# L-AĦBAR



PROVINĊJA FRANĠISKANA TA' SAN PAWL APPOSTLU, MALTA.

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Il-kjostru, li flimkien mal-kumplament tal-kunvent ta' Santa Marija ta' Ġesu', Valletta, ġew restawrati riċentement. Ara wkoll paġna



# Nazareth, couple responsible for attack at the Basilica asks to be forgiven

The Custos of the Holy Land, Fr Pierbattista Pizzaballa, ofm, visits the Habibi family under arrest for having set off firecrackers in the Basilica of the Annunciation: "poor people, they asked for forgiveness and I granted it."

ara wkoll paġni

# Hallelujah! Qam kif kien qal.

L-AHBAR APRIL 2006

# Communication of the General Definitory - March 2006

The General Definitory celebrated its ordinary "tempo forte" from the 6th to the 17th March 2006. During the Definitory sessions the following topics, among others, were dealt with:

- 1. Communications. As is now usual, the necessary time was given for an exchange of impressions of the activities carried out by each member of the Definitory since the previous "tempo forte" in January during this "tempo forte". The Minister General, Br. Juan Ignacio and Br. Luis gave their impressions of the visits to the Provinces of St. Anthony in Bolivia, of the Assumption, St. Michael and St. Francis Solanus in Argentina, the Custody of Br. Luis Bolaños in Paraguay and to the Foundation of Our Lady of Fatima in Uberlandia in Brazil. The Minister General and Br. Mario Favretto spoke of their visit to the Province of Sardinia. The Minister General informed the Definitors of his meeting with the Poor Clares of the Federation of Castile (Spain) and of the proposals on "The Embrace of Civilisations" in the University of Granada. The Minister General and Br. Ambrose Van Si spoke of their visit to the Province of St. Francis in Vietnam. The Vicar General reported on his presence at the Provincial Chapters of the Franciscan Sisters of the Child Jesus in Italy. Br. Ambrose Van Si gave a report on the meeting of the "China Project", celebrated in Seoul. Br. Miguel Vallecillo reported on his participation in the International Council for Evangelisation and on his participation, together with Br. Luis Cabrera and Br. Ignacio Muro, in the Seminar on Inter-religious Dialogue, celebrated in Brazil. Br. Bernardo Amaral reported on his participation in the meeting of the African Conference. Br. Sime Samac spoke of his participation in the Chapter of the "Foundation of St. Francis" in Russia and Kazakhstan. Br. Finian reported on his participation in the "Group for Development" at the General Curia.
- **2. Pontifical University "Antonianum".** The Definitory was informed of the "masters-diploma" for formators in a Franciscan perspective which will begin in the 2006-2007 course of studies. The "masters-diploma" will last two years and will be given in the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality.
- **3. A study day.** In accordance with its "ongoing formation project", the Definitory dedicated a day to the study of the topic of Evangelisation. The reflections were oriented by the Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy, Msgr. Csaba Ternyák, and by Br. Néstor Schwerz, Secretary General for Evangelisation, after a general introduction to the topic made by Br. Jacab Várnai.
- **4. Reflection on the Encyclical "Deus caritas est".** The Definitory dedicated one complete session of work to a reflection on the first Encyclical of Benedict XVI. The reflection was introduced by the Vicar General. The Definitory paid particular attention to the second part of the Encyclical, dealing with the indications which the Pope offers to our "works of charity".
- **5. Visitators.** The General Definitory appointed the following Visitators: Br. Francesco Bravi, Auditor of accounts and Visitator to the Pontifical International Marian Academy (Rome); Br. Eduardo Metz, of the Province of Holy Cross in Brazil, to the Province of Holland; Br. John Poudziunas, of the Province of the Assumption (USA) to the Province of Lithuania; Br. Francisco Oliver, of the Province of Murcia (Spain), to the Interprovincial House of "Cardenal Cisneros" in Madrid.

- **6. A meeting with the Custody of the Holy Land.** The Custos was invited to share some general aspects of the life of the Custody and of the situation being lived in the Holy Land with the General Definitory. He informed them in particular about the incidents in the Basilica of the Annunciation, in Nazareth..
- **7. Report of the General Procuration.** The Vicar and Procurator General, together with Br. Valentíno Menegatti, Secretary of the Procuration, informed the Definitory of the activities of the General Procuration during the year 2005. An animated dialogue on the causes of the abandonments of the Order followed.
- **8. Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.** The General Definitory, with the presence of the two members of the Office for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation at the General Curia, made a detailed evaluation of the II International Congress of JPIC celebrated in Uberlandia (Brazil) from the 30th January to the 8th February 2006, and of the JPIC International Council, celebrated in the same place on the 10th and 11th of the same month.

The General Definitory made the following decisions regarding JPIC:

- The next JPIC International Council will be held in the Philippines in 2008.
- The web page of the JPIC Office at the General Curia will pass to the web page of the Curia.
- The "proposals" of the JPIC International Council should be presented to the Order as proposals of the said Congress.

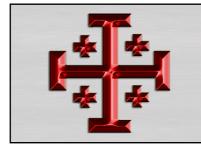
The General Definitory also appointed the new JPIC Executive Committee.

- **9. Meeting with the Presidents of the Conferences.** The Definitory approved the agenda of the annual meeting with the Presidents of the Conferences of Ministers Provincial of the Order which will be held in Rome from the 8th to the 10th of May this year.
- **10. Evaluation of the "study day".** The Definitory carefully evaluated the "study day" on evangelisation, spending time mainly on the concept of "new forms of evangelisation". The assessment was very positive, bearing in mind that it is an important means for the "ongoing formation" of the Definitory itself. There will be two "study days" each year on topics to be decided during the evaluation of the month of July.
- 11. The inauguration of the remodelling of the Curia. The General Definitory set the inauguration of the re-structuring of the Curia for the 10th May, coinciding with the presence of the Presidents of the Conferences of Ministers Provincial of the Order.
- **12. The College of St. Isidore.** The General Definitory approved the text of the agreement between the Province of Ireland, owners of the College, and the General Curia, to which its use has been ceded. The agreement sets the duration of the agreement at 29 years with the possibility of renewal. The agreement was signed in the "Aula Magna" of the College of St. Isidore by the Minister General and the Minister Provincial of Ireland on the 17th March, the feast of St. Patrick, Patron of Ireland.
- **13. Grottaferrata.** The General Definitory decided to transfer all the activities which have been carried out up to now in Grottaferrata to the College of St. Isidore in Rome. The College of St. Bonaventure of Grottaferrata will be rented out, as asked in its day by the International Commission for Grottaferrata which was

requested by the 2003 General Chapter to seek a solution for Grottaferrata.

- **14. Personnel.** The Definitory spent some time speaking about the personnel of the Houses dependent on the Minister. It is the will of the Definitory to make some changes of personnel now that we are about to complete the first three years of this six-year period.
- **15. Reports on Canonical Visitations.** The Definitory carefully studied and approved the reports on the Canonical Visitations presented by the respective Visitators to the following Provinces: Queen of Peace, in South Africa; XII Apostles, in Peru; St. Anthony, in Brazil.
- **16. Financial Balance for 2005.** The General Definitory approved the 2005 financial balance presented by the Bursar General.
- **17. The Extraordinary General Chapter.** The General Definitory, with the presence of the Secretary and Bursar of the Chapter, finalised the preparatory details of the coming Extraordinary General Chapter and approved the budget for the same Chapter.
- **18. The International Council for Evangelisation.** The Definitory, with the presence of the Secretary General for Evangelisation, assessed the celebration of the International Council for Evangelisation, held in Santo Domingo from the 13th to 21st of February last. The Definitory also examined and approved the budgets presented by the Council and appointed the members of the new Executive Committee for Evangelisation.
- 19. The "Service for Dialogue" Commission. Br. Miguel Vallecillo reported on the meeting of the Commission for Dialogue, held in Porto Allegre (Brazil) on the 27th and 28th February. He also gave information about the meeting between Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran Franciscans to be held in Canterbury from the 28th to 2nd September 2006. The Definitory gave the green light to the preparation of 4 aids/manuals on Dialogue with Culture, which the Commission for the Service of Dialogue will prepare.
- **20. Visit to the Russian Patriarch.** The Definitory was informed of the visit which the Minister General will make to Patriarch Alexis II on the 23rd and 24th March. Br. Miguel Vallecillo, Br. Finian McGinn and Br. Tecle Vetrali will accompany the Minister.
- **21.** The Commission for the revision of the Entities of the Order. The Definitory was informed of the last meeting of the said Commission and approved the sending of a questionnaire to all the Provinces which have "Foundations" in order to know more of these presences.
- **22. The Commission for Financial Aid.** The Definitory examined and approved the proposals for financial aid to our needy Entities presented by the said Commission.
- **23.** The meeting of Commissions. As is usual, the following Commissions met during the "tempo forte": The Commission for Financial Aid, the Commission for the Study of the Entities and the Financial Commission of the Definitory.

ikompli f'paġna



# What Happened in Nazareth: The point of View of the Custody

**CTS News** 

Thank God something worse did not happen at the Basilica of Nazareth: When reached by telephone on Friday March 3. Friday, at approximately 17:30 during a visit to Italy, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land was in shock when told there is a bomb at the Basilica of the Annunciation. At the time it was not known whether there had been a serious explosion, a lesser incident or just a bomb scare. What was known at the time was that on the first Friday of Lent the procession of the Way of the Cross was underway and was being celebrated by the local Christian community and some pilgrims. A bomb, in the Basilica which is one of the three most important Holy Places of Christianity under the administration of the Franciscans of the Holy Land, created overwhelming confusion at the site where, indeed, there was an a series of small explosions and from where rumors began to circulate. "There are injuries and one death," one of these rumors reported. The heart of the Arab Israeli City was inflamed and crowds had already gathered at the site to manifest their anger. The crowds were composed of both Christians and Moslems.

Witnesses who spoke to the press, which had hastily gathered at the site, were under the spell of the shock and their accounts were contradictory. The only point on which all agreed was that the action was committed by one or more Jews. Some referred to as many as five members of an extremist Jewish religious group.

#### The dictates of prudence:

In Jerusalem, at the Saint Savior's Monastery, the Vicar Custos and the Secretary of the Custody followed, as

best as they could, the situation with prudence as the facts were not yet clear. The Custody did not want to inflame an already explosive situation in Nazareth where a demonstration was in the making in front of the Basilica. The theory that a religious extremist group would commit such an act at the onset of the Sabbath cast doubt over the real identity of the perpetrators of the misdeed. The Custody has been criticized for not having denounced the act as that of a Jew in a communiqué that it published at 22:30. At the time the character of the perpetrators was not clear and already the earlier rumors of the involvement of extremist Jewish groups were proving false. The identity of those involved is now known: a husband and wife, who had threatened similar deeds in the past, he Jewish and she Christian, and their adult daughter.

In the evening, the news agencies, who at 18:00 hours did not hesitate to talk about religious extremists, now seem to turn their criticism to the actions of a crowd with was given birth by what was being minimized as the setting off of some fireworks. True, the demonstration gave way to an excess that the Custody deplores not only because it resulted in casualties from both the demonstrators and the police force, but also because it turned to violence which is quite distant from the true Christian spirit. However, one cannot reduce the event to the mere explosion of some fireworks. The photos, taken by the Franciscans of Nazareth, confirm the existence of the detonators and of small canisters of gas. The Franciscans, not being bomb experts, cannot and will not speculate on damages or injuries further explosions might have caused. However,

there was an attack on the Basilica in Nazareth. The Custody of the Holy Land vehemently condemns all acts committed against any holy place and the faithful who gather at these places for worship. It extends its thanks to all those who, in on that evening, manifested their support and solidarity. but cannot help but regret that the demonstration of Friday evening had drifted from legitimate outrage to take a political slant when the country is going through an electoral period. "Politics should not cross the threshold of shrines" contends Father Custos

Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

Who are the perpetrators? Haim Eliahou Habibi, a 43 years old Jew and his wife Violette, a 40 year old Christian, who are known to the Israel intelligence services as they had previously threatened in March of 2003 to detonate explosives in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, where they had taken refuge and after gave themselves up without resisting arrest. This man, an Israeli Jew is known to have psychological issues. Could his

action be considered a deliberate action against Christian Holy Places and what they represent and against the community which gathers there for prayer? The investigation will tell.

#### A requirement for Justice

While it does not want to accuse anyone and in particular neither the Jews as a whole nor the State of Israel, the Custody of the Holy Land remains in solidarity with the Arab population to which it ministers in Israel as well as in the Palestinian Territories. But the vocation of the children of Saint Francis is not to foster violence but to seek to be instruments of peace.

In Israel as well as in the Palestinian Territories, the Custody calls for the respect of human rights for all individuals and for the freedom of worship. It urges the State of Israel to

care for the all the Holy Places as its own laws enjoin it and to protect and insure safe access to the places holy to all the religious communities that live and visit in the Holy Land. Present in Israel, the Custody of the

Holy Land is aware and shares the feelings of the Arab Israeli population and that of the Christians in particular of being regarded as second class or even third class citizens. It understands the frustrations of those Israeli citizens who, for being Arabs, undergo all kinds of discrimination particularly in regards



to employment. This is why the Custody, when it can and when it deems it necessary, does not hesitate to remind the State of Israel of its obligation to guarantee equal rights for all the citizens of the country.

In the course of these events, the Custody is thankful for the support it received from the Church of the Holy Land represented by His Beatitude Msgr. Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Msgr. Giancinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Msgr. Elias Chacour, and Msgr. Gianfranco Gallone, secretary of the Nunciature, as well as the support of the sister churches in the Galilee and also of their representatives who traveled from Jerusalem, particularly the Greek Catholic Church, the Maronite Church, the Greek Orthodox, the Coptic Orthodox, the Anglican, the Lutheran and the Reformed Church.

It is thankful also for the support of the Moslem population who took offense that a religious site consecrated to the Virgin Mary, venerated in Islam, has been violated. The Franciscans always hope to find the Moslem Community standing alongside us when other Holy Places for which we are responsible are threatened.

Peace has now returned to Nazareth and Saturday evening, the Franciscans conducted the usual Marian Procession, which was both calm necessary peace. May the example of the and upbeat. The participants, more numerous than usual, have undoubtedly come to thank the Lord and the Virgin Mary that a disaster was averted. The faithful, who again assembled in larger than usual numbers His peace and love prevails.

for the very beautiful liturgy on Sunday in a fully packed church, were able at the end of the Mass, to rush over to greet His Beatitude Msgr. Sabbah, the Father Custos, Msgr. Marcuzzo and Msgr. Chacour.

The Friars of the Custody, in Nazareth as well as in other places in the Holy Land, will carry on with their activities in the Holy Places and their support for the populations so that peace might prevail in this country — a just and Virgin Mary of Nazareth, make our hearts open and ready to hear the Word that would like to be born anew within us and in out world, and may the Lord find us willing to work for a world where

# Pierbattista Pizzaballa paid a visit at the Nazareth Jail

Fr. Custos, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, on Monday, March the 6th, met the family re-sponsible for the attack committed in the Basilica of Nazareth, last Friday night, the 3rd of March.

The Custos said: "I was wondering what should I do. First I hesitated. The pres-sure coming from the mass media did not make me feel at ease. I thought they intended to make a spectacle out of the event. On the other hand, I had the desire to meet the family, to listen to them, to understand and forgive them. I think that, being in charge of the Holy Places, we have an serious



responsibility to behave in accordance with the Christian message. The voice of peace is that of forgive-ness. The readings of today's Mass are the following; first in Leviticus (19, 11-18):"You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin". And in the gospel of today (Mt 25, 31-46): "Just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me". These words were for me a stepping-stone. It was really what the Lord expected from us", said the Custos.

The encounter took place in the Police Station of Nazareth, where the couple and their daughter are still under police custody.

The media pressure was such that Fr. Custos could see them in private only for a few minutes. To the question repeated twice, of why they committed an attack against a church, the Custos could not tell more than this: "They cannot explain what happened. She (Violette Habibi) insists upon the fact she is a Christian. The family is at a loss. They are suffering because one of their children was taken from them by the social services. Really, they are poor people. I was deeply touched. They asked pardon for what they did and I granted it."

#### JIRRAKKONTA FRA JOHN MUSCAT MINN NAZARET

# ATTAKKATA L-BAŻILIKA TAL-LUNZJATA

Nixtieq ngħidilkom ftit kif ġrat l-istorja. Marija verament bħat-tieġ ta' Kana kienet qed tara dak li aħna ma narawx u taħseb li lilna jaħarbilna. Waqt li kul-hadd kien qiegħed jiekol u jixrob u jifrah Hi kienet qegħda titħasseb li dak il-ferħ kien ser jieqaf u jinbidel fi dwejjaq, għalhekk kelmet lill Binha biex jiehu ħsieb Hu.

L-istess ġara hawn fid-dar Tagħha stess. Waqt li aħna konna għaddejjin bit-talb fil-Bażilka ta' Fuq, aħna u nagħmlu l-Via Sagra, oħrajn kienu qegħdin jaħsbu kif jagħmlu ħsara lil dan il-post.

Kienu xi 5.20 p.m. meta konna fl-10 stazzjon, meta Ġesu' ģie mneżża minn hwejgu. Dak il-hin xi hadd prova jneżża dan is-santwarju gaddis mill-post gaddis tad-dar ta' Marija fejn seħħet għalija l-akbar opra tal-ħniena t'Alla lejn lumanita'. Dak il-ħin jien bħal kull persuna oħra fil-Bażilka smajna splużżjoni kbira fil-grotta. Jien bla ma kont naf sibt ruħi isfel wara ftit sekondi mingħajr ebda hsieb li dik kienet twissija ta xi haġa ohra akbar. Kif dhalt fil-grotta nara fin-naha tal-gemb ta' wara l-grotta ragel u żewg nisa u li r-ragel kien ghaddej iwaddab balal tan-nar li jintuza fil-festi. Dak il-ħin kien hemm ġa żewġ ħaddiema li jaħdmu maghna fis-santwarju, ghax wiehed minnhom kien ġa ġie mhedded li joqtluh u dan cempel lil huh li kien fil-mużew fejn hemm ir-rovini ta' Nażaret l-qadima. Dawn kienu hemm, imma ma setghu jaghmlu xejn ghax ir-raģel kien qieghed iwaddab dawn l-ispeci ta' bombi żghar, imma ovvjament jistghu kunu mortali jew gravi jekk jigu fuqek. Jien bqajt diehel sal-kolonna tal-konkrit, jigifieri sa tliet metri 1 boghod minn fuq il-post fejn dan ix-xenarju kien qieghed isehh. Bil-kuragg kollu inqabdu żewġ nisa li waħda minnhom kellha fidha flixkun pitrolju li xeħtitu fuq wiehed minna u riedet taghti n-nar, imma ghal grazzja t'Alla dan lahaq hatafha u waddabha fl-art.



In-nisa ġew imresqa 'l barra u kien baqa' r-raġel tagħha fuq iċ-ċint li jagħti għal grotta u li kien ġa firex minn qabel ma l-20 bott tal-gas u erba flixken petrol kif ukoll kellu żewġ spiritiri tal-gas. Ħdejh kien hemm ukoll *pushchair* li ġie użat biex fih daħlu l-materja kollu li kien bi ħsiebhom jagħmlu ħsara lil dan issantwarju qaddis.

Meta dan ra li ahna bqajna hemm allovoja kien qieghed iwaddab bla hniena dawn il-bombi żghar, aktar ifferocja u ghalhekk xerred flixkun petrol fuq il-pushchair u ghamel nar qawwi fil-post u sintendi hafna sparar. In-nar kien kbir hafna u ghalhekk wiehed mill-haddiema mill-ewwel ha pass importanti u mar igib l-fire extingusher u beda jispara fuq in-nar u fuq ir-raģel li ghal hin tilef il-kontrol u hadna l-opportunita' dak il-hin li s-siġġijiet li kien hemm mal-kolonna, (fejn is-soltu qatt ma nhalli siggijiet hemm, imma kienu l-istess siġġijiet tlieta li hadu wkoll biex normalment qaghdu bilqeghda sakemm iddecidew li jibdew ikewsu dik il-bomba ghax sibna wkoll hafna bocci tal-loghob tat-tfal u hafna muniti tal-5 xekel) allura hadna siġġu kull wiehed u waddabnihulu fejn ilqatnieh u x'hin kien imfixkel dhalna ghalih.

Hekk spiċċat l-ewwel parti fejn it-traġedja ma seħħitx kif kien maħsub minnhom. Fil-grotta kien hemm grupp ta' madwar erbgħin pellegrin li kollha telgħu fuq l-artal tan-nofs fejn hemm is-salib ta' San Damjan, fejn żġur li missierna Franġisku ħa ħsieb lil dawn il-pellegrini biex jitolbu iżjed għax hu kien qiegħed ukoll jieħu ħsiebhom fejn tant kien iħobb lill dan il-post qaddis.

Wara dan kien imiss issa parti kruċjali oʻhra. Dik li nżommu l-poplu li ġie fuq il-post bʻhan-nemel minn Nażaret kollu. Ḥafna mistoqsijiet dawn min huma, min baghthom, kemm kienu, ta' liema reliġjon huma, x'lingwa jitkellmu u elf mistoqsija oʻhra. Imma l-biża' kienet li dawn rieduhom ha jaghmlu ġustizzja minnhom dak il-hin stess, jiġifieri li riedu jsawtuhom sal-mewt. Fil-fatt barra kulhadd kien qieghed jghajjat "mewt ghal-Lhud, mewt ghal-Lhud". Kienet vera haġa iebsa li nikkontrollaw din il-folla, fejn il-pulizija damu hafna ma ġew u fejn issa quddiem il-Bażilka kienu qeghdin jifformaw kull grupp ghalih. Ghalhekk inqalghu inċidenti partikulari bejniethom. Jien ghamilt minn kollox biex ma nhalli lil hadd isawwathom, imma mhux il-hin kollu rnexxili ghax dawn sabu ruhhom taht id-daqqiet tal-ġemgha, imma ghall grazzja t'Alla dejjem erġajna hadnihom taht il-kontroll taghna biex ma jsir l-ebda swat fuqhom.

Sa dan it-tant fejn kienu għaddew xi sagħtejn minn mindu kienet bdiet din it-traġedja ġew ħafna puliżija u l-armata ukoll kienu bi kwantita kbira fejn fħin minnhom meta kollox kien maħsub kif ser joħorġu lil dawn it-tlieta minn fost ilfolla hekk kbira kollha tgħajjar "mewt għal-Lhud, mewt għal-Lhud", l-armata ħejjiet il-pjan li jkeċċu lil kulħadd billi wadbu l-gas tad-dmugh u jsawtu lil min baqa' hemm. B'dan il-mument tal-biża' allura s-suldati setgħu joħorġu lil dawn it-tlieta min-nies bla ħadd ma nduna għax kienet tinqala' ġlieda kbira.

Kien issa baqa l-mijiet li kienu ghadhom quddiem fil-pjazza tal-Bażilka, ghalhekk reġgħu wadbu ħafna gas tad-dmugh, u vera ma tara xejn u jaħarqu l-għajnejn daqs il-ħurrieq fl-aqwa tax-xemx. Imma hekk kulħadd tferrex u għal xi 11.00 p.m. sibna ruħna weħidna fil-paċi, kif ukoll fid-diżastru li saret fil-pjazza fejn kull pjanta u werqa ġew mgħafġa qiesu għaddiet tromba kbira. Aħna waqafna tkellimna ftit imbaghad bdejna t-tindif ta' malajr tal-grotta u tal-pjazza.

Kienet traģedja għalija pero' kienet ukoll grazzja għal ħafna nsara li naħseb kienu nsew kif inhi l-grotta li reġgħu ġew lura jitolbu l-Ommna Marija tkompli tħares dan il-post qaddis għal Alla u ta refuġju għalina.

Is-Sibt saret dimostrazzjoni paċifika ĥafna. Infatti ebda pulizija ma' kien preżenti almenu bl-uniformi. Tkellmu l-kapijiet ta' Nażaret u l-Patrijarka, l-isqof, u l-Imam. Filgħaxija kellna l-purċissjoni ta kull nhar ta' Sibt li kienet waħda kbira u l-Ḥadd sar Pontifikal mill-Patrijarka, isqfijiet, kustodju u ħafna reliġjużi oħra li ġew Nażaret.

# Franciscan's Visit to Vietnam Is a First



Il-Ministru Ġeneral Jose' Rodriguez Carballo, OFM

For the first time, a top superior of the Order of Friars Minor visited the Province of Vietnam, thanks to a special visa given by the Hanoi government.

Franciscan Minister General, Father José Rodríguez Carballo, was accompanied by the order's definitor general, Ambrose Van Si, during the Feb. 23-28 visit.

According to a communiqué from the General Curia of the Order of Friars Minor, the minister general met the solemnly professed friars and other religious, and visited nine of the province's 17 religious houses.

His other visits included two convents of the Poor Clare Sisters, as well as a meeting with Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pham Minh Mân of Ho Chi Minh City.

The Franciscan province of Vietnam, founded 77 years ago, has 120 solemnly professed friars. It also has 53 temporary professed friars, 13 novices and 13 postulants. Among their activities, the friars take pastoral care of ethnic minorities. (Zenit)

#### ikompli minn paġna

**24.** Statutes for the Canonical Visitation and the Presidency of the Provincial Chapter. The Definitory revised the Statues for the Canonical Visitation and the Presidency of the Provincial Chapter. The Statutes in force at present are those of 1995. The new Statutes are expected to be published for the next meeting of Visitators.

**25. "Folders".** The General Definitory has dealt with 89 matters requiring a response of the Minister or Definitory since the last "tempo forte" of January.

**26. New Foundations.** The General Definitory approved the erection of two new Foundations; one in Belarus, which will bear the name of 'St. Francis Stigmatised' and the other, of the Byzantine rite in the Ukraine, which will bear the name of 'All the Saints of the Order'. Both Foundations will depend on the Province of Katowice, in Poland.

Br. Sandro Overend Rigillo, ofm Secretary General

Fil-harġa li jmiss ta' L-AĦBAR, Fra Noel Muscat, OFM jikteb dwar

Ir-rabta specjali tal-Frangiskani Maltin ma'l-Art Imqaddsa

# Visit to the Patriarchate of Moscow

The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, visited the Patriarchate of Moscow from the 21st to 24th March 2006. The visit was preceded by a visit to the Catholic Archbishop of the Diocese, Msgr. Thaddeus

Kondrusiewicz, and to the Papal Nuncio in

Russia, Msgr. Antonio Mennini.

The Franciscan presence in Russia and between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches were spoken about in a truly family climate during both meetings. The Franciscan presence in Russia Kazakhstan is composed of 5 canonically erected fraternities with 23 solemnly professed

The meeting with the Patriarch, Alexei II, took place on the 23rd March between 13.00 and 13.45. The Patriarch, in a climate of cordiality, mentioned that the Franciscan Order "is an ancient Order in these lands, its presence going back to the year 1245". He also



said that collaboration with the Franciscans was "a fraternal collaboration, mainly in the area of spirituality". He said that in this respect he agreed with continuing the "exchange of visits of Orthodox monks and nuns to Franciscan places and of Franciscans to Russian monasteries". "The dialogue of spirituality -he said- is most important, since it is a dialogue of the heart and life and, therefore, that which can best bring us close". He showed his willingness to go forward in close collaboration with the Catholic Church in order to confront the challenges which present-day society presents to Christians -moral relativism, materialism, agnosticism, the saving of the family-, respecting the principles of the II Vatican Council in matters of ecumenism. He also spoke of the problem of "proselytism" which, he said, worries the Orthodox Church. The Minister General, for his part, underlined that his visit wished to be a continuation of the one Br. Hermann Schalück. ofm, the then Minister General of the Order, had in 1993. The visit, the Minister General of the Franciscans affirmed, had the strengthening of the friendly links between the Russian Orthodox Patriarch and the Franciscans, as well as strengthening the exchanges of fraternal visits and reflection between both Entities, as its principal objective. The Minister also reaffirmed the principles which led the Franciscans to resume its presence in Russia after the fall of communism: collaboration with the Orthodox Church, mainly is works of social assistance, and pastoral care, in agreement with the Catholic Hierarchy, of the Catholic communities in the country. The meeting ended with an exchange of gifts between the Minister General and the Patriarch.

The Minister General met for more than an hour with the Metropolitan Kiril of Smolensk, President of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Patriarchate, in the morning of the 24th. This meeting also was very cordial and was focused on forms of collaboration. It should be remembered that Metropolitan Kiril was the force behind "the exchange of visits" between a Franciscan delegation and an Orthodox delegation in 1994.

Both the Patriarch and the Metropolitan spoke of their great esteem for His Holiness Benedict XVI, quoting from his Encyclical Deus caritas est on various occasions.

The Patriarch and the Metropolitan were accompanied by the Vice-President of the Department of External Affairs and the Secretary for Inter-Christian Affairs of the Patriarchate during the meetings. The Minister General was accompanied by Br. Miguel Vallecillo, President of the Service for Dialogue of the General Curia, Br. Tecle Vetrali, Secretary to the said Service, Br. Jimmy Edmiston, ofm, President of the OFM Foundation of "St. Francis of Assisi", in Russia and Kazakhstan and Br. Roland Shakals, Franciscan Pastor in St. Petersburg.

The Franciscan delegation visited the Orthodox Cathedral of Moscow and made a pilgrimage to the Monastery of St. Sergey, the oldest and most important Russian Monastery.

# PROVINĊJA FRANĠISKANA SAN PAWL APPOSTLU - MALTA

Prot. 0603\24

# ĊIRKULARI

# RANDAN 2006 "Mulej, xi trid minni?"

Gheżież Huti f'San Frangisk,

Din kienet il-mistoqsija ta' Missierna Franģisku ghas-sejha mis-Salib ta' San Damjan. Din il-mistoqsija kienet l-ewwel sinjal posittiv tal-konveržjoni ta' Missierna Franģisku. Din hi l-mistoqsija li l-Ordni qed jitlob li kull wiehed minna jistaqsi f'qalbu matul din l-ewwel sena ta' thejjija ghas-sena 2009, gheluq it-800 sena mill-approvazzjoni tar-Regula tal-Patrijiet Minuri.

Illum l-Erbgha, 1 ta' Marzu, tajna bidu ghar-Randan Mqaddes, żmien qaddis li matulu nimxu mixja ta' konverżjoni li twassalna biex mill-ġdid niċċelebraw il-passjoni, ilmewt tas-salib u l-qawmien mill-imwiet tas-salvatur taghna Sidna Ġesu' Kristu. Ghalina l-Franġiskani, dan ir-Randan ghandu jkun ta' opportunita' biex kif Missierna Franġisku beda l-konverżjoni tieghu minn quddiem ix-xbieha tas-Salib ta' San Damjan bil-mistoqsija "Mulej, xi trid minni?", hekk ukoll ahna permezz ta' meditazzjoni u talb quddiem ix-xbieha ta' Kristu Msallab, rridu nistaqsu "Mulej, xi trid minni?, b'sinjal ta' rieda tajba ghall-konverzjoni ta' hajjitna..

Missierna Frangisku joffrilna l-isbah eżempju ta' kif nistghu nghixu l-vera konverżjoni. Meta nharsu lejn hajtu, nistghu nghidu li hajtu kienet konverżjoni kontinwa. Kien bniedem konvint mid-dghufija umana. Quddiem id-dghufija umana kellu kelma qawwija kemm ghal min jiżbalja kif ukoll ghal dawk responsabbli mill-hajja tal-fraternita'. Quddiem id-dghufija tal-bniedem, Frangisku kellu rieda ta' missier u qalb ta' omm fl-istess waqt. Ghezież huti, kemm ghandna bżonn minn dan l-ispirtu ta' Missierna Frangisku. Hafna drabi mill-mod kif ingibu ruhna u kif nitkellmu, nahsbu li ahna nies perfetti. Hemm bżonn li nhossu l-htiega tal-konverzjoni f'hajjitna. Hemm bżonn, li matul dan ir-Randan Mqaddes, bhal Frangisku nitfghu l-harsa taghna fuq ix-xbieha ta' Kristu Msallab u nitolbuh xi jrid minna fiċ-ċirkustanzi tal-hajja tallum. Bhal Frangisku, ma naqtghux qalbna quddiem l-isfidi ta' Kristu Msallab. Hemm bżonn li nkunu ta' kuraġġ ghal xulxin. Hadd mhu ahjar minn haddiehor. B'xi mod jew iehor ilkoll ghandna id-dghufija personali taghna.

Nitlobkom biex matul dan ir-Randan b'mod speċjali niftakru fil-Knisja ta' Benghazi li bħalissa għaddejja minn provi kbar. It-talb tagħna għandu jkun ta'appoġġ u ta' tama lil dawn ħutna li qed iduqu l-iebes ta' l-intolleranza u l-vjolenza. Inħeġġiġkom wkoll biex iżż uru aktar spiss lill-ħutna li jinsabu rikoverati fid-djar ta' l-anzjani. Jalla ngħixu l-veru spirtu tar-Randan li jwassalna biex ma' Kristu rebbieħ fuq il-mewt, inqumu rebbieħa fuq id-djufija personali. Il-Mulej jagħtikom is-sliem tiegħu!

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Provinċjalizja Il-Belt Valletta Illum, 1 ta' Marzu 2006 Ras ir-Randan

Fra Paul Galea, OFM Ministru Provincjal

Fra Marcellino Micallef, OFM Segretarju tal-Provincja

# PROVINĊJA FRANĠISKANA SAN PAWL APPOSTLU - MALTA

# Sehem il-Provincja Frangiskana tal-Patrijiet Minuri Fil-Pjan Pastorali ta' l-Arcidjocesi 2007-2008

Knisja li tinbena fil-formazzjoni u li tevangelizza

- Pubblikazzjonijiet mill-Edizzjoni TAU
- Korsijiet Biblici mill-Istitut Frangiskan u l-Kummissarjat ta' l-Art Mqaddsa
- Żjajjar Frangiskani fil-parrocci
- Irtiri Inter-Frangiskani u servizz fid-djar ta' l-Iritiri: Porziuncola Retreat House u Padova Retreat House (Għawdex)
- Lagghat ghall-Membri ta' l-Ordni Frangiskan Sekular

Knisja li tissaħħaħ fil-komunjoni u fid-djalogu fi ħdanha u mas-soċjeta'

- Sehem fil-Kunsilli Pastorali u Unitajiet Parrokkjali
- Kuntatt mad-dinja Islamika

Knisja li taqdi u tmexxi 'l quddiem is-solidarjeta' ma' l-emarginati

• Hidma flimkien mal-Ministeru tal-Familja u Solidarjeta' Socjali fid-Dar Frate Francesco, Birkirkara

Knisja li tiċċelebra b'mod ħaj

• Formazzjoni u korsijiet liturgići

Knisja li tagħti attenzjoni partikulari lill-familja u lill-adolexxenti\ zgħazagħ

- Hidma ma gruppi ta' koppji miżżewga u kummissjoni familja
- Laqgħat ma' adolexxenti u żgħażagħ f'ċentri franġiskani u fil-Welcome Home, ir-Rabat

# MESSAĠĠ TA' SOLIDARJETA' MA' ĦUTNA R-RELIĠJUŻI TAL-KUMPANIJA TA' ĠESU' (ĠIŻWITI)

P. Paul Chetcuti S.J.,

ahna l-Patrijiet Minuri ninsabu maghqudin maghkom f'dawn il-mumenti difficcli ghall-Provincja taghkom. F'mumenti bhal dawn tajjeb li niftakru li Ġesu' nnifsu , ghax iddefenda l-imwarrbin u pprietka l-imhabba u l-mahfra ta' l-ghedewwa, spicca imdendel fuq salib. Kuraġġ u inweghdukom it-talb taghna. Paci u ġid.

Ghażiż P. Paul Galea u l-patrijiet kollha,

F'ismi u f'isem il-Ġiżwiti Maltin nirringrazzjak għas-solidarjetà li wrejt magħna f'dan il-mument.

Kemm hi haġa sabiha meta nghixu bhal ahwa f'solidarjetà ma' xulxin. U kemm hi haġa kerha meta nhallu l-mibeghda u l-preġudizzji jifirduna minn xulxin. F'wahda hemm is-sliem. Fl-ohra hemm biss firda u t-tbatija.

Inkomplu nahdmu u nithabtu biex il-valuri tal-hajja u tar-rispett shih lejn kull bniedem ikunu mhaddnin minn kulhadd. Grazzi li tissieheb maghna f'din il-missjoni sabiha li, ghalina, hija l-missjoni ta' Kristu.

Nitolbu ghal xulxin u l-Mulej ibierek lilek u l-gheżież tieghek.



# 30 Refuġjat f'Dar Frate Francesco

Minn Jannar ta' din is-sena, billi n-numru taż-żgħażagħ refuġjati li kienu fid-Dar Frate Francesco naqas, saret bidla flużu tad-dar u għaddiet taħt il-Ministeru tal-Familja u Solidarjeta' Soċjali u b'hekk bdiet tilqa' koppji mmiżżewġa u single mothers refuġjati. F'kelma oħra hemm jgħixu 13 ilfamilja u 4 single mothers.

Nhar it-Tlieta 14 ta' Marzu l-Ministru Provinėjal żar id-Dar u ltaqa' mal-careworkers li qeghdin jaghtu s-servizz taghhom fid-dar, fosthom is-Sinjura J o s e p h i n e Leguesse li waslet biex ittemm il-ħidma taghha. Hija tiġi oht Fra Diegu Vella, OFM li kien missjunarju fil-Ħonduras.

Ir-residenti, mill-pocket money li





jircievu jridu jahsbu ghal ghajxien tal-hajja ta' kuljum. Ilkoll ghandhom cooker u fridge u kull familja tipprepara hi l-ikla taghha.

Huma ģejjin minn diversi pajjizi, fosthom mil-Eritrea, Ethopia, Togo, Liberia, Nigerja u Congo. Fost ir-residenti hemm 6 t'itrabi. Ta' min jghid li qed isir sforz biex jinstab xoghol ghalihom. Id-diffikulta' tqum ma' min se jhallu t-tfal waqt li huma jkunu x-xoghol.

Fil-maġġoranza tagħhom huma kattoliċi. Ġew imħeġġin biex jattendu għall-quddiesa fil-kappella Nazju Falzon. Fid-dar hemm armonija sħiħa, indafa u fl-istess hin qegħdin fambjent u ħajja sempliċi għall-aħħar.

Ta' min jgħid ukoll li l-Laboratorju tal-Paċi qed jilqa' 35 refuġjat ieħor.



# Attivita' Vokazzjonali

Joseph Magro. OFM

Fl-4 ta' Marzu, f'ġurnata mill-isbaħ l-Għaqda Vokazzjonijiet Franġiskani organizzat

attività Vokazzjonali għalladoloxxenti, biex jaraw iżjed mill-qrib il-ħajja tagħna bħala franġiskani u ikunu jafu iżjed mill-qrib min hu San Franġisk.

F1-10 ta' filgħodu iżjed minn 80 tifel inġabru fil-Knisja tal-Patrijiet Franģiskani fir-Rabat. Huma kienu milqugħin mill-Patrijiet Komunità, mill-promutur tal-Vokazzjonijiet kif ukoll mill-'Core Grupp' Bdejna Vokazzjonijiet. b'talb mill-fonti ta' San Frangisk u l-istorja ta' San Frangisk kienet spjegata



fil-qosor anke permezz ta' preżentazzjoni viżiva. Wara din il-laqgħa tqassam it-TAU li ġie spjegat minn Fra Ġużepp Beneditt.



Wara din il-Preżentazzjoni tal-qaddis it-tfal kienu imħeġġa biex jaraw i 1 fein kunvent, daru kull rokna tal-kunvent. tas-seminarju Frangiskan kif ukoll il-ġnien. Huma kienu magsumin f'erbà gruppi, fejn għal xi uħud din kienet esperjenza kompletament ġdida.



ġdida. Wara dan kollu inġbarna biex flimkien nibdew il-mixja tagħna lejn il-Buskett, din iddarba ukoll inqasmna f'hames gruppi taħt it-tmexxija tal-'Core Group': Aaron Abdilla, Joseph Cilia, Stephen Borg, Clint Micallef u Andrea Diacono. Grazzi specjali lil Fra Paul Attard ta' l-għajnuna fl-organizzazjoni ta' din il-ġurnata. Mela fil-11 bdejna l-mixja tagħna u għal habta ta' nofsinhar wasalna fejn issetiljajna u bdejna nħejju laffarijiet biex nibdew insajru.

Inqsamna f'żewġ gruppi fejn bdejna nilgħabu futbol u oħrajn xi logħob ieħor. Wara ftit minuti kulħadd kien imsejjaħ biex jiġi u jiekol. Wara li kulħadd kiel u xeba bdejna bl-organizzazjoni tat-treasure hunt. Żgur li kulħadd ħa pjaċir b'din il-logħba għaliex magħha kien hemm marbuta xi premjijiet.

Insomma, kienet esperjenza pożittiva hafna fejn tlabna, taghllimna u laghbna f'atmosfera Franġiskana. Żgur li fil-futur qrib se nerġghu norganizzaw attivitajiet simili u laqghat speċjali ghal dawn l-adoloxxenti.

#### Ikkuntatjana

Jekk tixtieq tkun taf izjed fuq ilhajja Frangiskna, fuq lattivitajiet u laqghat li jsiru filhajja vokazzjonali taghna l-Frangiskani...

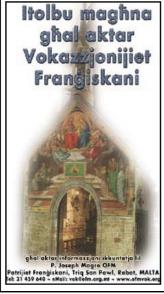
Jekk tixtieq tara iktar mill-qrib il-hajja taghna l-patrijiet Frangiskani u tixtieq tigi taghmel esperjenza qasira... Jekk qed tixtieq jew tahseb fuq sejha li Alla qieghed jaghmillek...

tgħidlux le l-Mulej... imma wieġeb bil-Qalb... billi tikkuntatja lil:

P. Joseph Magro OFM

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Mobile :: 99438188
eMail :: vok@ofm.org.mt
Indirizz :: Vokazzjonijiet
Frangiskani, Patrijiet
Frangiskani, Triq San Pawl,
Rabat, Malta.





# JUM IL-VOKAZZJONIJIET

22-23 ta' April - Għawdex 29-30 ta' April - Rabat 6-7 ta' Mejju - Valletta 13-14 ta' Mejju - tas-Sliema 20-21 ta' Mejju - Sta. Marija ta' l-Anġli 17-18 ta' Ġunju - Hamrun

#### ikompli minn

Reason why some one cannot kneel, then let him bow profoundly, or incline his head. In the same way, dearest brethren, when the deacon warns you to bow for the blessing, I urge you to be faithful in bowing for the blessing may come through man, but does not come from man" (Sermon IXXXV,1,5).

#### Supporting the faith

With the approach of the third millenium, it is wise to be aware of the liturgical treasures accumulated during the past two thousand years of our christian history. Any changes or up-dating contemplated in the name of Vatican II, should be carried out within the tenure of the instructions of the "Constitution of the Liturgy" with no strings attached or abuses, always according to the Bishops Conferences of the Catolic world. "There must be no innovation unless the good of the Church requires it. Care must be taken that any forms adopted should in some way, groq organically from the forms already existing" (Par. 23) in order to mantain wholesome the spirituality in the Catholic attitude of prayer.

# Pasquetta flimkien

It-Tnejn, 17 ta' April 2006

Il-Gwardjani huma mhegga javzaw lill-Ministru Provinčjal kemm gejjin mill-Ahwa mhux aktar tard mill-Erbgha 12 ta' April 2006. Min ma jinfurmax qabel, ifisser li mhu gej hadd mill-komunita'.

# Incident serju fil-Knisja ta' Giesu, fil-Belt: Barrani jaghmel herba minn kurcifiss storiku

Artiklu: L-Orizzont 01.04.06 Ritratti Marcellino Micallef, OFM



Quddiesa fil-Knisja ta' Santa Marija ta' Gesù, maghrufa bhala Ta' Giezu, kienet sfrattata minn ragel ta' 31 sena ta' nazzjonalità Ingliza li qajjem pandemonju shih meta telà fuq l-altar u kisser kurcifiss uniku u antik li hu parti mill-patrimonju Malti.

Waqt li Patri Gorg Aquilina, OFM, kien qieghed jaghmel l-omelija fil-quddiesa tas-sitta u kwart ta' filghaxija, ir-ragel Ingliz b'dixxendenza Asjatika u li jismu Christian Bangi, hareg minn fost in-nies u tela' jigri lejn il-presbiterju wara l-altar maggur. Waqt li beda jghajjat "Intom l-Insara ma tipprattikawx dak li tippriedkaw", qabad il-kurcifiss li kien wieqaf f'nofs l-altar u tefghu ghal isfel.

Il-kurcifiss tal-madriperla li nhadem 230 sena ilu mill-patrijiet Frangiskani Minuri ta' Gerusalem u kien armat ghall-okkazjoni tal-festa tad-Duluri nhar il-Gimgha, spicca mfarrak f'nofs l-artal u fl-art.

Dan il-kurcifiss kien fih gebliet zghar migjubin mill-Art Mqaddsa 'konnessjoni ma' postijiet fejn ghex Kristu.

Filwaqt li qam pandemonju fil-knisja, numru ta' nies qamu mill-ewwel biex jipprovaw izommu lil Banji milli jkompli jaghmel iktar hsara. Biex jiddefendi ruhu mir-rabja tan-nies prezenti, ir-ragel beda jwaddab gandlieri antiki ta' l-injam biex izomm lin-nies milli jersqu lejh bil-konsegwenza li kisser tnejn minnhom.

Uhud minn dawk li telghu ghal dan ir-ragel irnexxielhom jikkontrollawh billi rabtuh b'habel li jintuza fil-purcissjoni tal-Gimgha l-Kbira.

Dawn baqghu jzommuh sakemm waslu l-pulizija mill-Iskwadra Mobbli mmexxijin mis-Surgent Paul Cassar u l-Kuntistabbli Raymond Saliba li hadu azzjoni mmedjata, immanettjawh u arrestawh. Ir-ragel, li beda jinsisti li ma kellu ebda dokument ta' l-identità, ittiehed id-depot tal-pulizija biex ikun investigat mill-Ispettur Joseph Mercieca tad-Dipartiment ta' l-Investigazzjoni Kriminali.

Minn stharrig li ghamel l-orizzont jirrizulta li Christian Banji wara ttiehed mid-depot lejn ic-Centru tas-Sahha fil-Floriana biex jiddewwa ghal xi griehi li garrab fil-knisja. Waqt li kien fic-Centru tas-Sahha kompla jkun interrogat u minn hemm ittiehed l-Isptar Monte Carmeli biex jinghata kura ghall-kundizzioni li kien jinsab fiha.

Minn aktar stharrig jirrizulta li f'dawn l-ahhar jiem, Banji kien ipprova jsib ghajnuna socjali izda kien irrifjutat. Hu mifhum li l-bierah f'xi hin mar biex ikellem patri fl-istess knisja u ftit sighat wara, rega mar u sehh l-incident.

Wara li Christian Banji kien arrestat, il-quddiesa tkompliet xorta wahda bil-kurcifiss imkisser fuq l-artal. Aktar tard waslu l-membri tal-forensika biex jaghmlu l-istharrig taghhom.Il-pulizija mistennija tressqu l-qorti fil-jiem li gejjin. B'dan l-incident kien informat il-Magistrat ta' l-Ghassa Dr J. Cassar li dan hatar diversi esperti biex jghinu fl-inkjesta.



# Meticulous renovation of 300-year-old statue

The crowd-pulling devotional statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, revered at the Our Lady of Jesus Oratory, known as Ta' Giezu, in Valletta, is getting its first proper facelift since it was made some 300 years ago.

The statue underwent several alterations and renovations over the years. At



one point, even its head was adjusted slightly because, apparently, the Madonna was not deemed to have a proper posture. Eight coats of paint, at least, were applied to it over the years, and even a layer of fibreglass, according to the trend at the time, when it was "renovated" in the 1970s.

The people who run the Ta' Giezu Oratory where the Good Friday statues are kept have commissioned Fr Charles Vella to carry out restoration works on the statues, starting with the one of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Fr Vella, a Gozitan priest residing in Valletta, studied restoration in Italy and has restored paintings in private collections as well as works in churches, both here and abroad. He is also an artist who makes terracotta and wax figures and who has revived the tradition of the Neapolitan crib in Malta.

With the help of Roberta Cassar, Fr Charles patiently removed the "recent" layers of paint, the last coatings of which had to be painstakingly scraped off with a scalpel. He has decided to repaint the statute using the natural pigments that were applied when the statue was originally made.

The dress was initially painted with azurite, a semi-precious mineral with a deep blue hue that was often used as a dye for paints and fabrics.

"A mere 100 grams of azurite costs Lm140, but I have bought the original

colours, which include cinabro (vermilion) and lapis lazuli and will paint the statue with tempera, using egg white as a base with which to mix the ground colours," he said.

Azurite has the tendency to change its tone according to the intensity of the light and was in widespread use in the 18th century.

In the case of the statue of our Lady of Sorrows, this translucent colour has been snuffed under layers of paint, the last of which was a coat of cheap paint that also badly affected the texture of the base material of the effigy.

"I will paint the statue with a series of washes. Most of the tough work, that included the stripping of the more 'recent' paint and giving the statue its original smooth texture, has now been done and the statue is almost ready to be painted. "Everything I am doing is reversible. This is the modern trend. Every step is documented in a report that contains photographs of how things were before and after I intervened, so that future restorers would be able to see what I had done. My interventions are as minimal as possible," he explained.

The statue was made in Malta but the artist is unknown. As was the practice at the time, the work was not signed.

During restoration, Fr Vella could detect the spots where changes had been done over time.

"You can spot the places where fabric, wood or other material was added. What is not necessary is being removed to retain as much of the original work as possible. But, on the other hand, one cannot strip the statue to what it was when it was commissioned because that would change too much of what people are used to seeing now," he said.

One of the things that mostly damaged the statue was the way the support for the adjacent wooden cross was fitted. The support was directly linked to the backbone of the statue and the vibrations from the cross as it was carried along the procession caused substantial damage. Fr Vella has found a way to have the cross separated from the statue. The cross will now be fixed to the platform on which the statue is carried.

The Gozitan priest has been working on the statute for over a month.

"It will be ready well before the feasts of Our Lady of Sorrows and Good Friday. The statute draws crowds from all walks of life to this very day, and I feel I have a lot of responsibility to shoulder. But I drew up a preliminary report where I designed what had to be done and I am now doing just that.

I am extremely meticulous in my work, and this task is no exception," he said.



Natalino Fenech 15.03.06

# TINTEMM L-EWWEL FAŽI TAR-RESTAWRAZZJONI TAL-KUNVENT TAL-BELT

Minn Lulju 2005 sa Jannar 2006 inbdiet u ntemmet l-ewwel fażi tar-restawr tal-Kunvent tal-Belt. L-ikbar biċċa xogħol kienet ir-restawr tal-kjostru tal-kunvent. L-aperturi l-kbar iċċekknu u nbnew twieqi f'forma ta' arkati, kif jidher fir-ritratt flewwel paġna. Barra minn hekk ġie mbajjad il-kunvent kollu, l-intrata tal-parlatorju u l-kappella. Ix-xogħol sar mis-Sur Raymond Farrugia u l-ħaddiema tiegħu. F'April li ġej għandu jingħata bidu għat-tieni fażi tar-restawr li jinkludi fih it-tikhil tal-hitan u l-opra morta fuq il-bjut, tiswija tal-membrane u fuq kollox ir-restawr sħiħ u t-tibjid tar-refetorju.

# L-artist, il-bniedem u l-arti tieghu

# Doris Azzopardi

L-artist għandu bżonn biss saqaf fuq rasu, loqma ħobż u kavallett, il-kumplament jagħtihulu Alla u b'mod abbundanti. "Hu jrid jgħix biex ipinġi u mhux ipinġi biex jgħix." Hekk qal il-pittur Amerikan Albert Pinkham Ryder. Tidher frażi poetika u xi ftit barra mir-realta' ta' llum. Iżda meta ltaqjt u kelli l-opporunita' li nitkellem ftit fit-tul ma' l-artist Fr.Charles Vella, skoprejt li iva jekk Alla jogħġbu jżejjen persuna b'talent artistiku, ftit li xejn jifdal importanza għal affarijiet materjali oħra.

Ovvjament dan ma jfissirx li xogħol l-artist m'għandux ikun valutat kif jistħoqqlu, aktar u aktar meta wieħed jikkunsidra li dak li jiddistingwi l-artist middilettant hu s-sofferenza li jħoss l-artist biex joħloq, filwaqt li d-dillettant iħoss pjaċir biss. Nikkwota lill-kritiku ta' l-arti Amerikan li miet fl-1975, Lionel Trilling li ġustament jgħid li dak li jagħmel artist, hu l-poter tiegħu li jifforma l-materjal milluġigħ li lkoll għandna.

# Restawr u ristrutturar fuq il-vara tad-Duluri

Fr. Charles għadu kif temm biċċa xogħol diffiċli u importanti ħafna. Hu ngħata l-kompitu biex jirrestawra u jirristruttura l-istatwa tad-Duluri li tifforma parti mill-vari tal-Ġimgħa l-Kbira, li toħroġ proċessjonalment mill-Knisja ta' Sidtna Marija ta' Ġesu', organizzata mill-Arċikonfraternita' tas-SSMU Kurċifiss.

Fl-oratorju ta' l-istess knisja, Fr. Charles qatta' ħinijiet twal jistudja u jaħdem fuq din il-vara, li għandha devozzjoni kbira mill-poplu Malti. Hu neħha kisja wara oħra u għamel diversi skoperti interessanti u reġa' ħareġ ċerti dettalji li kienu mistura fil-vara.

Għall-aħħar tas-sajf, il-Kummissarji l-ġodda ta' l-Arċikonfraternita' tas-SSMU Kurċifiss irrealizzaw li lvari għandhom ħafna ħsara u ilu ma jsir xogħol fuqhom. Kien hemm żmien li kienu jingħataw iż-żejt tal-kittien, u għalhekk biż-żmien bdew jiswiedu."

Fr. Charles għalhekk eżaminhom sewwa u ħejja rappport preliminari u li mbagħad kien preżentat lill-Kummissjoni ta' l-Arti Sagra fil-Kurja, li tat l-approvazzjoni biex ix-xogħol isir. Hu ntebaħ li l-aktar vara problematika u li jeħtieġ isir ix-xogħol fuqha kienet id-Duluri, waħda mill-aktar vari popolari.

"Sibt li l-istatwa tad-Duluri tmur

lura 300 sena u kienet maqtugħa millanimu tagħha. Kawża ta' dan kien issalib tqil u kbir li kien marbut direttament ma' l-istatwa. L-ewwel li għamilna kien li fridna s-salib minn mal-vara biex jintrefa' mill-bradella biss. Sibt għajnuna kbira mingħand Paul Scerri, li jinqala' ħafna fix-xogħol tal-hadid u l-welding."

Minn hemm bdiet il-fażi proprja tar-restawr. Tul iż-żminijiet sarulha diversi rinnovazzjonijiet iżda qatt restawr. Id-differenza bejn rinnovazzjoni u restawr hi teknika iżda tista' tkun spegata b'mod sempliċi. "Rinnovazzjoni tfisser minn żmien għal żmien il-vara tingħata xi żebgħa (libsa fuq oħra) u ssirilha xi tiswija, filwaqt li r-restawr jinvolvi ferm aktar xoghol ghaliex il-vara titneżża mill-ilbies kollu taghha ovjament dak li jkun riversibbli, għaliex jista' jagħti każ li l-vara tkun ģiet trattata b'żebgħat li diffiċilment jitneħħew, bħal fibre glass, biex wara tingħata d-dehra kemm jista' jkun originali taghha."

Fr. Charles beda jneħhi l-ewwel passati taż-żebgħa tal-plastik biex imbagħad sab żebgħa tal-fibre glass u taħt, il-libsa ta' l-ottocento li kienet biż-żebgħa taċ-ċomb.

"Taħt kien hemm ilwien minerali sakemm wasalna għal-lwien semi-prezzjużi bħal azurito u ċ-cinabrio. Neħhejt xi ħames, sitt ilbiesi sakemm wasalt għalihom. Dawn huma lwien minerali magħmula minn ħaġar semi-prezzjuż, bħal coral, teknika li l-użu tagħha jmur lura għall-Medju Evu u l-prodott hu għali ħafna."

Fr. Charles fehemni li l-blu ta' l-azurito li hemm fid-drappeġġ tal-libsa tad-Duluri jinbidel skond l-intensita' tad-dawl ta' barra, u normalment jiċċara fid-dawl u jiskura fid-dlam. "Hu lewn ħaj li jkanġi ħafna u jagħti dehra mill-isbaħ. L-ilwien bagħatna għalihom barra."

Waqt il-hidma tar-restawr, Fr. Charles kellu l-opportunita' jiskopri aktar dwar il-vara tad-Duluri. Minn ģewwa strutturalment bħala statwa ħadet forom differenti tul is-snin. Fil-bidu kienet iċken u dan jikkonfermah għaliex Fr. Charles fuq ġewwa sab bażi ta' injam taż-żebbuġ iebes li kienet il-bażi originali. Wara kabbru l-bażi għal dik li hi llum u maż-żmien żidulha d-drappeġġ li jvarja minn dak oriġinali li tmur lura għall-epoka tas-settecento.

"Fis-seklu 19, imbagħad, għamlu traformazzjoni billi żidulha anġlu u kabbruha. Il-vara kienet inbidlitilha rasha u r-ras oriġinali għadha teżisti. Il-wiċċ ta' issa hu ferm isbaħ u delikat

hafna. Kien l-ewwel haġa li lestejt. Ilkarnaġġjon *pallido* u l-ghajnejn miksurin u mxawtin bil-biki jispikkaw u hemm min jikkommovi ruhu meta jersaq qrib wiċċha."

Tgħin lil Fr. Charles fix-xogħol hemm Roberta Cassar, restawratriċi li għadha kif igradwat u li fiha hu għandu fiduċja kbira. "Restawratur bravu hu dak li jikkonsulta lilu nnifsu wkoll. Dak li ma jingħalaqx għalih, jassorbi minn esperjenzi differenti. Kull restawratur ma jistax jippermetti żball. Kull restawratur ikollu mistoqsijiet li għalihom mhux dejjem hemm risposta."

Issa li l-hidma fuq d-Duluri spiċċat irid ikompli jaħdem fuq il-kumplament tal-vari li fuqhom se jsir xogħol ta' rinnovazzjoni, minbarra l-Ecce Homo. "Fuq din il-vara bi ħsiebni nagħmel listess biċċa xogħol bħal tad-Duluri għaliex jista' jagħti l-każ li noħroġ xi storja interessanti għaliex jidher li hemm xi xebħ mal-Kurċifiss ta' Ġieżu bħala anatomija."

Fr. Charles, li hu wkoll artist tajjeb hafna u versatili, qalli li biex tkun artist ma hemmx bżonn li tkun restawratur iżda biex tkun restawratur il-fatt li tkun artist ukoll jghin hafna.

IL-MUMENT 26.03.06

# Gozo Bishop to make second Fraternal Visit

On 18 April, Mgr. Mario Grech, the newly consecrated Bishop of Gozo, is to conduct a second fraternal visit to the community which gathers in the Franciscan church of Saint Anthony in Ghajnsielem, Gozo. The scope of the visitation is to delve more deeply in the pastoral activity of the friars and to have more time to talk with the faithful.

The programme will begin at 11.45 am, when Mgr. Grech will arrive at the Franciscan friary and will be met by the Guardian and the friars. After prayers with the fraternity he will have lunch with the friars. Later on he will talk privately with all the Franciscan friars. At 5.15 pm he will meet the members of the Secular Franciscan Order and the Piccola Famiglia Francescana (PFF). He will also dedicate some time to visit the sick in their homes.

At 7 pm the Bishop will solemnly enter the church of Saint Anthony and preside over a concelebrated Mass with the friars and faithful. A reception will follow in the friary and finally Bishop Grech will meet the Franciscan Youths.

# JUM MEMORABBLI GĦALL-KNISJA F'BENGHAZI



Nhar il-Ġimgħa 17 ta' Marzu, kien jum memorabbli għal knisja fBenghazi. Precizament xahar wara mindu sehhew il-grajjiet ta' niket ta' Frar li ghadda, giet iċċelebrata l-ewwel Quddiesa. Dan kien possibbli wara li numru ta' kattoliċi Filipppini u Afrikani għamlu sforzi kbar matul il-ġranet li għaddew, biex inaddfu kemm setghu l-kattidral żgħir mit-tifrik li kien fih, u jlestuh skond iċ-ċirkostanzi tal-mument biex tkun tista' tiġi ċċelebrata l-quddiesa. Jumejn qabel, Mons.Giovanni Martinelli ofm, Isqof ta' Tripli, ģie jagħmel żjara lill-knisja f'Benghazi fejn jiltaqa' ma' Mons. Silvestro Magro ofm, mas-saċerdoti u r-reliģiużi ta-Vigarjat kollu. Iż-żewġ Isqfijiet u P. Amado Baranquel, ofm Filippin, libsu lparamenti tal-quddiesa ma' genb l-antiporta tal-kattidral, ghax ghad irid ighaddi ħafna aktar żmien biex tiġi utilizzata s-sagristija. Il-knisja kienet mimlija bin-nies, kulhadd bid-dmugh f'ghaineih u b'sentimenti ta' radd il-hair 'l Alla ghal dak ilmument li l-komunita' kattolika kienet ilha titlob u tistenna. Mons. Magro wara li ta' t-tislima tal-paċi lil miġemgħa, fisser li din il-paċi hija differenti ħafna mill-paċi tad-dinja. "Din hija l-paċi tal-Mulej, jiġifieri paċi li titnissel mill-maħfra, millmoghdrija, mill-imhabba ta' l-ahwa, mir-rikonċiljazzjoni, u mit-tama fi Kristu fuq is-Salib. Kristu Msallab huwa l-paċi tagħna, għax is-saġrifċċju u t-talba tiegħu għall-maħfra fuq is-Salib, ġabu rikonċiljazzjoni bejn il-Missier fis-sema, u uliedu fuq l-art.....". Fl-aħħar tal-Quddiesa, tkanta innu lil Marija Immakulata Titulari tal-Kattidral u Patruna tal-Vigarjat. Dan kollu setgha jsir bil-ghajnuna indispensabbli li taw ukoll il-membri tas-sigurta' tal-belt ta' Benghazi, u uffiċċjali għolja tal-Qamar l-Aħmar li kuljum ġentilment jeskortaw l-Isqof kulfejn imur biex jaqdi l-ministeru tiegħu.

# Messaġġ ta' Mons. Sylvester Magro, OFM, fl-okkażjoni tas-Solennita' ta' San Ġużepp



Gheżiez P. Provincjal P. Paul Galea, huti l-patrijiet, nies u devoti ta' San Ġużepp,

Din is-sena ma nistax niċċelebra magħkom il-festa għażiża tagħna, li tgħaqqadna flimkien bħal familja waħda madwar il-Missier l-aktar ħanin.

Ilkoll tafu bis-shaba qalila li waqghet fuq il-knisja taghna hawnhekk, fuq il-komunita' tal-patrijiet u fuq l-insara taghna.

Kullhadd ihossu parti mit-traģedja għax meta tinlaqgħat il-knisja, tintlaqgħat l-omm, u kull wiehed ihoss qalbu minfuda jara 'l ommu hekk imġarba.

Imdawwar minn herba ta' qerda liema bhala, f'dawn il-ġranet il-hsieb tieghi jittajjar lejn il-knisja taghna tar-Rabat, imżejna ghall-festa ta' San Ġużepp u fiddieqa tal-qalb li tahkimni, ghajnejja jimtlew bid-dmugh. Inġibkom quddiem ghajnejja tkantaw, iċċapċpu u tifirhu madwar San Ġużepp, u fuq kollox titolbu l-patroċinju tieghu. Ghax San Ġużepp, bhala Missier ihares lil kull wiehed minnha bhalma hares lil Sidna Ġesu' Kristu u lill-Marija ghal tletin sena.

Haġa ta' l-ghaġeb, fit-tifrik kollu li ġarbet il-knisja jew il-kattidral ċkejken tieghi, ir-ritratt - inkwadru tal-vara ghażiża taghna, li kont ġibt minn Malta u poġġejt ghall-qima fil-knisja, baqa' shih u f'postu.

X'hin nerfa' ghajnejja lejh inhossni nintela' bit-tama, bil-kuraġġ u b'faraġ kbir biex inkompli nhares din il-parti tal-Knisja, li l-Vigarju ta' Kristu, il-Papa afda f'idejja.

F'mument jew ieħor ta' ħajjitna, ilkoll ngħaddu minn zminijiet difficli. Kull wieħed minna, kull familja tgħaddi minn burraxka jew oħra. Taqtgħux qalbkom!

Fittxu l-faraġ u t-tama fil-qawwa tat-talb u fis-sagramenti. Aħna l-insara għandna x-xorti kbira li niltaqgħu ma' Ġesu', l-Iben għażiż ta' San Ġużepp, li jaħfrilna kull dnub fis-sagrament tal-qrar, u jagħtina lilu nnifsu fit-tqarbin imqaddes.

Hadd fid-dinja m'ghandu x-xorti akbar minn dik li taghtina r-reliģjon taghna: dik li tlaqqaghna ma' Kristu li jahfer, li jhenn, u li jaghtina bhala ikel il-Ġisem Imqaddes tieghu.

Kif intom madwar San Ġużepp, ftakru fina u għidu talba għalina lil dan ilmissier. Min-naħa tiegħi, nitlob lil San Ġużepp ixerred fuq kull wieħed u waħda minnkom il-patroċinju tiegħu biex fuq kollox ngħixu lkoll ikollna l-grazzja li ngħixu ħajja qaddisa, li nagħmlu mewta tajba u naqilgħu l-hena ta' dejjem fil-ġenna. Amen.

Il-barka pastorali tiegħi tinżel fuqkom u fuq il-familji għeżież tagħkom, speċjalment fuq il-morda u dawk li huma mgħobbijin b'kull xorta ta' salib.

Monsinjur Isqof Silvester Magro, OFM Benghazi - Libja 19 ta' Marzu 2006 Viva San Ġużepp.

#### TISRIEH FIS-SLIEM!

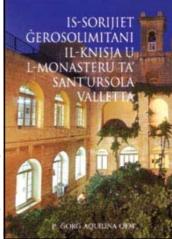
Is-Sinjura Carmela Vella, omm ħuna Fra Ġużepp ingħaqdet mal-Mulej għal dejjem nhar it-Tnejn, 27 ta' Marzu 2006, fl-għomor ta' 96 sena. Il-funeral tagħha sar nhar l-Erbgħa, 29 ta' Marzu fil-parroċċa tas-Sacro Cuor, Sliema.

# Monumental History of St. Ursola Nunnery Launched in Rome

Fr. George Aquilina OFM, historian and archivist of the Maltese Franciscan Province, has just returned from Rome, where he attended the official launching

of the Italian edition of his monumental history of the Nunnery of Saint Ursola in Valletta. Fr. George, who is the chaplain of this Monastery, has written this work after spending more than 25 years delving into the Archives of the Monastery, those of the Order of Saint John at the National Library, the Archives of the Cathedral, and the Secret Archives of the Vatican, together with other Archives in Palermo.

The official launching was honored by the presence of the Grand Master of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta, His Royal Highness Prince Andrew Bertie, together with many outstanding personages from the Order. The Monastery of Nuns of Saint Ursola in Valletta was founded in 1584 by Grand Master Hugh Lubens de Verdalle, and the nuns form the



female branch of the Order of Saint John. They have been present in Malta ever since, even after the departure of the Order from the Islands in 1798, when Napoleon took over Malta and Gozo. They have continued to live in the monastery during the British era, their monastery was bombed during World War II and was rebuilt as it is today. The church of the monastery boasts a masterpiece by Mattia Preti, depicting the martyrdom of Saint Ursola.

The original edition of the monumental history was written in Maltese and was launched on 19 October 2005 in the presence of the President of the Republic of Malta, Dr. Eddie Fenech Adami. The book has been translated into Italian and reprinted under the auspices of the Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta, in the Republic of Malta. The same book is now going to be translated into English. It has already won the admiration of scholars in Malta and abroad.

# GIFRA HAMRUN "IN PUTTINU CARES"

Members of the Franciscan Youth (GIFRA) of Hamrun are engaged in the organization of a 60-hour football Marathon. They are practically taking care of every detail that the marathon entails. The day begins with a Mass in the main area where the NGO stands are. Afterwards, visitors are being entertained in various ways. Other organizations are also giving a helping hand, including sponsors and local talented singers. During the marathon, children are being offered recreation through games, drawings and a large selection of music. The GIFRA members of Rabat are also participating in this event.

The "Puttinu Cares" is a childrens' cancer support group, and operates from the Wonderland Ward in Saint Luke Hospital. The group's main function is that of obtaining funds and other resources from various sponsors. Most members of the group have at one point or another taken part in fund-raising activities. The group also aims at creating more awareness regarding cancer in children, and tries to convince the public that cancer is not just a fearsome disease, but that, in fact, in most cases, cancer can be curable.

# Lent in Jerusalem

**Noel Muscat, OFM** 

The season of Lent has kicked off with full solemnity in the Holy City of Jerusalem. Every weekend in Lent sees the Franciscan fraternity of Saint Saviour Monastery, together with that of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, fully occupied with the liturgical celebrations at the holiest Christian shrine, namely the church in which Christians venerate the rock of Calvary, where Christ was crucified, and the empty Tomb from where He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Every Friday afternoon at 3pm the Francsican friars organize the "Via Crucis" along the streets of Jerusalem which mark the this ceremonial journey of Christ from Pilate's Pretorium to Golgotha. Hundreds of pilgrims take part in this devotional procession. Readings are proclaimed in Italian, English and Arabic or Spanish, for the meditation of those present.

On Saturday afternoon, at 2.30pm, the 50 or so Franciscans living dating from the 18th in Saint Saviour's Monastery, headquarters of the Holy Land Custody, half of whom are Franciscan students, go to the Latin Patriarchate, to accompany the Latin Patriarch, Mgr. Michel Sabbah, for the solemn entrance and procession in the Holy Sepulchre.



They are accompanied by the traditional "kawwas", still wearing their traditional robes dating from the time of the Ottoman Turks. However, accompanyment is nowadays aided by the more efficient escort of the Israeli police and the vigilant security of the Israeli soldiers in the piazza in front of the Basilica. The Patriarch is escorted by the Franciscans in the Basilica since, according to "Status Quo" rules century, the Franciscans alone are recognized as the official Catholic proprietors in the Basilica by the other proprietors, namely the Greek and Armenian Orthodox monks.

At 3pm the solemn procession takes place along all the stations in

the Basilica, stopping particularly in the place where St. Helena found the Holy Cross in the year 325, on Calvary, and in front of the Tomb of Christ. Here the Franciscans and the Patriarch go round the Tomb for three times in an anti-clockwise procession under the "Anastasis" or dome of the resurrection, singing the Easter hymn with the basilica organ blasting out its melodious voice from the thousands of pipes in the gallery. The fragrance of incense, the splendid vestments, the hundreds of candles make the procession an experience not to be missed.

The Franciscans return to the Basilica in a quieter form round about 11.30pm for the night vigil, presided by the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa

OFM, or his Vicar, Fr. Artemio Vitores OFM. The vigil celebration is held in the Latin, or Catholic, section of the Basilica, and includes the psalms and readings of Matins, plus another procession round the holy Tomb, with the singing of the "Benedictus" canticle and the reading of the Gospel of the Resurrection.

At 8.30am on Sunday the Franciscan friars go again to the Latin Jerusalem. Every Patriarchate to accompany the Latin Patriarch (Catholic Bishop) of Jerusalem to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre for Pontifical Mass. The singing in Gregorian chant Basilica of the Agony of is done by the Franciscan students, while the homily is delivered in Arabic by the Franciscan parish priest of the parish of Saint Saviour, the only

Catholic parish in Jerusalem.

These celebrations are repeated every Saturday and Sunday all during Lent, until Palm Sunday, when the solemn Easter celebrations start.

Besides these celebrations, the Franciscan friars also go for a "peregrinatio", or pilgrimage to the shrines linked with the Passion of Christ, in and around Wednesday evening they go to celebrate Mass to commemorate the various mysteries: at Dominus Flevit on the Mount of Olives on 15 March, at the and which, together with Jesus in Gethsemani on 22 March, at the Flagellation Church in Jerusalem, seat of the Franciscan Faculty of Biblical Sciences and

Archaeology on 29 March, at Bethany, house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, on Thursday 30 March, at the Lithostrotos Church in the Via Dolorosa on 5 April, and on the Altar of the Virgin Mary of Sorrows on Calvary on Friday 7 April. This day marks the liturgical feast of the Virgin Mary of Sorrows, which is also very popular in the Maltese islands, particularly in the devotional procession which the Franciscan friars in Valletta organize from the Church of Saint Mary of Jesus (Ta' Giezu), the Good Friday processions, originated from the Maltese Franciscans who brought over this devotion from the Holy Land during the 17th century.



Mumenti mill-ħajja ta-żewġ novizzi tagħna, Fra Walter Sultana u Fra Joseph Ciappara f'Assisi.





The memorable Year of the Eucharist, promulgated by the late Holy Father Pope John Paul II, has given an inspiring boost to the adoration of the blessed Eucharist. As a result of this holy crusade, world-wide, private chapels were built in many parishes for this specific spiritual exercise which has motivated an incrising numbers of Catholics to spend precious time, adoring, in silence, the blessed Eucharist.

This particular exemplary attitude of quiet worship, follows the edifying trational Catholic pattern of liturgical regulations for both young and adult faithful. Likewise, the chapels of adoration are purposely constructed with an ideal designed-style, inducive to prayer and meditation, either kneeling or sitting down, in a peaceful atmosphere, infront of the blessed sacrament, exposed.

Centuries old symbolic gestures of Catholics at communal or private prayers indicate dep respect towards the sacred, with a provision of accomodation **Kneeling and prostration** facilities to avoid disconfort or casual behaviour and distraction. Most churches and chapels are furnished with kneelers for the pews.

#### Attitudes of prayer

Kneeling in prayer, has been as common among Catholics for the past two thousand years, as it was, along with prostration among the Jews. (Numbers 14,5; Joshua 5, 14; Kings 18,39). When the first followers of Jesus,

# **HISTORICAL OUTLINE** Catholic **Attitudes Of Prayer**

## Sebastian Camilleri, OFM

who were Jews, prayed, they naturally, knelt or prostrated themselves (2 Chron 6; Daniel 6, 10).

We know that christians also stood in prayer, with their arms outstreched, forming a cross-like figure. The Roman basilicas and the Roman catacombs abound in frescoes, paintings, mosaics, tombs, monuments and even glass vessels which depict christians at prayers, with hands outsreched horizontally, slightly raised, faces turned towards the East. "We christians, pray looking heavenwards with hands outstreched, because we are not ashmed". (Tertullian 160-200 AD., Apologet.XXX). Also in (de Oratione, XI), he says that christians never copied the pagans in prayer but the Lord Jesus. "Not only do we stand, but we stretch our arms out, copying the suffering death of Our Lord". Unlike pagans who held their arms out infront, vertically, the Christians held their arms out, horizontally, forming a cross".

The most common attitude of early Catholics in prayer was kneeling prostration. Pope St. Clement I, writing in 96 AD to the Corinthians, say: "Let us fall down before the Lord, and beg Him with tears..." (Ep.1 ad Corinth, VI)

When St. Ignatius of Antioch prayed for all the Churches, before he was martyred, in 107 AD, it was "with all the brothers kneeling around" (Martyrium S. Ignatii, VI).

Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 AD)

Records what Hegesippus in 170 AD said: "that St. James the first bishop of Jerusalem used to enter the temple alone, and be found lying on his knees and from continual kneeling, his knees became as calloused as those of a camel" (Hist. Ecclesiast. II, 23).

St. Jerome (340-420) declares: "It is according to the Church custom that we genuflect to Christ", recalling St. Paul's admonition that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bend" (Philippians 2, 10).

#### Ordination of priest

The author of "de Ecclesiattica Hierarchia" (500 AD) commenting on the ordination of priests, wrote in terms that is familiar to our Roman Rite of Ordination "the approach to the holy altar, and their prostrating themselves, makes clear to all who are admitted to holy orders that they must submit their personal lives entirely to God from whom be appeared" (Hexaemorn, VI 9, 74). they receive their consacration as priests" (de Eccles. Hierchia. V, III, 2).

#### Kneeling forbidden on Sundays

The practice of kneeling at prayers and especially at Mass, was so common in the early Church, that it was permitted only week-days. From Sunday and from Easter Sunday till the eve of Pentecost it was forbidden to kneel. For kneeling was a sign of penance. St. Irenaeus of Lyons (130-200 AD) traced this custom back to the time of the Apostles themselves. "It is fitting that we recall our own sinfulness and the grace of our Christ by means of which we have risen from our fall. So our kneeling on the six days of the week (Monday to Saturday), is a sign of our sinfulness; while our not kneeling on the Lord's Day (the first day of the week) is a sign of our rising again, through which by the grace of Christ, we have been freed from our sins, and from death which has itself been done to death" (Council of Nicea, 325 Ad, 41-42).

St. Augustine (354-430 AD) explains the Catholic custom in his day: - "We pray standing and do not fast

during the Easter season, as a sign of the resurrection; and the same custom is observed at mass every Lord's day.

Rabanus Maurus of Metz (in 87 AD) wrote: "On the Lord's day we pray standing" (de Institut Cleric. II, 41-42).

### Sign of humility and penance

The deacond's acclamation, before the petitions on Good Friday: - "Let us kneel", recalls the ancient Catholic custom that reflects the belief of the Church that kneeling is a sign of humility and penance". The bending of the knee is a token of penitence and sorrow of a penitent heart") John Cassian, 360-435 Ad. Collect XXI, 20).

St. Ambrose of Milan (339-39) in reference to kneeling at Mass notes: "The knee has been made flexible so that by means of it, more than any other limb, our offences against the Lord may be mitigated and God's displeasure may

#### **Profound bows**

The solemn blesings during mass, such as "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing" reflects a most ancient custom and a humble attitude in the Church in paying homage to the Almighty. Early Mass books contain various commands from, "Humiliate vos ad benedictionem", i.e, humble yourselves to receive the blessing (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), to bow down your heads before the Lord and "Bow your heads to Jesus Christ", liturgy of Saint Mark etc.

St. Caesarius, bishop of Arles in (620 AD) in one of his sermons, concerning the liturgical attitudes in Catholic Churches in his days, said: - "I entreat and urge you, dearest brethren, that as soon as you hear the prayer said by the priest at the altar, or by the deacon, you faithfully bow not just your hearts, but your whole bodies. For often as I ought, I take careful note that when the deacon cries, "Let us kneel", I see the majority of you still standing like upright columns... If there is some good

ikompli p.

# **April 2006**

Provincja San Pawl Appostlu - Malta

IT-TNEJN	IT-TLIETA	L-ERBGHA	IL-HAMIS	IL-ĠIMGHA	IS-SIBT	IL-HADD
23 Festa ta' Ġorġ Aquilina u George Bugeja	25 Definitorju	30 Festa ta' Ġużepp Beneditt Xuereb			1	2 Hames Hadd tar- Randan
ယ	4	Sī	6	7	∞	9 Hadd il-Palm
10	11	12	13 Hamis ix-Xirka	14 II-Ġimgħa l-Kbira	15 Is-Sibt Imqaddes	16 L-GĦID IL-KBIR Tiġdid tal- Professjoni
17 Pasquetta flimkien	18	19	20	21	22	23 It-Tieni Hadd ta' l- Ghid RIL 2006
24	25 Festa ta' Mark Enriquez u Mark Ciantar	26	27	28	29	30 It-Tielet Hadd ta'l- Ghid AHBAR AP L-AHBAR



# Ikisser kurċifiss fil-knisja tal-Belt



#### **FESTI U BIRTHDAYS**

#### APRIL

- 23. Fra Ġorġ Aquilina Fra George Bugeja
- 25. Fra Mark Enriquez
  Fra Mark Ciantar
- 30. Fra Ġużepp B. Xuereb
- 1. Fra Dijonisju Mintoff
- 2. Fra Loreto Zerafa
- 3. Fra Twanny Chircop
- 4. Fra Joe Bonello
- 12. Fra Marcello Ghirlando
- 19. Fra John Muscat
- 23. Fra Ġużepp Camilleri
- 24. Mons. Robert Camilleri

#### MEJJU

- Fra Alexander Borg
   Fra Sandro Overend
- 12. Fra Godfrey Micallef
- 19. Fra Ivo Tonna
- 20. Fra Bernardin Sant
- 7. Fra Charles Diacono
- 8. Fra Mark Enriquez
- 27. Fra Raymond Falzon

# Awguri u Xewqat Sbieh!

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# L-A<del>H</del>BAR

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L-AHBAR APRIL 2006