation

May 1-7, 2019

Lourdes Pilgrimage

May 16, 2019

New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting

June 13-14, 2019

New York City

Area Leadership Meeting

June 24, 2019

Feast of Saint John the Baptist

July 11-23, 2019

Pilgrimage to Malta Italy, Switzerland

August 1- 4, 2019

Wisconsin

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help

August 15, 2019

Feast of the Assumption

September 8, 2019

Feast of Our Lady of Philermo

September 19, 2019

Boston, MA

Board of Councillors Meeting

November 1, 2019

All Saints' Day

November 14, 2019

New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting

November 15, 2019

New York City

Annual Meeting, Investiture,
Annual Dinner

November 28, 2019

Thanksgiving

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Change of address?

Please notify the New York Office.

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

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

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.