



A new communications tool, an important link with you

This is the first edition of the email newsletter of the Grand Magistry, the most recent of our communications tools.

The newsletter joins the information flow we provide regularly to our confreres worldwide: the Activity Report, the Annuaire, our many international conferences, and the website which reflects our latest activities and events.

Over coming issues we will bring you information on the activities of the Grand Master and of the Government of the Order of Malta, as well as notices on current and forthcoming events and special works of the Order in different countries.

All Order organisations are invited to submit articles and photographs for inclusion.

This edition covers major engagements undertaken by the Grand Master this autumn, a special award to young German members for their work in Lebanon, and selected Order global news cuttings.

I am very pleased to introduce to you this latest communications tool - another important link with all our members, volunteers and donors everywhere.

Jean-Pierre Mazery
Grand Chancellor

Grand Master in official visit to President of the Italian Republic

The visit confirms the solidity of the bilateral relationships, rooted in age-old ties and in an exemplary cooperation

“ I look with admiration at the initiatives carried out by the Order of Malta in the most tormented areas of our planet.”

Thus the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano,

welcomed Grand Master

Fra' Matthew Festing to the Quirinale Palace, 6 November.

Fra' Matthew Festing valued “the fruitful collaboration between Italy and the Order of Malta” and Italy’s generous hosting of the Order since 1834. He noted the bilateral 2003

Health Agreement for collaboration with the Italian Health Authorities, and recently, with the Italian Coast Guard, where the Order’s doctors embark on the patron boats at Lampedusa. “Together with Italy we are engaged in a framework of cooperation which I do not hesitate to define as an excellent model,” the Grand Master said. President Napolitano paid homage to the sacrifices made by Order members, volunteers and personnel: “They set inspiring examples,” he said. ■



■ Military honours for Grand Master at the Quirinale Palace

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Senegal's first Cardinal Bailiff of the Order

Cardinal Sarr receives
the Order's highest honour from
Grand Master Festing

His Eminence Cardinal Theodore Adrien Sarr, Archbishop of Dakar, was appointed Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion by Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing at the Magistral Palace, 4 November in the presence of the Sovereign Council, Order representatives and guests, and the President of the Order of Malta National Committee of Senegal, Alöyse Raymond Ndiaye.

Cardinal Sarr spoke movingly of his reactions: "After the Holy Father's decision to raise me to the rank of Cardinal in the Church I felt a new appeal from the Lord to respond even more to His love, to serve Him better, to serve the Church better, and to serve better my brothers and sisters! This promotion from the Sovereign Order of Malta reinforces these appeals, to love and serve always more.

Through receiving the position of Chaplain Conventual Grand Cross ad honorem on 27 April 2007, which your prestigious Order bestowed on me, you introduced me to this great family that the Church has always honoured, from its birth in Jerusalem up to our own times, and across epochs of success but also of suffering, in Rhodes, in Malta, and now in Rome.

I wish to express with all my heart my deep and sincere gratitude to His Most Eminent Highness and to the Sovereign Council for the honour and trust shown to my humble person. With my brothers, the Knights of Senegal, with all the Authorities of the Order and its members throughout the world, I wish to raise attention to the needy, and to the sufferings of my brothers and sisters in the world, doing my best to give practical, moral



■ New Bailiff congratulated by Grand Master Festing

and spiritual support as did the Son of God made man, who crossed the villages and cities of Palestine to cure the sick, to free them from evil, to teach them faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to invite them to the conversation and the communion with this God of Love. I wish to express my best wishes for the continuation of the actions of the Order of Malta in the world, for an always greater development of its witness to the Christian faith and its humanitarian actions." ■

Théodore-Adrien Cardinal Sarr

Archbishop of Dakar, Senegal, is the African country's first cardinal. Born in Fadiouth, Senegal 71 years ago, Cardinal Sarr oversees more than 340,000 Catholics in the Dakar area, about 10% of the population.

Postal convention with the Vatican City State

A commemorative stamp issued by the Order on 13 November followed the signing of a Postal Convention between Vatican City and the Order of Malta on 24 June by Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State and Jean-Pierre Mazery, Grand Chancellor of the Order of Malta. The Convention, which gives full validity to correspondence stamped with the respective stamps is, in its sphere, another element in the wish to extend the relationships between the Order of Malta and the Vatican. The commemorative stamp is triangular and reproduces the coat of arms of the Order of Malta together with those of the State of Vatican City. ■



Order of Malta stamps

The first stamp issued by the Grand Magistry Post Office is dated November 15, 1966. Stamps were issued in the Order's historical monetary units – scudos. This first series consisted of nine stamps of varying values, illustrated with the Order's symbols and images. Since this first set, stamps have featured the Order's history, its charitable and humanitarian works, its artistic heritage, and religious themes. Mail stamped with Sovereign Order of Malta stamps can be sent to 53 countries when posted at the Magistral Post Office, Via Bocca di Leone 68, Rome.

- The joint issue: available from November 13th 2008
- The Grand Chancellor Jean-Pierre Mazery and Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo sign the Postal convention



Perspectives and the Order ten years from now

The International Strategy Seminar for members to review and consider the Order's strategy in continuing to carry out its ancient mission will take place in Venice from 15 – 18 January 2009. The meeting follows on from the Seminar held in Malta in 2004. Topics will include examination of the spiritual formation of members, the Order's religious inspiration, the Order as a community setting examples of

Christian living, vocations to the professed religious life, and the Order's look to the future in both its spiritual and humanitarian aspects. The Seminar will be presided over by HMEH the Grand Master. Over 400 delegates from Order organisations across the world have already enrolled and will participate in the key discussions, together with the members of the Sovereign Council (the Order's government). A series of working groups will consider

the further development of the Order's mission over the coming ten years and beyond. Special meetings for the professed knights, for the presidents of the National Associations, for the hospitallers and for the diplomatic corps are scheduled. The seminar will culminate in a solemn High Mass to be celebrated in the Basilica of St. Mark by the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Angelo Scola, Bailiff of the Order of Malta, on the closing day. ■

The Bible Day and Night

Grand Master joins representatives from all religious and social groups in Italy in historic reading

Italian television (RAI) staged a unique event in October, entitled The Bible Day and Night, the longest ever live broadcast by the Italian public television channel - a continuous reading, without comments, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, lasting seven days and

seven nights. The reading by the Grand Master, Fra' Matthew Festing, from the Gospel According to Matthew, took place in the Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome. The 139 hours of uninterrupted collective prayer started with the first verses being read by His Holiness

Benedict XVI. Later readers included university professors, politicians, actors, sports men and women, ordinary people, and representatives from the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as well as from the Protestant, Jewish and Muslim faiths. ■



■ The Grand Master gives his Bible reading

The Order's worldwide relief service, Malteser International, on the ground in the devastated region

Myanmar: Six months on from cyclone Nargis

Present since 2001 in Myanmar, the Order of Malta's worldwide relief service was among the first to assist the victims of the devastating Nargis cyclone in early May, for which the official death toll now stands at 100,000, with over 1.5 million homeless. The Order of Malta was the point of reference for channelling international Catholic aid. Six months after cyclone Nargis devastated large parts of Myanmar, Malteser International considers and evaluates the success of its work so far. "We have been successful in the prevention of communicable diseases, especially in the severely affected Irrawaddy Delta. And in general people are finding

their way back towards a normal life again," reports Roland Hansen, Head of the Asia Desk at Malteser International. "Nevertheless, the provision of safe drinking water is still problematic," Hansen continues. "This is the reason why an uncontaminated water supply especially in very remote areas remains one of our main focus points." Another is the rehabilitation of the social infrastructure. In and around the badly destroyed coastal city of Labutta, and on Middle Island, Malteser International is rebuilding health centres and schools as well as latrines in order to avoid the spread of diseases. The organisation is also rehabilitating ponds and wells and constructing rain water collection

tanks. In addition, specially trained voluntary counsellors offer psycho-social care to the survivors, helping them to cope with their grief for lost relatives and friends. In the coming weeks and months, Malteser International will help the people living in the disaster region to prepare for future catastrophes better by developing emergency plans and building cyclone-proof evacuation centres with water supplies and latrines. Malteser International has already provided medical supplies and safe drinking water as well as relief items such as soap, blankets, cooking equipment and mosquito nets to more than 100,000 people. And their work is ongoing. ■



■ Malteser International field workers secure tents, Irrawaddy Delta

Grand Master meets shipwrecked immigrants at Lampedusa

Order of Malta Italian Emergency Corps in action with the Italian coastguard

The Grand Master went to Lampedusa island (220 km South of Sicily) 12-13 October, boarding the Italian Coastguard patrol boats to see at first hand the Order of Malta's Italian Emergency Corps' volunteer doctors, nurses and helpers in action. Lampedusa has made international news as a prime transit site for illegal immigrants hoping to enter Europe from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. For the last six months the Corps has been providing medical assistance to immigrants, now numbering over

2500 cases. Problems included dehydration and malnutrition, chemical burns, sunstroke, injuries from falls and cuts and grazes, but there were also many cases of scabies. Among those most at risk: the children, including newborns, and numerous pregnant women, who in many dramatic cases were at serious risk of giving birth on board. On Saturday morning Fra' Matthew Festing went aboard coastguard vessel CP 407 'Lolini' and visited the immigrants' Reception Centre on the island, asking them to tell

their personal stories. At midnight he was at the port of Lampedusa to attend the disembarking of 25 immigrants who, after five days at sea in an unprotected rubber dinghy, had been saved in the Straits of Sicily by the coastguard and treated by the Order's Emergency Corps doctors. Sunday, the Grand Master attended Mass in the Reception Centre together with Order personnel and the latest immigrant arrivals and afterwards, on board a coastguard ship, participated in the operations at sea. ■



Order of Malta's Italian Emergency Corps

In 2007, Fausto Solaro del Borgo, President of the Order's Italian Association, to which the Corps belongs, signed the Agreement for integrated social solidarity projects with the Coastguard Commander in Chief, Admiral Luciano Dassatti. The joint activity on Lampedusa was launched on 27 April 2008. Founded in 1970, the Emergency Corps focuses on relief and assistance to populations hit by natural disasters. It comprises some 2000 volunteers (doctors, paramedics and helpers) in the three northern, central and southern areas.

■ Meeting immigrants at the Reception Centre, Lampedusa

Cooperation in social, humanitarian and healthcare agreed

Fra' Matthew Festing on official visit in Latvia

Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing was welcomed to Riga Castle by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, on his official visit to Latvia, 28 to 31 October. Key topics in the discussions between the two leaders were the Order of Malta's bilateral relations with Latvia and the development of cooperation in the social and health sectors. President Zatlers noted with gratitude the Order of Malta's prompt contribution after Latvia regained independence in 1991. The meeting was followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at the Freedom Monument. The Grand Master and his delegation also met with Minister of Welfare Purne, Minister of Health Eglitis, Deputy Speaker Pētersons, Cardinal Archbishop of Riga Pujats, Apostolic Nuncio in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia Zurbriggen, Archbishop of the Lutheran Evangelic Church Vanags, and the accredited Diplomatic Corps. Signed during the meeting with the



■ Talks between Grand Master and President Zatlers (first on left)

Minister of Welfare was a Memorandum to foster cooperation between the Order of Malta and Latvia in the fields of social, humanitarian and healthcare assistance. The document included a framework and guidelines for further development of relations. The four-day

programme took the Grand Master to important sites in the capital city, including the Pauls Stradiņš University Hospital Clinic, the Museum of the Occupation in Riga and lastly, the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Saldus, which had been built with the help of the Order. ■

Visit of the President of the Italian Senate

Italian Republic's second highest-ranking official at the Magistral Palace

Fra' Matthew Festing received the President of the Italian Senate, Renato Schifani, at the Magistral Palace on 8 October. He thanked the Senator for "the support given during the debate for the parliamentary ratification of the Agreement on Health Relations between Italy and the Order of Malta".

President Schifani noted in his reply that the Order's work is greatly appreciated in Italy, "representing as it does an example of proximity to and solidarity with those who suffer, carrying out its mission with faith and great commitment, sometimes even making the supreme sacrifice, to help so many." ■



■ With President Schifani

NEW AMBASSADORS

Macedonia, Serbia, Equador, Guatemala

The Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing received in separate audiences, for the presentation of their letters of credence as new ambassadors of:

- **Macedonia**, H.E. Ljupco Tozija (5 November 2008)
- **Serbia**, H.E. Vladeta Jankovic (5 November 2008)
- **Equador**, H.E. Fausto Cordovez Chiriboga (7 November 2008)
- **Guatemala**, H.E. Acisclo Valladares Molina (7 November 2008). ■

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CURRENT ACTIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Congo

Malteser International, the Order's worldwide relief service

November: Malteser International expands its programme of psychological assistance in the region of Minova, Congo, where numerous internally displaced persons (IDPs) have arrived during recent weeks – among them many girls and women who have suffered rape and other abuse. ■



France

The French Association

November – April 2009: every Sunday morning groups of young volunteers of the French Association take turns at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris to prepare hot breakfasts for the homeless. ■

Dominican Republic

The Cuban Association

October: Twenty-eight members of the Order of Malta's Cuban Association visit the Dominican Republic from 9 to 13 October to provide health services to the residents of one of the poorest regions in the country. Over 2,500 men, women, elderly and children are examined during these four days and a 6-month supply of medicines (to the value of US\$140,000) distributed. The Order's Cuban Association organizes six-monthly expeditions in the Dominican Republic. ■

Action in Africa, treatment in Monaco

The Order's Ambassador to the Principality of Monaco, Peter K. Murphy, is congratulated November 20 by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, in recognition of his coordination of the Order of Malta's work in locating children suffering from severe heart malfunction, throughout Africa and the Middle East. With the assistance of the Order, these children are identified and brought to the Principality to undergo medical treatment at the world renowned Centre Cardio-Thoracique de Monaco. ■



GERMAN ASSOCIATION YOUTH GROUP WINS WESTPHALIAN PEACE PRIZE

In October, the youth group of the German Association of the Order of Malta were awarded the prestigious Westphalian Peace Prize in recognition of their altruistic help for young people with handicaps in areas of war and crisis. The group run summer holiday camps for disadvantaged children and young people in homes and orphanages in the Lebanon. Since 1998, more than 300 young volunteers have spent their summer in Lebanon helping these disabled young - over 150 a week come to the camp during the summer period. "Our charges look forward to this holiday with joyous anticipation every year," say the Sisters at the 'Mission de Vie' at Antelias, near Beirut. The adult award went to Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary General, for his steadfastness in 'holding to his vision of a more peaceful world in spite of political disappointments and personal criticism.' He told the volunteers of his pride in "sharing the prize with you, in recognition of your tremendous work helping fellow young people in Lebanon and the Middle East." ■

the Order of Malta

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