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HOSPITALLERS

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— IN THIS ISSUE —

A Pilgrimage *of* Grace

One Teen's Journey to Lourdes

9 CARRIED BY GRACE
Tricia's Journey to Lourdes

10 WHAT ARE YOU REALLY SEEKING *in* LOURDES?

11 MEMORIES OF GRACE
2026 Lourdes Pilgrimage

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

DOWNLOAD OUR MOBILE APP for spiritual resources, news, calendar of events, member directory, and new push notifications. The app is available for Android and iOS devices in the app store when you search "Order of Malta, American Association."

— IN THIS ISSUE —

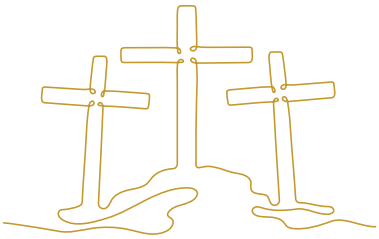
3
A Message from the
President

4
A Message from the
Executive Director

5
STEWARDSHIP SPOTLIGHT
Gregory Oussani, KM

7–12
2026 LOURDES PILGRIMAGE
A Pilgrimage of Grace
One Teen's Journey to Lourdes

Carried by Grace
Tricia's Journey to Lourdes



What Are You Really Seeking *in* Lourdes?

Memories of Grace

A Call to Faith and Service

13
SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Work of The Order

14
REGENT'S CORNER
The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

15–16
FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHT
2026 Grants Program
Strengthening Hands-On Service Across the Association

17–18
WORLDWIDE WORKS
Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation
Tia's Story

Malteser International Americas
Building Hope and Health in Guatemala

19–23
RECENT EVENTS
A Culture of Transparency
The International Conference of Receivers and Treasurers

A Renewal of Our Calling
as Knights and Dames

Malta Camp USA

24–25
UPCOMING EVENTS
Take Heart
Join the 2026 Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion

Save the Date
2026 Investiture Weekend in New York City

26
2027 Admissions Application
Now Open

27
Association Calendar

A Message from the

PRESIDENT

AS ALWAYS, THIS HOSPITALLER NEWSLETTER is chock full of information and highlights our activities for the past few months— please read it cover to cover!

Our pilgrimage to Lourdes was spectacular! The weather cooperated, our travel was seamless, and by all accounts our malades and their caregivers came home filled with joy, hope, and peace. It would be hard to thank of all of the people involved by name, but I'd like to especially thank Debbie and Jean Brunel, Mitch Mitchell and Stacey Reisman, Tony Gagliardi and Patti Vara-Hickey, Kristy Synder, Nancy and John Murphy, Msgr. Ritchie and the clergy, Pete McMullin, and Cathy, Carla, Matt and the entire office team for all their hard work and dedication. I'm also very grateful to Cardinal Dolan who accompanied us this year and, as always, enriched our pilgrimage with his deep spirituality, warm smile, and good humor. Lastly, I'm grateful to all the Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, Affiliates, students, and volunteers who gave up a week to demonstrate what 'forgetful of thyself' really means.

Our 2026 grant process has largely concluded and I am very happy to report that nearly $900,000 was distributed to support Holy Family Hospital, Malteser International—Americas, the Malta Mobile Ministry, Prison Ministry, Malta Camp, and the works of our Areas. I am very grateful to Grants Committee chair Anne Peach and her committee members Andy Aoyama, Maureen Bleday, Keith Cardoza, Bill Fessler, Rory Kelleher, Nicki McGowan, and Andy Smith, as well as all the Area Chairs. A great deal of effort is expended by this group to review grant applications and ensure the requested funds are being used in meaningful ways and in line with the charism of the Order. Special thanks to Tiffany Mazza as well for all of her support!!

By now you will have received an invitation to participate in the annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion and I hope many of you will take advantage of the opportunity to participate. Champion is the only recognized apparition site in the United States and offers a unique opportunity to escape the bustle of everyday life to join members from the Federal and Western Associations and pray in a tranquil space that is literally in the middle of corn fields and devoid of the commercialism that is present at other sites. It is truly a special pilgrimage!

As announced in an email on June 18th, the American Association will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of its establishment and its century of service in 2027. From an initial 12 members, the Association has grown to over 1,800 and has expanded far beyond its initial New York City focus. This expansion across the country gave rise to the founding of the Federal and Western Associations, who share this anniversary with us and bring our number to almost 3,000 Knights, Dames, and Chaplains throughout the United States. To commemorate this occasion, we are planning a trip from September 24–October 1, 2027 to visit Malta and Rome, Italy. Although the Association has sponsored trips in the past, this one will be especially significant as it will allow us to connect in very personal ways with the Order's historical roots and its modern presence.

We expect to be joined by senior leadership from the Grand Magistry, the three Associations, our chaplains, and distinguished guests. Our travels will take us to sites that are at the core of the Order and our faith, offering a meaningful opportunity to reflect on our shared history, deepen our friendships, and look ahead to what our next 100 years may bring. It promises to be a memorable celebration of this momentous anniversary and of the enduring mission we share.

Shortly after American independence, amidst bitter deadlocks over state representation, Benjamin Franklin proposed to the Constitutional Convention that a chaplain begin daily sessions with a prayer, arguing that '*a nation cannot rise without Divine aid*'. Imploring the delegates he stated:

> *"In the beginning of the contest with G. Britain, when we were sensible of danger we had daily prayer in this room for the Divine Protection. — Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a Superintending providence in our favor. To that kind providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance."*

As we celebrate the 4th of July, and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, let's remember our dependence on 'Divine aid' and that all that is good about our country comes from His providence. And let's pray that He will continue to bless the United States, give us strength to move past the bitterness and division of our day, and watch over us as we care for the poor and the sick and defend our faith.

Thank you for all you do, humbly and without fanfare, to live the charism of the Order. Know that your work is valued, appreciated, and most of all necessary.

Have a wonderful summer!

Kenneth R. Craig

A Message from the

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL STATED: ***"Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another."*** This underscores that groups making a great impact are unified by selfless love. Having been with the Order for nine months, I have now seen first-hand how members, affiliates, and volunteers, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and opinions, come together, forgetful of thyself and joined by faith, to serve the sick, poor, and marginalized with love and compassion. As the American Association approaches its Centennial Anniversary, the impact the Order continues to have in the United States is extraordinary, and we look forward to exploring opportunities to enhance and expand our impact in the years to come.

It is clear that the Order of Malta, American Association is a strong, compassionate community. In the spring, hundreds of people came together selflessly and cooperatively to take care of malades and support their caregivers during the Lourdes Pilgrimage, providing a life-changing spiritual experience and much-needed healing. It was a gift and joy to behold!

I have also had the honor and privilege to visit a number of Areas in recent months, including Cincinnati, Cleveland, Michigan, and Long Island to meet with members, attend events, and experience the works of service that unite so many to demonstrate Jesus' love in their own communities. Our members support Zelie's Home for new and expectant mothers in Cleveland, which provides love and support for vulnerable women building families. In Cincinnati, our members celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy providing free prescription drugs for the poor and sick made possible with support from the Cincinnati Area. Our members lead the Malta Medical & Dental Clinic in Detroit, providing much-needed care to the poor and uninsured. On Long Island, our members support low-income families who are struggling to make ends meet with nutritious food and baby items through St. Martha's Parish Outreach. These are all incredible examples of our members joining forces with each other and our partners to make a difference—improving lives and strengthening our communities with love.

In June, I spent a few days at Malta Camp in upstate New York. Once again, I observed the American Association building community with love and kindness. In its fifth year, more than 100 volunteers, including many members and affiliates, joined forces to provide a memorable experience for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The joy was palpable and the unity in diversity was heartwarming. And I have to recognize the remarkable hospitality and generosity of members Peter and Jean Maloy, who opened their home with love to the more than 100 volunteers to kick off Camp week. Also, much gratitude to the Camp leadership, including Mary Delaney, AUX, Ed Delaney, KM, and the Medical, Behavioral, and Operations teams, who ensured the success of 2026 Malta Camp USA!

To ensure the Order's impact grows, we continue to review and improve operations in the New York Office. Mary Zouvelos joined our staff as a Program Manager in late winter. She helped with the planning and execution of Malta Camp USA. Her passion and compassion were evident as she supported camp operations. Angela Castronova joined our team on June 29 as the new Membership & Administrative Coordinator. She will be assisting with the new member admissions process and responding to membership questions and needs. Please give her a warm welcome! We will be bringing on a Finance Director in early August to oversee the Accounting/Finance operations of the Association. Notably, long-time dedicated staff members have been promoted: Carla Gunerard—Events & Pilgrimage Manager; Matt LaRose—IT & Operations Manager; and Tiffany Mazza—Marketing & Communications Manager. Victoria Gothard, our Mountbatten Program intern from England, is doing an outstanding job supporting member engagement, marketing and communications, and program development, and we hope to extend her term until May 2027.

We are in the process of transitioning the American Association bank accounts to Bank of America and hope to complete the move by the end of the summer. We will be working with the Areas to transition their accounts as well for consistency and to streamline the tracking of Area finances. Office staff will be in touch over the summer to review the procedures and assist with the transition. I respectfully request your patience and cooperation as we work through the process.

In addition, over the past several months, the New York Office has supported the Association's vital mission and member experience in a multitude of ways. We updated the Area Leadership Handbook, Year of Formation Modules, and Employee Handbook; redesigned the quarterly Hospitaller Newsletter; planned and executed a video project for enhanced communications; supported the NY City Area's Camino Sobre Ruedas pilot; and worked with the Board and Committee Leaders on the Winter and Summer Retreats, the Lourdes and Our Lady of Champion Pilgrimages, and the 2027 Centennial Trip. We also worked with American Association leadership to create a Safeguarding Policy, update the Code of Conduct, and administer and improve the Admissions, Grants, and Member Engagement processes. In addition, we worked with members to remit outstanding annual contributions and managed clean audits for the Association and two Foundations. And thanks to the generosity of Greg Oussani, KM, we are in the process of developing a Planned Giving Program, while exploring the creation and expansion of critical programs serving those most in need.

As we approach the American Association's 100th Anniversary year, I look forward to sharing ideas and working together to plan for the next 100 years with an eye toward growing our faith-fueled membership and meaningful impact while bound to God and one another in love.

Peace and all goodness, Cathy A. Demeuse

GREGORY OUSSANI, KM

STEWARDSHIP IS A WAY OF LIFE.

It is a continual process of renewing and recommitting ourselves to God. It is the intentional act of returning a portion of our time, talent, and treasure back to Him in gratitude for the countless gifts He has bestowed upon us.

"Let us pray to the Virgin Mary that she may intercede for us and help us to be faithful stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to us, administering it with justice and responsibility." — Pope Leo XIV

As part of this renewed focus, each quarter we will spotlight members whose extraordinary witness exemplifies true stewardship. Their leadership, humility, and generosity offer powerful examples of our mission in action and invite all of us to reflect on how we are called to serve.

HONORING EXEMPLARY STEWARDS

THIS QUARTER, WE ARE HONORED TO HIGHLIGHT GREGORY OUSSANI, KM, whose steadfast commitment to the Order of Malta and the wider Catholic community reflects a lifetime dedicated to faithful stewardship.

A Knight of Malta in the New York City Area since 2004, Gregory has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the Order's mission through the generous sharing of his time, talent, and treasure. His stewardship extends well beyond participation; it is reflected in sustained leadership, active engagement, philanthropic support, and a deep devotion to serving the Church and those most in need.

Since becoming a member, Gregory has participated in 14 Lourdes Pilgrimages with the Order of Malta, faithfully accompanying our beloved malades on their journey while living the Order's charism of witnessing the faith and serving the poor and the sick. His consistent presence on pilgrimage over more than two decades speaks to a profound personal commitment to service and spiritual growth.

His leadership within the American Association has been equally impactful. A member of the Board of Directors from 2023–2025, Gregory served on numerous committees, including Communications, Spirituality and Member Outreach, Disciplinary, Planned Giving, and several ad hoc committees supporting key Association initiatives. In 2025, he spearheaded the Association's planned giving efforts and now serves as Chair of the Planned Giving Committee, helping establish a long-term strategy to strengthen the Order's future and ensure that its legacy continues for generations to come.

Gregory's stewardship is also evident through his philanthropic commitment to the Order, including his generous support of the Association's recent Capital Campaign. Whether serving on committees, contributing to strategic discussions, supporting major initiatives, or hosting distinguished guests such as Sister Raffaella Petrini, FSE, during the 2025 Investiture Weekend, he consistently answers the call to serve with humility and dedication.

Beyond the Order of Malta, Gregory's lifelong service to the Church includes leadership roles with the Friends of the Sisters of Life, the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation, the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums, the Melkite Catholic Eparchy, and numerous other Catholic apostolates. Across each of these endeavors, a common thread emerges: a desire to place his gifts at the service of God and others.

Gregory's example reminds us that stewardship is not defined by a single act of generosity, but by a lifelong commitment to faithfully using the gifts God has entrusted to us. Through his leadership, service, philanthropy, and devotion to the mission of the Order, he exemplifies stewardship as a true way of life.

"For more than 20 years,
Greg Oussani's selfless generosity of
his time, treasure, and talent,
most especially in the defense of life,
has been an inspiration to all of us."

— Ken Craig, GCM,
President, American Association

LEAVE A LEGACY *of* COMPASSION

Supporting the Sick and the Poor for Generations to Come

LEGACY GIVING is one of the most meaningful ways to extend your impact beyond your lifetime. By including the Order of Malta, American Association in your estate plans, you help ensure that our mission of serving the sick, the poor, and the most vulnerable continues for generations to come. Your generosity strengthens a nearly 1,000 year tradition of faith, service, and humanitarian care—one that has shaped countless lives across centuries.

WHAT IS LEGACY GIVING?

Legacy giving—also known as planned giving—allows you to make a charitable contribution through your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy. It is not limited to large estates; even a modest gift can make a profound and lasting difference. Unlike traditional estate planning, which focuses on caring for your loved ones, legacy giving allows your values to endure and your compassion to create hope long after you are gone.

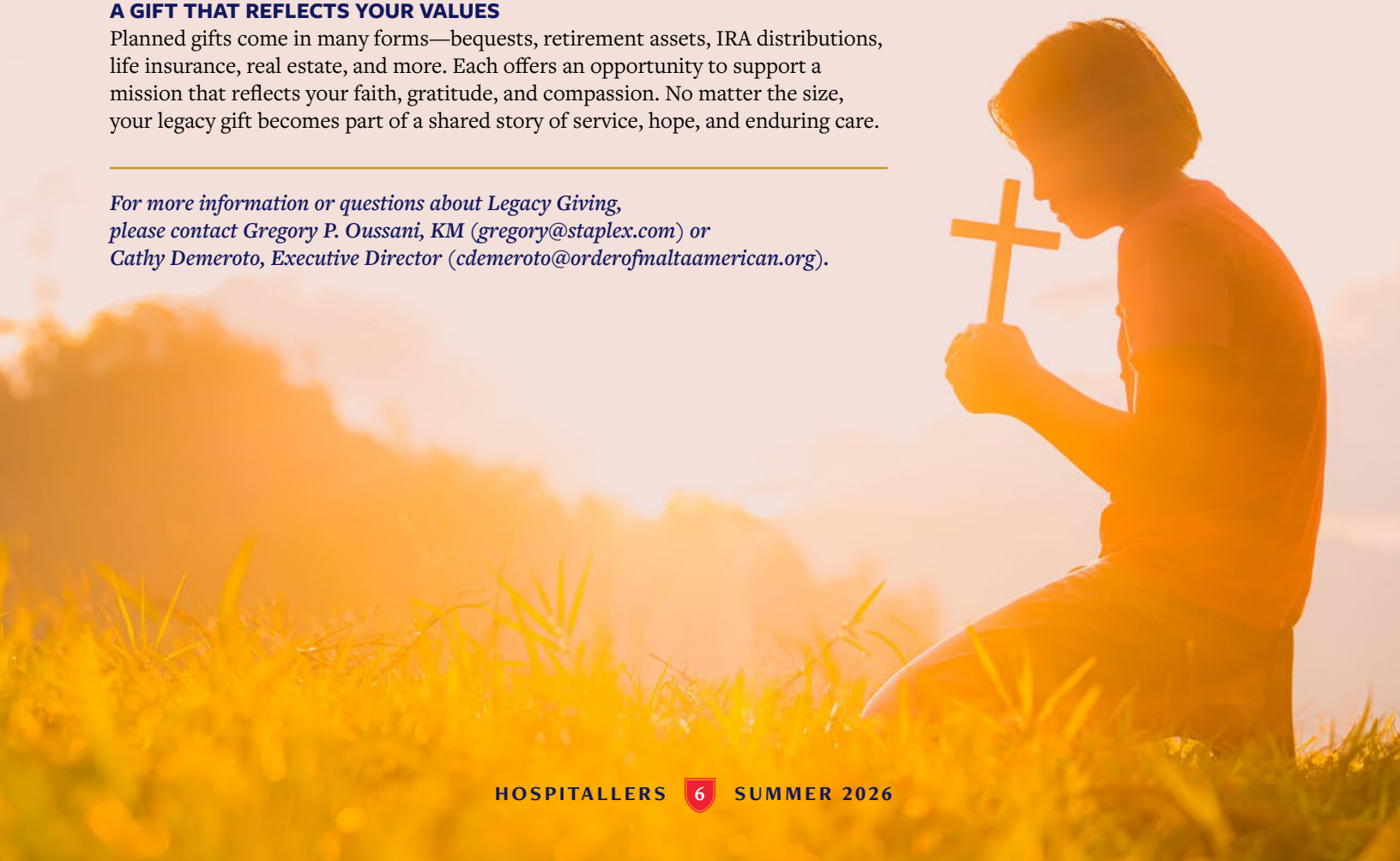
WHY CHOOSE THE ORDER OF MALTA, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION?

For Knights, Dames, volunteers, and friends, legacy giving is a natural extension of a lifelong commitment to serving those in need. With deep roots in the United States since 1927 and a global history spanning over 900 years, the Order of Malta stands as one of the world's oldest and most respected humanitarian institutions. Including the Order in your estate plans ensures that our mission—notably caring for the sick and the poor—continues with strength and purpose.

A GIFT THAT REFLECTS YOUR VALUES

Planned gifts come in many forms—bequests, retirement assets, IRA distributions, life insurance, real estate, and more. Each offers an opportunity to support a mission that reflects your faith, gratitude, and compassion. No matter the size, your legacy gift becomes part of a shared story of service, hope, and enduring care.

For more information or questions about Legacy Giving, please contact Gregory P. Oussani, KM (gregory@staplex.com) or Cathy Demeroto, Executive Director (cdemeroto@orderofmaltaamerican.org).



A PILGRIMAGE *of* GRACE

One Teen's Journey to LOURDES

—2026 LOURDES PILGRIMAGE—

Earlier this year, Daniel Graziose traveled with the Order of Malta, American Association on its 38th Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes, joining nearly 400 pilgrims—Knights, Dames, Chaplains, Auxiliary, Volunteers, Candidates, Medical Team Members, Malades, and Caregivers—on a journey defined by prayer, compassion, and quiet courage. Guided by this year's theme, "Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee," the pilgrimage became a powerful witness to faith, tender care, and the hope that flourishes in community. The reflection that follows is Daniel's own account of that experience.

When I look back on my time in Lourdes, I feel both honored and proud to say it will be a week in my life that I will never forget. The people I met—their faith, their stories, their laughter—are what made the Lourdes Pilgrimage 2026 so special. What began as a week of getting to know one another quickly felt like years of friendship had already passed.

My name is Daniel Graziose. I am 16 years old, and I am from Long Island, NY. I am currently a junior at Chaminade High School.

I was born in 2009 in China to a family I did not know, and I was born with a neurological condition called hydrocephalus—a buildup of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain caused by a cyst blocking the duct that normally allows fluid to drain. Early in my life, I had a shunt placed, which allowed me to live and grow with proper treatment. At 6, I had to replace my shunt, as I couldn't live without one.

From ages 6 to 14—until my freshman year of high school—I lived a normal childhood: going to school, spending time with friends, and playing team sports.

However, during the first eight months of high school, I began experiencing intense head pain. At first, I thought it was the adjustment to a new school, a new environment, and the stress of being a teenager. But when the pain worsened, I knew something more serious was going on. After months of doctor visits, medications, and temporary relief methods like ice and massages, nothing worked permanently. By then, I had already undergone seven procedures related to hydrocephalus, and surgery became the last option.

I was then "unofficially" diagnosed with Chiari malformation, a condition that often goes hand in hand with hydrocephalus. After a week and a half in the hospital and two procedures, I finally came out of pain following recovery. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Steven Schnider, MD, and the entire medical team at Cohen Children's Hospital in Queens, NY.

For about a year and a half afterward, I lived pain-free again. But during my junior year at Chaminade (2025–2026), the pain returned. In November 2025, we went back down the surgical path. Knowing it had been the most effective solution before, and with similar symptoms, we decided to proceed. Two surgeries were performed, recovery followed, and things seemed to be improving.

But on the way to a post-op checkup, my mom and I were in a minor car accident, which left me with an acute concussion. Just when things seemed to be stabilizing again—as if in fate's hands—the pain returned. More doctor visits followed: medication, physical therapy, ice, heat, and massages—but nothing worked the way surgery had.

In January 2026, I underwent my third surgery of the school year: the removal of a non-programmable shunt and the insertion of a programmable one, allowing for more external control of fluid flow.

Continued on next page

2026 LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

Continued from previous page

When that still did not fully resolve the pain, we reached another turning point. In April 2026, during Holy Week, I had my longest hospital stay yet—12 days and three additional procedures in the operating room. After all of that, I am now living shunt-free and continuing on the road to recovery.

Throughout everything, both my faith and my relationship with my caregiver—my mom—were tested. My faith has always remained with me, even when I could not see it. As Scripture says, *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Monsignor Frank Caldwell, pastor at Curé of Ars in Merrick, NY, has been a major part of my journey. He has anointed me, visited me, comforted me in the middle of the night, and been a constant source of strength and inspiration. It was also through him that my mom and I were nominated to participate in the Lourdes Pilgrimage 2026 with the Order of Malta.

Thank you to the Order of Malta, American Association, for saying "YES!" and allowing us to be part of something so meaningful

I also want to thank my mom. I may not have known her all my life, but she is, and will always be, my best friend through both the ups and downs. Without her, my journey to where I am today would be a mystery. Through every hospital stay, every setback, and every moment of uncertainty, she has been right there beside me without hesitation.

Walking into Terminal 7 at JFK Airport, I can honestly say that both my mom (my caregiver) and I were uncertain about what lay ahead. It felt like everyone already knew each other, and there we were, stepping into it all for the first time. Before we even landed in Lourdes, France, I had already made a friend. I am especially grateful to have met Olivia Tuttle, another 16-year-old who is defying the odds and writing her own story every day.

This year marked the first time the Order of Malta welcomed as many young pilgrims with their caregivers as it did, and I am truly honored to have been one of them.

The kindness of the volunteers and the dedication of the medical teams—doctors, nurses, and student nurses—will never go unnoticed. You are the reason every pilgrim was able to experience Lourdes the way they did.

We were encouraged to surrender ourselves to those caring for us that week, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to do so.

To all the young pilgrims on both the purple and blue teams, each of you inspires me, gives me perspective, and shows what courage, resilience, and strength truly look like. You are not alone—we are all in this together.

To the Purple Team Captains, Jean and Peter Maloy: thank you for giving me a week I will always remember. Your leadership and hospitality are unmatched—especially for the Tootsie Pops!

To my Purple Team pod—Mark and Lisa Ioli, Sally Sweeney, and Nate Miller—thank you for your care, understanding, and the love you showed both my mom and me throughout the week.

Thank you to the Order of Malta, American Association, for saying "YES!" and allowing us to be part of something so meaningful.

Thank you to everyone who made the week possible without ever seeking recognition.

As one door closes, another opens; for me, this is the beginning of a new chapter. I am deeply grateful to everyone I encountered for helping me rediscover my smile. It had been a long time since I experienced the kind of joy and peace that I found in Lourdes. — Daniel Graziose

While in Lourdes, Daniel also interviewed Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop Emeritus of New York. You can read that interview here.

CARRIED *by* GRACE: *Tricia's Journey to Lourdes*

FOR TRICIA KOLESAR AND HER HUSBAND, ANDY, the Lourdes pilgrimage became a beautiful experience of grace, tenderness, and renewed trust in God.

Traveling as a malade with the Order of Malta, American Association, Tricia encountered the extraordinary kindness of the volunteers, medical team, and fellow pilgrims in a way she says she will never forget. She expressed heartfelt gratitude for the Yellow Team leadership, the doctors and nurses, the voiture crew, and her generous sponsor, all of whom helped make the pilgrimage a profound experience of care and accompaniment.

> *"The Lourdes trip was spiritually and emotionally uplifting," Tricia shared, calling it "a great grace that we will never forget."*

After noticing a lump last year, Tricia received a formal cancer diagnosis in January. Shortly afterward, Chris Poch, KM, proposed her to travel as a malade on this year's pilgrimage to Lourdes. She began treatment on February 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, and her first round concluded on April 27, the day before the pilgrimage began. Tricia came to Lourdes carrying the burden of serious illness, as well as a deep hope that the pilgrimage would be a place of encounter with the Lord's healing love. During her time there, she experienced moments of humility, trust, and surrender, especially as she learned to place her hopes more completely in God's hands.

One of the most meaningful moments of the pilgrimage came while praying the Stations of the Cross. There, Tricia felt drawn into a deeper understanding of what it means to embrace the cross she had been given and to walk more closely with Christ through suffering. In Lourdes, she encountered not only prayerful support and tender care, but also the peace that comes from entrusting oneself to Jesus through the loving intercession of Our Lady.

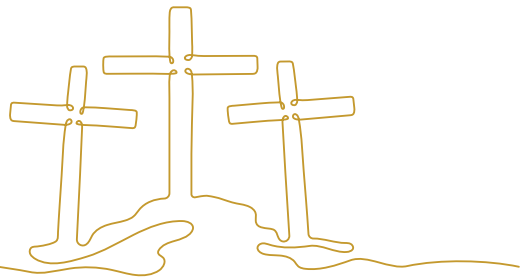
After returning home, Tricia received extraordinary medical news: biopsies showed no evidence of carcinoma. For her, this was not only encouraging news, but part of what she describes as a profound healing—one experienced through prayer, pilgrimage, and the loving presence of God throughout her journey.

Reflecting on that grace, Tricia wrote, "God is so good and Mother Mary had me covered in her beautiful blue mantle the entire time."

She also shared her sincere thanks for the many personal acts of kindness she received along the way, including a beautiful prayer shawl that remains a cherished reminder of the charity and devotion shown by everyone connected to the Order of Malta.

Tricia's testimony is a beautiful witness to the heart of the Lourdes pilgrimage. While healing may come in many forms, her story reminds us that Lourdes is always a place of grace: a place where burdens are shared, faith is strengthened, and souls are drawn more deeply into the loving care of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

WHAT ARE YOU REALLY SEEKING *in* LOURDES?



On the first full day of our Lourdes Pilgrimage, Rev. Joseph Johnson, ChM set the spiritual tone with a powerful Spiritual Orientation that invited pilgrims to look beyond logistics and enter the deeper purpose of the journey. His reflection reframed pilgrimage not as travel, but as an intentional movement toward God—one marked by openness, healing, and grace. The excerpts below offer a glimpse into his message, which touched on the nature of pilgrimage, God's love, the role of Mary, and the meaning of miracles. We invite you to read and reflect. We've included excerpts from his talk below. At the end, you will find a link to read his full reflection on our website.

WHAT IS A PILGRIMAGE?

"Pilgrimage doesn't mean a vacation. Nor is it simply a trip to France... our destination is not geographical but spiritual. A pilgrimage is a journey made in order to grow closer to God."

STAYING OPEN TO GOD'S WORK

"God often has things in store for us that we didn't expect... Be open to that! Pilgrimage is about openness to God's work in our hearts."

WHO GOD REALLY IS

"God is your loving Father who created you... who wants to guide you to discover how to become the person He created you to be. He is also the goal of our lives."

MARY AS OUR SPIRITUAL MOTHER

"'Behold your mother!' ... Simply put, Mary is our spiritual mother... Closeness with the Son necessarily brings us into closeness with the Mother."

RETHINKING MIRACLES

"Miracles can be discovered all around us... We can discover a freedom here from the things that consume us in daily life."

WHAT GRACE REALLY IS

"Grace is divine life... a share in Christ's life. God's power is love—and love is the greatest power in the world."

THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE

"God's love is our way. His love is our destination. His love is our happiness. His love is our true home forever."

You can read the full transcript of Fr. Johnson's talk when you click here.

—MEMORIES *of* GRACE—

***"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee"* (Luke 1:28)** is Angel Gabriel's greeting to the Blessed Mother at the Annunciation and marks the beginning of the Incarnation. It was also the theme of our 2026 Lourdes Pilgrimage, where we placed our trust in Mary and reflected on the beginning of her own absolute trust in God's will.

At the time of the Annunciation, Mary did not know what the future held. She had no detailed map before her, no knowledge of the flight into Egypt or the darkness of the Cross. What Mary did have was a deep interior willingness, a calm confidence rooted in God's presence and an unmerited divine gift: grace.

In many ways, our pilgrimage mirrored Mary's journey. We arrived in Lourdes without knowing exactly what awaited us, carrying our questions, hopes, and sorrows. There, Heaven seemed to reach down and touch earth, allowing an inner dawn to break within our hearts. God willing, it became a first step toward healing, an awakening of dormant faith, or simply a source of comfort for the present and the future.

This year's Lourdes Pilgrimage was truly special. Every pilgrimage to Lourdes is a blessing, but there was something about this year's journey that is difficult to describe. Was it the beauty and witness of our malades and caregivers? Was it the deep faith of our pilgrims? Was it the profound love shown for the Blessed Mother, her Son, and one another? We believe the answer is yes to all of these.

A pilgrimage to Lourdes does not happen without the dedication, sacrifice, and hard work of so many people. On behalf of everyone involved with the pilgrimage, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to:

Our malades and caregivers, for demonstrating what faith and hope truly are and for allowing us to live out our charism

Our chaplains and clergy, for shepherding and guiding us throughout the pilgrimage

Our medical team, for their care, compassion, expertise and counsel

Our office teams, both in Lourdes and New York City, for ensuring that every aspect of the Pilgrimage ran so smoothly

Our captains, hosts, charioteers and pod members, for their accompaniment, guidance and tireless service

Our security team, for keeping us safe

Our auxiliary and student nurses, for their hard work, dedication and bright smiles

All those who assisted us at the hotels and airports, helping to make our pilgrimage such a wonderful experience

Our music ministry, for their beautiful accompaniment at Masses, services, and events

Our Young Pilgrims team, for all they do to bring joy and energy to the pilgrimage

Our Advance Team, for preparing everything before our arrival as well as our departure

Our Knights, Dames, YOF members, Affiliates and Volunteers, for your countless hours of service, generosity and joyful spirit

Please know that each of you remains in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you do to make this Pilgrimage such a profound blessing and a true joy. It is an honor to serve alongside you and to be part of the Order of Malta.

With gratitude and love,
Mitch and Stacey
Lourdes Pilgrimage Co-Presidents

A CALL *to* FAITH *and* SERVICE

Address by the Grand Master, Fra' John Dunlap, at the First Year Medal Ceremony

We are pleased to present the address delivered by the 81st Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' John Dunlap, at the First Year Medal Ceremony for those attending the Lourdes pilgrimage for the first time on Saturday, May 2, 2026. In this reflection, he reminds us that in a world marked by suffering, we are called to draw closer to one another, deepen our faith, and place the most vulnerable at the center of our service.

Excellencies,
Dear Knights, Dames and Volunteers,
Dear Pilgrims,

We gather once again in **Lourdes**, in this place where **Heaven touched the earth**, where the **Virgin Mary revealed God's tenderness** to His people, and where the suffering find not only **consolation**, but **meaning**.

This year marks my **26th pilgrimage to Lourdes**, and my **third as Grand Master**. Each time I return, my sense of **gratitude deepens**—for this place, and for all of you who give life to this pilgrimage.

This pilgrimage is **never routine**. Each year reflects the state of the world we bring with us—and this year, that world is marked by **deep suffering**.

War, division, and instability continue to define our time. Among us are pilgrims from countries profoundly affected by conflict—**Ukraine, Palestine, and Lebanon,** whose First Lady honors us with her presence. We are also honored by the presence of the **mother of the President of Slovakia.** Their participation is **not symbolic.** It is a reminder that the **wounds of the world are here, among us.**

We also carry **grief that is closer to home.**

In recent months, many **young lives** were lost while serving others. I think in particular of **Chadi Ammar**, a young employee of our Order in Lebanon, killed in an airstrike while helping his community. He was not a soldier. He was serving - and he paid with his life.

This is the **reality of what it means to serve today.**

And yet, **we are here.** Not because the world is peaceful - but precisely because it is not.

In times like these, **distance is not an option.** When the world fractures, we are called to draw closer - to one another, and to the **Virgin Mary.** Like children turning to their mother, we come to her with **trust.** We ask for her **guidance,** her **protection,** and her **strength.**

This year, we are in total **7,600 participants,** a clear sign of **fidelity and commitment:** this includes **1,300 malades, 260 priests – including 4 Cardinals and 20 Bishops – 600 young people, 450 members of medical staff, 350 children, and 900 pilgrims.** These are not just numbers. They are **lives placed at the service of others.**

The presence of so many **young people matters.** They are not here out of obligation, but by **choice.** That tells us something important: **the spirit of service is alive** - and it must be **sustained.**

At the same time, our Order looks forward with **hope.**

Two causes of sainthood are currently underway within our Order: that of **Blessed Gerard,** our founder, and that of **Fra' Andrew Bertie, the 78th Grand Master.** We commend these causes to your **prayers,** that they may continue to advance.

But let us be clear: coming to Lourdes does not solve the world's problems.

It does something more **demanding.**

It reminds us of **who we are supposed to be.**

In a world that grows colder, we must be more **welcoming.**

In a world that isolates, we must **accompany.**

In a world that forgets the weak, we must place them at the **center.**

This is not optional. It is our vocation: *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum.*

Our members and volunteers live this reality every day—in **Ukraine, in the Holy Land, in Lebanon,** and in so many other places marked by suffering. They do not wait for ideal conditions. They serve in the **middle of difficulty.**

Lourdes gives us clarity.

Here, the malades are not hidden - they are at the **center of daily life.** And that alone challenges the **logic of the world outside.**

Before concluding, I return to the **Virgin Mary.**

In difficult times, we do not need **complicated answers.** We need **guidance**. And like children, we turn to our mother.

We ask her to help us **remain faithful.**

We ask her to keep us **united.**

We ask her to show us how to **serve—not in words, but in reality.**

May **Our Lady of Lourdes** guide us in these difficult times.

May she draw us closer to one another.

And may she strengthen the **mission of our Order throughout the world.**

I wish you a meaningful and blessed pilgrimage. Thank you

The Sacred Heart *of* Jesus

The Work of the Order

LAST MONTH, on the 11th of June, the Bishops of the United States, to mark the 250th anniversary of Independence, consecrated the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Incidentally, June is, by tradition, the month of the "Sacred Heart of Jesus." Many churches have a prominent statue of the Sacred Heart and many homes have either a statue or a picture of the Sacred Heart in them. Perhaps we might be puzzled or unsure about this devotion, or think that it might be a bit outdated, or perhaps we might just like to know more. With this in mind, this reflection, in our summer edition of the Hospitaller's Newsletter, unpacks how the Sacred Heart is at the very center of our Christian life and, indeed, the work of the Order.

Devotions to the Sacred Heart became more prominent after the visions of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a saint who lived in France in the late seventeenth century. In his encyclical letter, Dilexit Nos (on the Sacred Heart of Jesus), Pope Francis wrote about a world that has become ″heartless″ and indifferent to greed and war, and a Catholic Church in need of revitalizing its missionary joy, need to open themselves up to Christ′s infinite love. By contemplating Jesus′ Sacred Heart, the faithful can be filled with the living water that can heal the hurt we have caused, strengthen our ability to love and serve others, and inspire us to journey together toward a just, solidary and fraternal world. The encyclical includes numerous reflections from the Bible, previous magisterial texts and the writings of saints and his fellow Jesuits, to re-propose to the whole church the centuries-old devotion. In fact, since 1899, there have been four papal encyclicals and numerous papal texts dedicated to the Sacred Heart: a symbol of Jesus′ infinite love, which moves the faithful to love one another.

Pope Francis noted that in the deepest fiber of our being, we were made to love and to be loved. However, when we witness the outbreak of new wars or just ongoing and petty power struggles, we may be tempted to conclude that our world is losing its heart. Therefore, the most decisive question we can ask is, "Do I have a heart?"

With the Pope Francis's reflections in mind, we can see that there is an important symbolism at play in this devotion to the Sacred Heart. When we speak of the heart as Catholic Christians, we do not just mean the vital organ that pumps blood around our bodies. Rather, the heart is understood to be at the very center of what motivates us and it is the seat of our love for God and for others. This also makes sense when we think about many phrases that we use about people: warm-hearted, cold-hearted, broken-hearted, big-hearted, open-hearted etc. These phrases are not really talking about that amazing muscle, the physical human heart! Instead, they describe or capture the essence of a person.

The most decisive question we can ask is, "Do I have a heart?"

We can also see the root of this understanding of the heart in the Bible, where the word heart is used hundreds of times; almost always as a symbol of the very soul of a person. The "heart" is literally what makes them tick, or as we might say, going to the very heart of things. So, the Sacred Heart of Jesus reminds us of His great love for us and His desire to fill our hearts with His love. Perhaps we can also reflect that this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus questions us and challenges us too: about my heart and where my heart really is. In other words, what really motivates me or makes me tick, and where do I put all my energies in life? In this way, the challenge is about our spiritual heart: How would we describe it from that list above?

The Sacred Heart is very much connected with the gift of love from the heart of Jesus: the Eucharist. The Eucharist is often called "the sacrament of love" since it is a real presence of Jesus's love for us and a challenge for us to love another. Do I receive the Eucharist with an open and clean heart? Do I then live the love of Jesus that I have received as I leave Mass, especially as a member of the Order? A number of parishes also have "Eucharistic Adoration", where we can spend time in prayer before the Blessed

Sacrament. It is a wonderful way of extending the loving encounter with our Lord that we experience and receive during the celebration of the Mass.

In these reflections about the heart, we can easily make a connection to the work of the Order. We might say that the heart is at the heart of our mission and purpose! The love of God, shown in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, motivates and makes possible all that the Order does, especially in our love and service of the sick and those in need. In fact, in 2020, the then Grand Master of the Order consecrated the Order to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

As we continue our journey through these summer months, perhaps our Lord asks two things of us. First of all, he asks us to open our hearts to His; that is to His immense love. Let us not be hard hearted and indifferent to Jesus' great love for each of us. Secondly, he asks us to look into our hearts and to see what is there and then, with His help, to renew and to strengthen our heart: that is to create a pure heart within us. In all this, we will receive many gifts that we need in our often busy lives that can tug at our heart this way and that. Finally, and by no means least, we can receive that special gift of the risen Christ, the gift of a tranquility of heart. This is a gift that many of us need in our busy and sometimes fragmented lives. It is a wonderful gift indeed!

This reflection was written by Very Rev. Msgr. Anthony M. Barratt, STL, PhD, VF, ChM, Upstate New York Area.

—REGENT'S CORNER—

24TH JUNE

The NATIVITY *of* SAINT JOHN *the* BAPTIST

The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist is the patronal feast day of the Order of Malta, and it holds a special place in the life of the Order. It is more than a date on the Church calendar. It is a moment to reflect on the spiritual life and mission we are called to live. For us, Saint John is not simply a patron from the past. He remains a striking example of humility, devotion, and courage, and his witness still speaks to our vocation today.

The Church celebrates only three births in its liturgical year: the birth of Jesus, the birth of Mary, and the birth of Saint John the Baptist. In Catholic tradition, saints are usually honored on the day of their death, because that is seen as their birth into eternal life. These three nativities are different because each is tied in a unique way to God's saving work and to a birth marked by holiness. Jesus, the Son of God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, is conceived by the Holy Spirit and born without sin. Mary is honored because, by the grace of the Immaculate Conception, she was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her life. John the Baptist was conceived in the ordinary human condition, but tradition holds that he was sanctified in his mother's womb when he leapt for joy at the Visitation and was filled with the Holy Spirit. For that reason, he is honored not only for his witness, but also for the holiness that marked his birth. His life reminds us that God often prepares a soul for its mission long before the world can see it.

This feast also says something important about the identity of the Order of Malta. Our calling is not really about position or recognition. It is about a life rooted in prayer, fraternity, and service. As a lay religious order of the Catholic Church, the Order has a distinctive place in the Church: deeply spiritual in character, yet with a charism always expressed in practical works of mercy. Saint John reflects that same spirit. Though he came from a priestly family, he did not choose comfort or status. He went into the wilderness, where holiness and witness became inseparable.

That same calling continues in the shared spiritual life of the Order today. The Subpriory is more than a structure or an organization. It is a spiritual home that brings members together in prayer and sacrifice. In a world that often feels scattered and distracted, that kind of shared life matters. Like Saint John gathering disciples in the wilderness, the Order is meant to form a community centered on Christ and shaped by humility. His words, "He must increase, but I must decrease,"

remain a guide for us. Our service should never point back to ourselves, but to the God-given dignity of the people we serve in the presence of Christ.

This is especially true in the Order's service to the poor and the sick. That service is not just philanthropy, and it is certainly not about recognition. It is an expression of *obsequium pauperum*—a reverent service grounded in the belief that Christ is present with those who suffer. The poor and sick are never simply recipients of charity. They are persons whose dignity calls forth humility, compassion, and faithfulness from us. In serving them, the Order stays faithful to its ancient mission and, at its best, quietly points others toward the Gospel.

Saint John also reminds us that humility and courage belong together. He spoke the truth plainly, defended what was right, and accepted the cost of doing so. That remains part of the challenge the Order of Malta continues to accept. Our defense of the faith, *tuitio fidei* is no longer lived out on battlefields, but in fidelity to human dignity, in spiritual discipline, and in works of mercy in a wounded world. As we celebrate his nativity, we are invited once again to renew our commitment to prayer, simplicity, and loving service, so that Christ may increase in all we do.

H.E. Amb. Peter McGuire, GCMOb, is the Regent of the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes.
He can be contacted via email at subpriory.oll.regent@gmail.com.

2026 GRANTS PROGRAM

Strengthening Hands-On Service Across the Association

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION'S 2026 GRANTS PROGRAM continues to be one of the most meaningful ways we live the charism of the Order: *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*—witnessing the faith and service to the sick and the poor. Through this annual program, the Association helps Areas transform compassion into action by supporting local organizations and projects where members are actively engaged in hands-on service.

While final award details are still being completed, the 2026 program is expected to provide nearly $900,000 in support through more than 100 grants across 28 Areas. This total also includes Board-designated grants supporting the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation, Malteser International Americas, and key Association ministries, including Malta Camp USA, the Malta Mobile Ministry, and Prison Ministry. Together, these grants help strengthen ministries and initiatives that bring practical assistance, dignity, healing, and hope to vulnerable neighbors in communities throughout the Association and beyond.

This year's program included two grant opportunities designed to meet the needs of Areas and their partner organizations. Local Area Project Support Grants make it possible for Areas to sustain and expand local works that may not be affiliated with a 501(c)(3), such as Malta Walks, backpack programs, and other Area-led efforts. Regular Area Grants support 501(c)(3) organizations where members are directly involved in service, ensuring that Association funding remains closely connected to the personal commitment and active participation of our members.

The impact of the Grants Program is made possible through the enduring support of the Malta Human Services Foundation (MHSF), which serves as a vital source of funding for the Association's charitable work. Re-established in 2003 to support the mission of the American Association, the Foundation has provided more than $7 million to sustain the grants program since 2004. Through the generosity of members and benefactors, combined with disciplined stewardship of its resources, MHSF helps ensure that the Association can continue investing in ministries and organizations that embody the Order's commitment to serving the poor and the sick.

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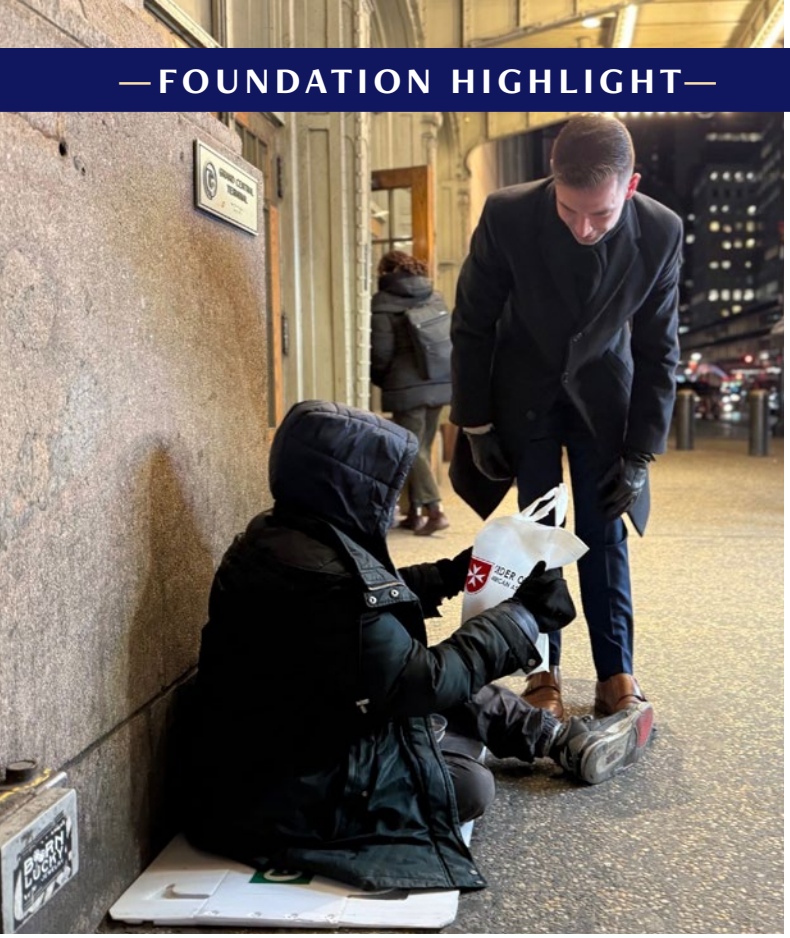

Behind every grant is a story of service.

THE FOUNDATION'S SUCCESS reflects both prudent financial management and a commitment to Catholic values. Guided by the ethical investment principles of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and supported by experienced fiduciary advisors, MHSF has generated more than $12 million in investment gains over the past decade while continuing to meet its annual funding commitment to the grants program. Under the leadership of Keith Cardoza, KM, and its Investment Committee, the Foundation has nearly doubled the size of its portfolio, transforming financial resources into lasting impact. Every grant awarded through this program is a testament to that stewardship, helping members bring hope, healing, and compassionate service to those most in need.

The grants process was once again guided by the Board's Grants Committee, with an emphasis on impact, sustainability, and alignment with the mission of the Order. Applications were submitted through SurveyMonkey Apply, offering Areas and organizations a streamlined way to prepare proposals, review program materials, and participate in the process. The New York Office also supported Areas throughout the application period by providing guidance, resources, and assistance as questions arose.

Behind every grant is a story of service: members accompanying those who are isolated, feeding families, visiting the sick and imprisoned, supporting children and families in need, and responding to local challenges with faith and generosity. Together, these works reflect the heart of the Association and the lifelong commitment members make to serve Christ by serving the poor and the sick.

Now that most 2026 grants have been awarded, the program has moved into the important follow-up phase. The Association is working with Areas and grant recipients to ensure that awarded funds are being used according to each grant's stated purpose and in support of the hands-on work of our members. At the same time, we are evaluating this year's program and collecting feedback from participants to identify what worked well and where the process can be improved for next year. Through this continued stewardship and reflection, the resources entrusted to the Association can keep becoming tangible acts of mercy, strengthening our shared mission and extending the healing presence of the Order into the communities we serve.

To see many of our grants in action, visit the Latest News section of our website here.

HOLY FAMILY HOSPITAL *of* BETHLEHEM FOUNDATION

TIA'S STORY

IN BETHLEHEM, FAMILIES ARE LIVING THROUGH EXTRAORDINARY HARDSHIP. Ongoing wartime conditions shape daily life across the region. Yet under the shadow of war and uncertainty, Holy Family Hospital remains a pillar of stability, where stories of hope, like Tia's, continue to shine.

Eight years ago, Tia was born at just 23 weeks gestation, weighing a little over one pound. She was immediately transferred to Holy Family Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), where her earliest days were marked by countless prayers and anxious waiting. Surrounded by monitors and ventilators, she received round-the-clock care from a dedicated medical team determined to give her the best possible chance of survival.

Tia spent 132 days in the NICU. Slowly, she gained strength and stability until she was finally healthy enough to return home to her family.

Today, Tia is eight years old. Her bright smile and confidence radiate light in every room she enters.

Her story reflects the lifesaving work that takes place every day at Holy Family Hospital. It is a testament to the expertise of the medical staff, the importance of state-of-the-art equipment, and the impact generous donors can have.

Right now, in the same NICU where Tia began her life, other newborns are taking their first fragile breaths. Each one depends on the same level of care and compassion that made Tia's survival possible.

Tia's story is nothing short of a miracle. With a Level III NICU comparable to those found in Europe and the United States, Holy Family Hospital offers the highest level of care available in the region. There is no safer place for the smallest and most vulnerable babies than in the hands of its skilled and compassionate medical staff.

Holy Family Hospital is a primary work of the Order of Malta and a shared mission of all three U.S. Associations. American Association members serving on the Board of Holy Family Hospital Foundation includes Michael J. Heck, Chair; Gail T. Berardino; Jean L.P. Brunel; Molly K. Heines; Nicolle C. McGowan, MD; and Gregory P. Oussani.

To learn more about Holy Family Hospital, visit birthplaceofhope.org or contact Kate Robinson, Foundation Director, at kate@hfhfoundation.org

HOLY FAMILY HOSPITAL *of* Bethlehem Foundation

MALTESER INTERNATIONAL AMERICAS

BUILDING HOPE *and* HEALTH *in* GUATEMALA

In 2026, Malteser International Americas, part of the Order of Malta's worldwide humanitarian relief effort, has expanded its collaborative efforts with local Order of Malta Associations to include Guatemala. It is also exploring partnerships with other faith-based organizations whose mission aligns with ours.

Recently MI Americas participated in a visit to Guatemala which highlighted our collaboration with Orden de Malta Guatemala and explored the potential to partner with Food for the Poor. We had the opportunity to tour both the Guatemalan Association's St. Joseph's Medical Clinic and its local "Changing Lives" school as well as the impressive food distribution operations supplied by Food for the Poor and operated by the Association.

Thanks to the generosity of Order of Malta American Association and its Grants Program, we are assisting the St. Joseph's Clinic, which provides general healthcare to underserved Guatemalans, in creating a pediatric dental service within the clinic, complete with a dental x-ray machine, and a child-friendly, non-threatening environment designed to reduce anxiety and encourage repeat visits.

This fall, also with the support of the American Association's grant, we will be supporting the continuation of an American surgical mission to Guatemala. The team will consist of about 20 volunteer surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses. With the rental of three operating rooms at the local hospital, we expect that the lives of about 60 individuals will be noticeably improved as the surgical team provides routine procedures such as hernia, gallbladder, and appendix during the course of one week. These routine surgical treatments are provided to individuals who would otherwise go untreated due to lack of medical insurance. We look forward to reporting back to you about this important service.

The medical clinic and school have flourished due to the long-standing support of American Association member, Suzy Moran, GCMOb , of

New Jersey and her late husband Brian. Gratitude for Suzy's great support was evidenced by this plaque on the wall.

Additionally, we were blessed with invitations to private homes where we learned firsthand about the impact both the clinic and the school have on the local recipients. Guatemala has a 50% poverty rate and this work saves lives. The smile of the healthy child above from our home visit is encouraging testimony to all of this.

—A CULTURE *of* TRANSPARENCY—

The International Conference of Receivers and Treasurers

FEBRUARY 2026 | MAGISTRAL VILLA, AVENTINE HILL | ROME, ITALY

This past February, Receivers and Treasurers from the Priories and National Associations of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta gathered together for the first time for a conference in Rome Held at the Order's Magistral Villa on the Aventine Hill — just steps from the ancient Basilica of Santa Sabina, where Pope Leo celebrated Ash Wednesday Mass — the two-day conference brought together 46 Receivers and Treasurers representing 27 National Associations and 7 Grand Priories and Sub-Priories from around the world.

Titled "A Culture Change," the Conference was hosted by His Excellency Frá Francis Vassallo, a Knight of Justice and the Receiver of the Common Treasure for the Grand Magistry — the central governing body of the Order. Along with serving as a Governor of the Central Bank of Malta, Frá Francis brings to his role a distinguished 28-year international banking career with Chase Manhattan Bank. He was appointed Receiver of the Common Treasure in June 2025.

The three American associations and the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes were represented at the Conference. Ambassador Peter McGuire attended on behalf of the Subpriory. The American Association was represented by Treasurer Andy Aoyama, Executive Director Cathy Demeroto, and President of the Order of Malta Pilgrimage Foundation, Joe Berardino. Treasurer George Gunning represented the Federal Association, and Treasurer Robert Redwitz represented the Western Association.

Frá Francis opened the Conference by articulating his vision for the stewardship of the Order's goods, grounded in two complementary principles: Subsidiarity and Solidarity.

Subsidiarity holds that National Associations and Priories bear primary responsibility for advancing the charism of the Order at the local level. It promotes responsibility, autonomy, and efficiency — while making clear that no Association operates independently of the Grand Magistry. Solidarity, in turn, calls us to stand together and commit ourselves to the good of all and of one another. As one common religious entity, our successes and challenges are deeply interconnected.

To bring both principles to life, Frá Francis underscored three essential foundations: greater transparency, good corporate governance, and strong internal controls. These are not administrative ends in themselves, but the means by which the Order can most faithfully fulfill its mission.

On the second day of the Conference, Giorgio Amodeo, Secretary General of the Common Treasure, presented a financial overview of the Grand Magistry. He outlined the cultural shift the Grand Magistry is committed to achieving increased transparency, greater credibility, and enhanced fundraising capacity. These goals will be advanced through the regular publication of metrics and key performance indicators, clear and effective communication of financial information, and a commitment to being audit-ready at all times.

Giorgio identified the four principal sources of revenue that sustain the operations and mission of the Order: membership fees, financial investments, donations, and rental income. While the first three are familiar to most American members, the fourth — rental income derived from property ownership — is more prevalent in a number of European Associations, including those in Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, France, and Spain. These Associations may hold properties donated to the Order in prior generations, including urban and rural housing units that generate rental income, as well as vineyards and orchards whose produce is sold commercially. The three American associations generally do not own income generating real estate.

Other presentations at the Conference included Count Guy-Antonie de La Rochefoucauld, President of the Board of Auditors for the Grand Magistry, outlining the role of the Board of Auditors, the Grand Hospitaller, His Excellency Dr. Josef D. Blotz, describing the Order's key service interventions over the past 70 years, and Famio Bifulco, Treasurer of the Italian Association, providing a brief history of the Italian Association over the past 150 years.

This Conference marked the first time Receivers and Treasurers from across the Order have come together to share perspectives, build relationships, and work toward a common vision. Beyond the formal sessions, the gathering fostered a deeper sense of interdependence among Knights and Dames from National Associations spanning every continent.

Frá Francis' goal is clear: with greater transparency and stronger corporate governance, the Order can enhance its global charitable works and build the institutional credibility necessary for globalized fundraising. He envisions a dedicated global fund capable of sustaining long-term, large-scale projects—an aspiration well within reach given the Order's distinguished reputation and committed membership.

For those of us from the American Association, this Conference was a timely reminder that we are part of something far larger than our own membership — a worldwide community of faith and service, strengthened by the shared commitments of Subsidiarity and Solidarity.

You can learn more about this conference when you visit the Order of Malta's international website here.

SUMMER RETREAT FOCUSES ON

"Living the Charisms of the Order"

A RENEWAL *of* —OUR CALLING— *as* KNIGHTS AND DAMES

FROM JUNE 5–7, over 40 Knights, Dames, Auxiliaries, Members in Formation, and Chaplains of the Order of Malta gathered in serene rural Michigan to focus on "Living the Charisms of the Order" – the theme of the American Association's 2026 Summer Retreat.

Representing Areas from across the country—including Massachusetts, Ohio, Florida, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York—these members shared a deeply enriching experience of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. The retreat took place at the Weber Retreat and Conference Center in Adrian, Michigan.

Guided by Retreat Master Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron GCChC, Archbishop Emeritus of Detroit, participants were invited to reflect more deeply on what it means to live their vocation within the Order of Malta: Living our charism is a true expression of living the gospel.

A WEEKEND ROOTED IN PRAYER AND SACRAMENT

The retreat schedule was rich with opportunities to encounter Christ through the Church's sacramental and devotional life. Daily Mass anchored each day, including a special votive Mass on Saturday honoring Blessed Gerard, founder of the Order, and a beautiful celebration of Corpus Christi on Sunday.

Participants also experienced Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, the Rosary, Morning and Evening Prayer, Stations of the Cross, the Chaplet of the Order, and the veneration of sacred relics of the True Cross, the Crown of Thorns, the Apostles, and great saints such as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Ignatius of Loyola. Confession was offered for a further opportunity for spiritual renewal, allowing attendees to enter more fully into the grace of the weekend.

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REFLECTING ON THE CHARISMS OF THE ORDER

At the heart of the retreat were four conferences delivered by Archbishop Vigneron, each focused on a portion of the Order of Malta's daily prayer. His reflections provided both theological depth and practical guidance for living out the Order's charisms.

Vocational Call

In the opening conference, Archbishop Vigneron emphasized that the Order of Malta is not merely a philanthropic organization or non-governmental entity, but a religious order rooted in a personal call from Jesus Christ. Each member, he reminded participants, is called by name into intimate service—an invitation that continually deepens as God asks more of us in love. He reminded us that being a member of the Order is a vocation. As a member it is about "being" a true disciple of Jesus".

The Unity of our Two Purposes

The second conference explored the inseparable connection between defending the faith and serving the poor and sick. Drawing from the Epistle of St. James—"faith without works is dead"—the archbishop emphasized that belief must be made visible through action.

He challenged participants to see the poor and sick not as problems to solve, but as persons to love, persons in whom Christ is especially present. The example of Blessed Gerard serving the sick with honor and dignity by feeding them from silver platters symbolized this profound truth: serviceis not simply charity, but a privilege and encounter with Christ Himself.

Members in a Noble Company with a Noble Cause

In his third conference, Archbishop Vigneron reflected on the "noble cause" of the Order, highlighting its three defining characteristics:

A military order, called to be courageous and steadfast in defending the faith.

A chivalrous order, marked by loyalty, integrity, and courage; and

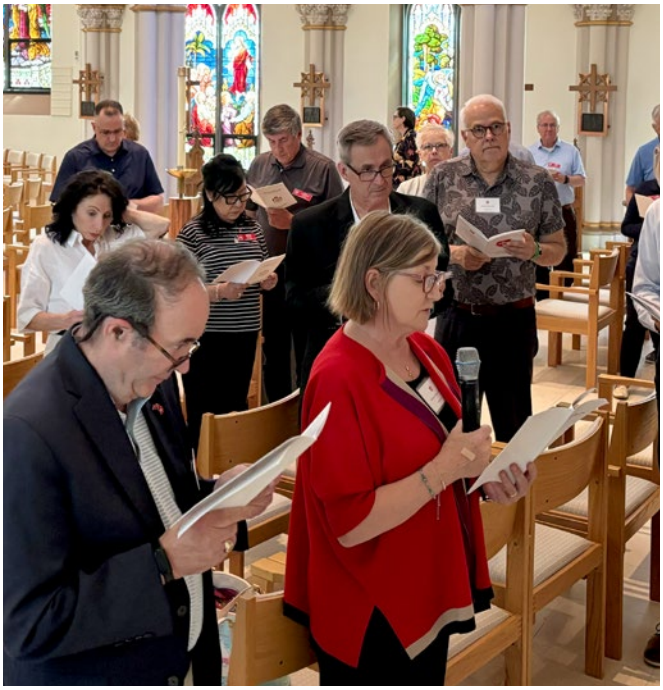
A nobiliary order, distinguished by a freedom that embraces responsibility for others.

Members were reminded that they belong to a "noble company," strengthened by the example and intercession of Saints and the "Blesseds" of the Order, including modern witnesses such as Blessed Karl of Austria and Blessed Clemens August von Galen.

The Order, he noted, is not only a mission for good works on earth, but a path to personal sanctification.

A Call to Generous Discipleship

The final conference invited participants to embrace three essential graces: forgetfulness of self (imitating Christ's total self-gift), deep devotion (lived through faithful fulfillment of daily duties), and commitment to God's glory, peace, and the good of the Order.

Archbishop Vigneron encouraged attendees to adopt the spirit of generosity inspired by St. Ignatius: "to give and not to count the cost." This call to be "all-in" captures the essence of the Order's vocation—living with wholehearted dedication to God and neighbor.

"We are not part of a nameless many, but are each called by name."

CONTEMPLATING THE MYSTERIES

Archbishop Vigneron also shared a First Saturday Devotion Rosary meditation, wherein participants were invited to reflect on the meaning of "mystery" as a real encounter with divine grace. Each mystery of the Rosary, Archbishop Vigneron explained, becomes an opportunity to ask, "What grace is God offering me in this moment?" This reflection included a beautiful reminder of Mary's essential role in salvation history as the "new Eve," inseparably united with Christ and present in every mystery of His life.

FELLOWSHIP AND RENEWAL

Beyond the formal sessions, the retreat offered time for fellowship, shared meals, and rich conversation among Order members from across the country. These moments of community strengthened bonds among members and reinforced the sense of belonging within the Order.

In a world often marked by busy-ness and distraction, the retreat provided a sacred pause—a chance to reconnect with God, renew purpose, and deepen commitment to the Order's mission.

LOOKING FORWARD

As attendees departed from the retreat, they carried with them not only memories of a grace-filled weekend, but also a renewed sense of mission. The call to live the charisms of the Order—**defending the faith and serving the poor and sick (*tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*)**—resounded clearly throughout the retreat. The gathering served as a powerful reminder that the vocation of the Order of Malta is not simply an activity, but a way of life—one rooted in prayer, strengthened by community, and lived in loving service to Christ present in others. With that truth at heart, members return to their communities ready to live their calling with renewed faith, courage, and generosity.

A Week at

MALTA CAMP USA

FROM JUNE 20–26, OVER 150 PEOPLE, including 51 young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, gathered at Siena College in Albany, NY for Malta Camp USA's fifth annual summer program. Built on the belief that every person is "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14),a Malta Camp USA brings together volunteers and Guests with disabilities for a week of friendship, adventure, and community.

Campers arrived mid-morning on Day 1, greeted by balloons, banners, and the kind of cheering that makes it very hard to feel like a stranger. Returning Guests made their way around the room giving hugs, while new Guests were greeted with open arms and silly costumes. Camp opened with a beautiful Opening Mass, concelebrated by Fr. Daniel Vallejo, Fr. Joe Cavoto, and Colombian volunteer Fr. Euclides Eslava where we celebrated the Feast of St. John the Baptist with joyful song. After some orientation arts and crafts, the evening wrapped up with a "spa night" of tie-dye, nail painting, toiletry kit assembly, and a sound bath— a quieter close to an eventful first day. Many Guests were ready for bed early.

The days that followed were full. Mornings at Apex Entertainment (bowling, laser tag, bumper cars, and arcade games) gave way to a week packed with "choose your own" activity blocks, where campers pre-selected options that matched their interests: helicopter rides over the Adirondacks, goat yoga at a local farm, metal detector treasure hunts, rock climbing and caving, candle making, an escape room, and more. In the evenings, the full group came back together for more activities, making stuffed animals together, learning new games at casino night, relaxing during movie night— and, of course, participating in camp's famous talent show!

Continued on next page

"I love Malta Camp because it feels like home, like I belong here."

Continued from previous page

What stands out most about a week at Malta Camp is not the itinerary—it is the people and what they bring out in each other. At Field Day, team colors quickly stopped mattering. When a camper who everyone knew was genuinely thrilled just to be running rounded the final stretch of the 100-meter dash, the crowd stopped cheering for their own team and got behind that one runner. At the talent show the audience was equally enthusiastic for every single act, from first to last. By the final performance, most of the crowd had abandoned their seats entirely and joined the performers on stage.

One of our Guests this summer put it simply: "I love Malta Camp because it feels like home, like I belong here." That sense of belonging is, at its core, what the program is built to create— not just for Guests, but for the volunteers who come expecting to give and routinely find themselves receiving just as much. "I don't think I've stopped smiling since I arrived," a first-year volunteer shared on our final full day together.

This summer also marked Malta Camp USA's fifth birthday— a milestone celebrated at dinner with cake and a video of memories from five years of camp, including messages from volunteers and Guests who couldn't be with us but wanted to be. Five years ago, Malta Camp hosted its first cohort of 11 Guests and 20 volunteers. Since then, we have drawn participants from more than 25 states and five different countries, sending everyone home with friendships, memories, and, hopefully, a reason to look forward to next June!

If you are interested in learning more about Malta Camp USA, volunteering, or supporting the program financially, please visit maltacampusa.org or contact Mary Delaney, AUX at info@maltacampusa.org.

—IN MEMORIAM—

Kailee M. Scharf

June 4, 1996 – June 30, 2026

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Since this article was written, the Malta Camp USA community has been heartbroken by the sudden passing of beloved camper Kailee Scharf. Kailee joined the Malta Camp family in 2024 and quickly became known for her joyful spirit, thoughtfulness, generosity, and gift for making others feel included. We give thanks for the light she brought to camp and hold Kailee, her family, and all who loved her in our prayers.*

EACH SUMMER, members of the American, Federal, and Western Associations gather for a cherished pilgrimage to the **National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion** in Champion, Wisconsin. From **August 6–8, 2026,** pilgrims will once again come together in prayer, fellowship, and devotion for the 13th annual Pilgrimage to this sacred place under the loving care of the Blessed Mother.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Champion holds a unique place in American Catholic life. It is the site of the only Marian apparition in the United States formally approved by the Catholic Church, where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Adele Brise in 1859. Since being declared "worthy of belief" in 2010 and later designated a National Shrine, Our Lady of Champion has welcomed countless pilgrims seeking spiritual renewal, healing, and a deeper encounter with Christ through the intercession of His Mother.

This year's pilgrimage theme, "Take Heart," invites us to place renewed trust in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to open our hearts to the guidance of Our Lady. In a peaceful and intimate setting, pilgrims will participate in daily Mass, Adoration, the Rosary Procession, Stations of the Cross, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Anointing of the Sick, a Healing Service, and presentations focused on the Blessed Mother. It is a weekend designed not only for prayer, but also for fellowship, encouragement, and shared witness among Knights, Dames, clergy, families, and volunteers.

For those who have never traveled to Lourdes, this pilgrimage offers a beautiful opportunity to experience the grace of a Marian shrine closer to home. For those who have been to Lourdes, Our Lady of Champion offers a different but deeply meaningful setting in which to pray, reflect, and be renewed. The recent opening of Adele Brise's cause for sainthood adds even greater significance to this historic pilgrimage site and to the witness of faith that continues to inspire pilgrims today.

All members in good standing and their families are warmly encouraged to join us for this special weekend of devotion and community. Space is limited. Registration details are available on our website when you **click here.**

— SAVE *the* DATE —

November 12–14, 2026

INVESTITURE WEEKEND

in

NEW YORK CITY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for one of the American Association's most anticipated annual gatherings: **Investiture Weekend,** taking place **November 12–14, 2026, in New York City.** This signature event brings together members old and new, along with family and friends from across the country and around the world, to celebrate and welcome the newest Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta, the Class of 2026.

Throughout the weekend, attendees will have opportunities to deepen their spirituality, strengthen bonds of fellowship, and learn more about the life and work of the Order and the American Association. The schedule will include meetings, workshops, Masses, receptions, and dinners, as well as time to reconnect with longtime friends and make new connections within the Order.

Highlights of the weekend include the New Member Orientation, Area Leadership Meeting, Chaplain Meeting, and Mass for the Blessing of the Robes and Capes on Thursday, followed by the New Members and Chaplains Reception. On Friday, attendees are invited to begin the day with the Spirituality Forum and Annual Business Meeting before gathering at **St. Patrick's Cathedral** for the **Ninety-ninth Solemn Mass of Investiture.** The celebration will continue that evening with the Annual Cocktail Reception and Dinner at **Cipriani 42nd Street,** featuring a special guest speaker.

The weekend will conclude on Saturday with a Mass for the intentions of living and deceased malades and deceased members of the Order at St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation Brunch at the 3 West Club, and the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes Mass and Reception at St. Francis Church.

A limited number of rooms have been reserved at **The Westin New York Grand Central,** located at 212 East 42nd Street, with a special group rate of **$299** plus tax per night. Room block dates are **Wednesday, November 11 through Sunday, November 15.** Availability is limited, and reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please save the date and plan to join us for this meaningful weekend of prayer, fellowship, celebration, and service. Registration will open in September, and members will receive an invitation with additional details.

OPEN NOW!

2027 ADMISSIONS APPLICATION

SPONSORING CANDIDATES *for a* LIFELONG COMMITMENT

THE 2027 ADMISSIONS Application is now open, and members are invited to begin prayerfully discerning and sponsoring candidates for the next class of the Order of Malta, American Association. This year's admissions process includes several important updates designed to ensure that each candidate enters formation with a clear understanding of the Order's spirituality, mission, expectations, and lifelong call to our charism.

For the Class of 2027, the admissions process has been newly structured into three phases: Proposal, Pre-Formation, and the Year of Formation. Proposal and Pre-Formation opened in mid-June. The process begins when a sponsor submits a Pre-Screen Questionnaire for candidate pre-approval. If approved, the candidate then moves into Pre-Formation and submits the required application materials and supporting documentation by September 30, 2026. Applications will be reviewed by Area Chairs, the Admissions Committee, and the Board of Directors in October and November, and approved candidates will begin the Year of Formation on November 20, 2026. During this time, candidates will continue their discernment, complete formation requirements, participate in Order events and works, and prepare for final review and approval before Investiture.

A key priority of this year's process is ensuring that sponsors put forward candidates who are not only qualified, but also well prepared for the seriousness of membership. Membership in the Order of Malta is not honorary or temporary; it is a lifetime commitment to the Order's spirituality, its defense of the faith, and its service to the sick and the poor. Sponsors should take care to propose individuals who understand this commitment, have already demonstrated a spirit of service, and are prepared to participate actively in the works and life of the Order.

Several requirements have been updated for this admissions cycle. Candidates must have been Catholic for at least three years before beginning the application process and must have participated in the works and activities of the Order for approximately one year before being considered for membership. Sponsors must have been members of the Order for at least three years, be in good standing, and should have attended at least one Lourdes Pilgrimage. Sponsors and candidates should also reside in the same Area whenever possible, so that sponsors can accompany candidates in person throughout the process. While these requirements are intended to guide the admissions process, limited exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the President.

Remaining Year of Formation materials are due March 31, 2027. Final applications will be reviewed and approved by the Area Chairs, Admissions Committee, Board of Directors, Regent, and Sovereign Council from April through June 2027. Approved candidates will be invested at the Investiture Mass and Annual Dinner on November 12, 2027.

Members who are considering sponsoring a candidate should review the full sponsor and candidate instructions carefully before beginning. The sponsor's role is central: sponsors help candidates understand the expectations of membership, accompany them through formation, and affirm that they are ready for the spiritual, practical, and financial responsibilities involved. Thank you for helping ensure that the 2027 admissions process welcomes candidates who are prepared to embrace the Order's mission for life.

To learn more about the process, please visit our website or contact Angela Castronova, Membership and Administrative Coordinator acastronova@orderofmaltaamerican.org.

— 2026 UPCOMING EVENTS —

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
July 23	**Board of Directors Meeting**	via Zoom
August 2–9	**Order of Malta Cruise to the Ligurian Sea**	Monaco, France & Italy
August 6–8	**Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion**	Champion, WI
September 24	**Board of Directors Meeting**	via Zoom
November 12	**Board of Directors Meeting**	New York, NY
November 12–14	**Investiture Weekend**	New York, NY
December 4–6	**Baby Steps Camino®**	St. Augustine, FL

FAITH *—by—* PHONE	SPIRITUAL OUTREACH CALL	LIVE ROSARY CALL	LISTEN LIVE
	First Wednesday *of every month at* ***11 AM*** *ET*	***Every Sunday*** *evening at* ***7 PM*** *ET*	*dial* **1-800-442-5794** *enter passcode* **656886#**

VOLUME 26 SUMMER 2026

HOSPITALLERS

OUR MISSION

The American Association of the Order of Malta has as its mission to promote the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, through witness to and support of the Catholic faith, and through active service to the sick and the poor.

IN MEMORIAM

Deceased Members of the American Association
January 1, 2026 – July 1, 2026

Carol Ann Chisholm, DM
Birmingham, MI

Mary Frances Clauder, DM
Cincinnati, OH

Judith Davidson Darin, DM
Wellington, FL

Thomas Garrett Flynn, MD, KM
New Canaan, CT

The Honorable Frank J. Guarini, Jr, KM
Jersey City, NJ

Charles A. Holden, Jr, KM
Middleton, MA

Joanne Mary Humphreys, DM
Bronxville, NY

Lewis E. Lehrman, KM
Greenwich, CT

John R. Morris, KM
Staten Island, NY

Susan M. Morrison, DM
Wayzata, MN

Patricia Margaret Muratore, DMOb
Morristown, NJ

Most Rev. William F. Murphy, ChC
Rockville Centre, NY

Samuel G. Polozola, KM
Arlington, TX

James D. Sterling, PhD, KM
New York, NY

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?
Please notify the New York Office.
If you have recently moved, changed your phone number, or your email address, we encourage you to **click here** to fill out our contact information update form. This will ensure that you continue to receive the latest information from the Order of Malta, American Association.

Articles for future issues of this newsletter should sent to: tmazza@orderofmaltaamerican.org

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
122 East 42nd Street
Suite 1900
New York, NY 10168
212-371-1522
orderofmaltaamerican.org

EXECUTIVE OFFICE STAFF

Cathy Demeroto
Executive Director

Carla L. Gunerard
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Amy Saidens

Editor
Tiffany A. Mazza

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