

SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM
OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Journal of Spirituality

Introduction to the Spirituality of the Order of Malta



ROME 2014

N. 15

SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM
OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Journal of Spirituality

Introduction to the Spirituality of the Order of Malta

ROME 2014

N. 15

INDEX

Press Release of the Communications Office	5
1. Introduction (<i>Archbishop Angelo Acerbi</i>)	11
2. Obedience, Fundamental Christian Virtue (<i>His Em.ce Cardinal Paolo Sardi</i>).....	13
3. History of a Spirituality (<i>Fr. Bruno Martin</i>)	25
4. The Spirituality of the Professed Knights (<i>Msgr. Luigi Michele de Palma</i>).....	41
5. Knights and Dames in Obedience (1956-2011) (<i>Fr. Costantino Gilardi, OP</i>)	63
6. Notes for the Spirituality of the Order of Malta's Chaplains (<i>Msgr. Natale Loda</i>)	83
7. The Spiritual Formation of Volunteers (<i>Rev. Fra' Georg Lengerke</i>).....	105
8. The Spirituality of Leadership in the Order of Malta: A Spirituality of Service (<i>H.E. Fra' Duncan Gallie</i>)	125

9. Spiritual Formation in Hospitaller Activities <i>(H.E. Dominique Prince de la Rochefoucauld-Montbel)</i>	141
10. The Spirituality of the Order of Malta in Daily Life <i>(Dom Henry O'Shea, OSB)</i>	149
11. Spirituality as the Font of Service <i>(Richard J. Wolff, KJ)</i>	163
12. The Order of Malta's Institute of Spirituality <i>(Archbishop Angelo Acerbi)</i>	179
Past Issues of "Journal of Spirituality"	189

PRESS RELEASE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
OF THE GRAND MAGISTRY OF THE
SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

**Pope Francis appoints Raymond Leo Burke as
Cardinalis Patronus of the Sovereign Order of Malta**

Rome, November, 8 2014 - *Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke has been appointed today Cardinalis Patronus of the Sovereign Order of Malta by His Holiness Pope Francis. Previously Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature, he succeeds Cardinal Paolo Sardi, who was appointed Patron of the Sovereign Order of Malta in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI.*

"I extend a warm welcome to Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, who is from today the new Cardinalis Patronus

of the Order of Malta, and I sincerely thank Pope Francis for his appointment,” the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra’ Matthew Festing, announced. “This role has hitherto been very capably held by Cardinal Paolo Sardi and I express my deepest gratitude, and that of all the Order’s members, for his great commitment and devotion over the past five years. He will remain one of our most eminent and esteemed confreres.”

Cardinal Burke has been a member of the Order of Malta since June 2011.

The Cardinalis Patronus of the Order of Malta is the Pontiff’s representative to the Sovereign Order of Malta and has the task of promoting its spiritual interests and that of its 13,500 members, as well as being responsible for relations with the Holy See. The Cardinalis Patronus is a distinctive element of the strong centuries-old links between the Vatican and the Order of Malta.

In 2013 the Sovereign Order of Malta celebrated the 900th anniversary of its official recognition by the Holy See as a lay religious order.

The Sovereign Order of Malta’s mission is embodied in the motto Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum, or witness to the faith and assistance to the poor and the suffe-

ring. Through its social work and healthcare activities in 120 countries the Order assists the poor, the sick and victims of war and social exclusion without distinction as to race or religion.

The “Journal of Spirituality” of the Order of Malta joins His Highness Fra’ Matthew Festing, Grand Master of the Order, in extending a warm welcome to the new *Cardinalis Patronus* of the Order of Malta, Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, and in expressing deep gratitude to Cardinal Paolo Sardi also for his generous collaboration with the “Journal of Spirituality”, with articles rich in doctrine and inspired by a sincere love for the Order of Malta.

On this occasion the Holy father addressed to Cardinal Sardi the following letter¹:

¹ What follows is a courtesy translation from the letter, which has been written in Italian.



Venerated Brother
Cardinal PAOLO SARDI
Patronus of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

At this moment in which the name of your successor as Patronus of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta is made public, I would like to express my most sincere thanks – together with my appreciation for your having offered your acceptance to leave this role - for the competence and love that you have shown in the tasks entrusted in you in over thirty-eight years of service to the Apostolic See.

In particular, I am aware of your generous commitment to the Secretariat of State from 1976 onwards, then becoming Head of the Section for General Affairs in 1990 and Vice-Assessor two years later, until being nominated Titular Archbishop of Sutri and Apostolic Nuncio with special duties on 10th December 1996, and Vice-Camerlengo of the Holy Roman church from 23rd October 2004. My predecessor Pope Benedict XVI

decided to name you Pro-Patronus of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta on 6th June 2009 and Patronus on 30th November the following year, having called you to be part of the College of Cardinals.

Keeping in mind your hard work, I thank you and the Lord for this long period of service, in which you have demonstrated your tireless dedication to the Church and the Roman Pontiff.

The knowledge that you have unsparingly dedicated your sacerdotal energies in the areas entrusted to you - and the collaboration that you will continue to offer as a member of the College of Cardinals - may fill your soul with joy. May the Lord refill the years that he grants you with the fruits of his goodness.

I entrust upon you the special protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Apostle Paul, and I gladly impart upon you, and those persons dear to you, my Apostolic Benediction.

From the Vatican, November 8th, 2014.

Franciscus

INTRODUCTION

(Translated from Italian)

Pope Benedict XVI, in the memorable speech given in St. Peter's Basilica on 7 February 2013 for the 900th anniversary of the "*Pie Postulatio Voluntatis*", said that the Order of Malta had always from its earliest days, "*been marked by [.....] its unrenounceable spiritual identity, characterized by high religious ideals*".

This is also the primary aim of the Order as set forth in art. 2§1 of its Constitutional Charter.

More recently, in "*Regulations and Commentary*", both in the Preamble as well as in the general Introduction and in that of the three Classes, spiritual aspects are described as fundamental in the formation of the Order's members and in its charitable work. Finally, with his Decree of 21 June 2013, H.M.E.H. the Grand Master established the *Institute for Spirituality of the Order of Malta*.

This little "*Journal of Spirituality*"'s series has treated the theme of spirituality in its various aspects. The title "*Introduction to the Spirituality of the Order of Malta*" assigned to this edition is just an indication of profound reflection the Order's members must

carry out if they want to maintain “*its unrenounceable spiritual identity, characterized by high religious ideals*” defined by Pope Ratzinger.

The dedication of the Order’s members to the religious ideal in their life and when working in its service is also the best guarantee for overcoming any unrest that could disturb the life of the Order itself.

A.A.

OBEDIENCE, FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

(Translated from Italian)

Obedience plays an important role in the Order of Malta. It constitutes one of the “religious vows” with which a Knight of Justice pledges, as the *Code* tells us, “*to serve the sick and the poor of Jesus Christ and to dedicate himself to the service of the Church and of the Holy See according to the spirit of the Order*” (art. 6). But obedience also qualifies the Second Class, to which the Dames and Knights called “in obedience” belong, precisely because they “*oblige themselves by a special promise, which binds in conscience, to a life leading to Christian perfection*” (*Code*, art. 94 § 1). I would thus like, in this article, to reflect on obedience to define better its nature, highlight its value and assess the ways in which to put it into effect.

1. The history of humanity starts with the great disobedience of the first couple. God had instructed them that: “*you are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die*”. (Gen 2:16 seq.).

But Adam and Eve disobeyed God's order and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree (*Gen* 3:6). Their disobedience broke the communion between the creature and his Creator. This was how sin entered the history of the world, a history that would then record many other acts of disobedience by the descendents of Adam and Eve. However God, who loves man, did not give up and very soon planned to restore the broken relationship. This is what is narrated in the "protovangelium" (*Gen* 3: 14-15). But the implementation of this plan requires time: it is necessary to repair the breach created by the initial disobedience and aggravated by that accumulated by the descendents of Adam. This breach can only be mended by a corresponding accumulation of acts of obedience prompted by love of God, recognized as the Father.

This is what happens from the beginning of the history of salvation. God asks Abraham, head of the chosen people, to sacrifice his long-awaited son, that Isaac in whom the old man had placed his hopes for descendants (*Gen* 22: 2). The patriarch's heroic obedience reopened the dialogue between God and humanity (*Gen* 22: 15-18). The history of the new chosen people starts with another difficult act of obedience: the pro-

tagonist was the young Maria, who accepted the request addressed to her by the angel of God. Her “fiat”, given despite the prospect of humiliation, and probably death by stoning if she were to be accused of adultery, made it possible, through the incarnation of the Word, for God to enter the story of humanity (*Lk* 1: 26-38).

2. But the best witness to the importance of obedience for regaining hope in salvation is Jesus himself. He has given us the example of “*becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross*” (*Phil* 2: 8). In the life of Jesus everything involves listening to and accepting the will of the Father. He does nothing by himself, but only what is pleasing to the Father (cf *Jn* 8: 28-29). The will of the Father is what supports him in his mission (cf *Jn* 4: 34). The obedience of Jesus reaches its dramatic zenith in the Garden of Gethsemane when, sweating blood (*Lk* 22: 44), he utters the well-known words: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done” (*Lk* 22: 42). The Son, who feels loved by his Father and in turn loves Him with all his heart, understands that it is precisely this love that brings him to such a radical form of obedience.

3. This example of Christ is one that becomes binding for every Christian. The precept of love which takes precedence over all the rest of the Law (cf *Mk* 12, 28-33), in Jesus takes on the connotation of obedience even unto death on the Cross (cf *Phil* 2, 8). It is by obeying the Father that he demonstrates his love for him, a love that he then turns on us. A Christian cannot forget this. Even less can the Knight of Justice, bound before God with the “vow of obedience”; nor can the Dames and Knights forget it, who have made a special “promise of obedience”. They know, as the Order’s *Code* says, that “*the virtue of obedience moves the soul to the imitation of Jesus Christ who became obedient even unto death on the Cross*” (*Code*, art. 61).

It should be pointed out that God normally shows His will through the many kinds of human mediation. Here some concrete examples are necessary. Over and above the mediation of civil authorities in the management of public affairs – a mediation which the Dames and Knights of the Order of Malta, like any other good citizens, must respect – the Order’s members also know that their choices must be prompted by the indications given by the Church Pastors and, first of all, by the Pope himself, centre of

the unity of God's people. In this regard the *Constitutional Charter* solemnly declares that: “*The purpose of the Order is the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, service to the faith and to the Holy Father, and assistance to one's neighbour, in accordance with its ancient traditions*” (art. 2 § 1). Even more explicitly, in art. 9 § 3, the *Charter* states that “*The members of the Order are to conduct their lives in an exemplary manner in conformity with the teachings and precepts of the Church*”. The Order's *Code* also returns to this theme when it declares that each Knight of Justice must be “*suited to serve the sick and the poor of Jesus Christ and to dedicate himself to the service of the Church and of the Holy See according to the spirit of the Order*” (*Code*, art. 6).

4. Alongside the mediation constituted by the Church's high authorities, the Dames and Knights have their own mediation. These are the decisions made by the Order's authorities, who have the responsibility of guiding the members of the various classes. As for the Professed, the *Code* first of all places side by side the two sources of the mediation of God's will: “*With the vow of obedience, Professed Knights.....*

bind themselves to obey the Holy Father and their legitimate Superiors in accordance with the Constitution and Code” (art. 62). The Code again returns to this matter with greater solemnity: “The Professed, mindful of their high vocation and of the obligations they have freely assumed before the Church and the Order, must conform their lives to the spirit of the Gospel, according to the Constitution and the Code,” (art. 85). Referring specifically to human mediation, the Code states: “The Professed must have religious respect for their Superiors, and must submit themselves to them in a spirit of love and devotion” (art. 65). This is anyway the pledge the Knight of Justice makes during the religious profession, he vows to obey “whichever Superior I will be assigned by the Holy Order” (Code, art. 37).

The Code also has specific rules of obedience for Dames and Knights “in obedience”. They, “*in conformity with their own vocation and the directives of their legitimate Superiors, ... oblige themselves by a special promise, which binds in conscience, to a life leading to Christian perfection*” (art. 94 § 1). Again the Code gives the formula of the Promise that the Dame or Knight pronounces: “*calling on the name of God, promise faithfully to observe the laws of the Sovereign*”

Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, to carry out the duties proper to Knights and Dames in Obedience and to render due obedience to whichever Superior shall be given to me” (art. 100 § 1). In particular the Dames and Knights “in obedience” pledge to “*follow the spiritual rule of life approved by the Grand Master, with the deliberative vote of the Sovereign Council*” (art. 101, d).

In the Code there is also a specific reference to the Knights of the 3rd Class: “*in accordance with the Constitution, members of the Third Class shall conduct themselves so as to give Christian example in their private and public lives, thus putting into effect the tradition of the Order. It is incumbent on them to collaborate effectively in its hospitaller and social works*” (art. 116). It is obvious that none of this can happen without constantly exercising the virtue of obedience. To emphasize the seriousness of this duty, art. 119 of the Code states that: “*members belonging to the Second and Third Class whose conduct is less than exemplary are subject to the disciplinary sanctions provided*”. These sanctions can also be severe, ranging from a warning or reprimand to suspension and even dismissal (Code, art. 120).

5. I want to conclude these reflections with an observation that, albeit in itself obvious, it is helpful to enlarge on. We have spoken of the duty that the Order's Dames or Knights have to obey their legitimate Superiors. The question is, who are these Superiors? The answer is many. The first and supreme Superior is the Pope, successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ. Next to him come his collaborators: the Secretariat of State and the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia. Among the Dicasteries, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life are particularly important, since the Knights of Justice, that is the Knights of the 1st Class, constitute a religious order, albeit with particular features.

Then there are the Order's authorities. Leading them is the Grand Master, who, as the *Constitutional Charter* states, is "*assisted by the Sovereign Council, sees to the exercise of his supreme authority, to the conferral of duties and offices, and to the general government of the Order*" (art. 15 § 1). The Sovereign Council's "assistance" to the Grand Master is expressed by means of the "deliberative" or "consultative" vote that the *Charter* specifies for various matters. The Grand Master, however, conserves his higher authority because he is not obliged to issue a decree

deliberated by the Sovereign Council if he does not agree with it (*Charter*, art. 15 § 3). If it only concerns a consultative deliberation, the Grand Master is not only not obliged to issue the relative decree but he can even issue one not in conformity with it. Finally, the *Charter* notes the “magistral decrees” (art. 15 § 3), that the Grand Master issues without the Sovereign Council having to vote: these are the decrees with which he promulgates acts of government and convenes the Extraordinary Chapter General (art. 15 § 2 b & i).

The Dames and Knights, proud to belong to the Order, place their trust in the Grand Master, acknowledge his higher authority and are proud to implement the directives he issues. They are aware of belonging to an extraordinary association which carries out charitable work in favour of the sick and the poor in every corner of the world.

Alongside the Grand Master are other authorities, starting with the High Offices who collaborate with him in managing the Order. The directives the Grand Prior or the Prior of a certain territory issue are also important in the life and actions of the Dames and Knights operating in a certain territory, as well as those issued by the President of a certain association

for its members. For these are the authorities who have the task of translating and applying the instructions coming from the Grand Magistracy.

6. A last word before concluding this paper. Today everything seems concentrated on individuals, with much insistence on their dignity and on the duty to respect their liberty. This need is legitimate in itself. Often today people want to be the masters of their fate, independent planners of their lives and future. But this absolutization of their dignity often means that people claim forms of liberty that can arrive at free will. And giving in to free will does not increase liberty, but creates a dependence that turns into real slavery. Since this is the climate in the world today, the Dames and Knights of the Order of Malta would do as well to protect themselves from possible contamination. Sometimes it is difficult to see in the indiscretions caused by words or behaviour that spirit of obedience for which Christ set an example. But the Divine Master remains the model on which every Christian, and thus also every Dame and every Knight of the Order, must base their conduct. This is the point of arrival of these considerations:

constant reference to the teaching and examples left us by Jesus Christ will enable the Dames and Knights to abide by the instructions of their legitimate superiors which is the essence of the virtue of obedience. Albeit a virtue that has never been easy to respect. We could say that Raymond du Puy, the Order's second Grand Master, was well aware of this. It is no coincidence that at the beginning of his "*Regula*" he greatly emphasizes this pledge: "*First of all I order that all the brothers who come to place themselves at the service of the poor to maintain and observe, with the grace of God, the three things that they have promised, and that is chastity, obedience, that is that they will perform exactly everything everything that shall be enjoined them by their master, and to pass their lives without possessing anything in property*" (cf "*Premiers textes normatifs des Hospitaliers*", Paris 2013, p. 103). Of the three vows, only obedience has a particular comment. Evidently the Grand Master of that time already deemed the specific explanation to be useful.

His Em.ce Paolo Cardinal Sardi

HISTORY OF A SPIRITUALITY

(Translated from French)

As has often been pointed out in these Journals, it is not in theoretical writings that we have to seek the sources of the Order's spirituality¹. However I consider that it is not only possible to read the Order of Malta's spirituality through its 900-year history but it is this spirituality that constitutes the guiding thread uniting the various guises the Order has taken over time. A hospitaller religious order, becoming military by necessity, sovereign of a territory... of which it is then deprived, returning to be exclusively hospitaller, placing its diplomatic status at the service of charity; an order initially made up of brothers who have taken the three religious vows, but which has always numbered "confreres" among its members, inspired by the same ideal; an order with a majority of non-religious members, but united by this unwavering ideal around the "heart" consisting of the professed. Let us try to be guided by Ariadne's thread to discover the history of its spirituality.

¹ Cf. n°14, p. 103-114.

An Unwavering Ideal from the Beginning

Although the circumstances of the Order's birth in Jerusalem remain – and will continue to do so – shrouded in mist, its original characteristics have been clearly identifiable from the time of the privilege *Pie postulatio voluntatis* (1113) sent by Paschal II to Blessed Gerard, or the publication of Raymond du Puy's first statute (v. 1140). We have examined these in a previous article². Undoubtedly the most important is the definition of the religious consecration, dating back to Blessed Gerard's first foundation, no longer seen through asceticism or the liturgical service, but through total commitment “to serving the poor”; Gerard's fellow brothers are the *fratres ad servitium pauperum venientes*, they are “servants and slaves” of the sick “Lords”. Accustomed as we are to see religious congregations “specialised” in this or that service, we no longer appreciate how surprising such a declaration was in the early 12th century. Neither can we realize how unique the other aspects of the first hospitaller foundation were at that time. For example, the formulation of the three

² n° 11, p. 7-19.

vows, living “without individual property» chastely and in obedience: the “Rule” of Raymond du Puy is one of the first historical testimonies of the religious life. Or again, an order that accepts in the same “house” *domus Hospitalis*, lay brothers and clerical brothers, devoted without distinction to the same task. And finally the association of these “confreres”, *confratres* with the Order’s mission, predecessors of today’s Second and Third Classes, who make a commitment and cooperate with the professed brothers; Raymond du Puy associates them with the Order so closely that it’s as if they worked in Jerusalem, *quasi ipsi militent in Hierosolimis*. We can say that the Order’s physiognomy as we know it already existed in 1140: it found its identity in charitable work, it establishes an international network that unites much wider circles around the nucleus of the Hospital’s professed brothers, ranging from totally committed confreres to the throng of benefactors.

From Serving the Poor to Defending the Faith

The militarization of the Order occurs in various stages; from very early on the Order made use of mercenaries; it is only later, in the second half of the 12th

century, that some brothers directly perform military tasks, initially for protecting the pilgrims then, as the need gradually arose, for defending the Holy Land. Significantly, the statute of Roger des Moulins, circa 1180, still lists military expenses under alms-giving. Because, unlike the Templars, warriors by vocation – *militia Templi* – the Hospitallers have always subordinated military action to their main vocation, serving the poor and the sick. They are described thus up to the conquest of Rhodes: the *Hospitallers*, the *brothers of the Hospital*. An indirect, but no less moving, testimony is Saladin's gesture after taking Jerusalem, in 1187, when he allows ten brothers from the Hospital to remain another year in the city conquered by Islam to look after the sick³. Immediately after arriving at St Jean d'Acre, on Cyprus after 1291 or on Rhodes after 1310, the brothers' first thought is to rebuild a

³ This is not part of the Order's "legenda aurea" but is testified to by a letter from a Templar to Henry II of England: *Ipse Saladinus in domo Hospitalis permisit remanere decem de fratribus Hospitalis ad custodiendum infirmum usque ad annum unum*. DELAVILLE LE ROULX, *Cartulaire* ... n° 847.

hospital⁴. It is only after the suppression of the Order of the Templars (1312) and their settlement on Rhodes with full sovereignty that the “brothers of the Hospital” start to call themselves the *knights* of Rhodes – and then, after 1540, knights of Malta. We have to wait for the legislative changes of the late 15th century (the *Stabilimenta* drafted by Caoursin and approved by Pope Innocent VIII in 1492) to see the first article of the Rule transformed and the notion of the defence of the faith introduced: the *fratres ad servitium pauperum venientes* of the Rule of Raymond du Puy become the *fratres accedentes ad obsequium pauperum et tuitionem fidei catholice*. The twofold concept of *obsequium pauperum/tuitio fidei*, still often used today to characterize the Order, is first seen in this late 15th century text⁵.

⁴ The Chapter General of 1314 orders 30,000 bezants to be spent on building the new hospital on Rhodes, which was to be rebuilt on its current site a century later.

⁵ For the Order’s earliest legislation, reference is to the publication by the Order of Malta’s Accademia Storica, *Premiers textes normatifs des Hospitaliers*, Paris 2013, edited by E. ROUSSEAU; besides the critical text and palaeographic comment on *Pie postulatio voluntatis...* by M. CAMILLERI, curator of the National Library of Malta, see also the crit-

Liturgical Life and Prayer

Other aspects of the religious life should not be ignored. The *Rule* of Raymond du Puy shows the attention paid taken even then to the liturgical ceremony, with deacon, subdeacon and acolyte serving. Around 1180, the “customs of the church” added the obligation of having liturgical objects of a certain value, silver chalices and censers. The statute of Rogers de Moulins fully endorses these concepts:

“Concerning the churches it is commanded that they should be arranged and regulated at the disposition of the Prior of the clerics of the Hospital with regard to books, clerics, vestments, priests, chalices, censers, perpetual light and other ornaments”.

As we can see, great emphasis is given to the material aspects of the liturgical celebration. This doubtless

ical edition according to manuscript 4852 of the Vatican Library of texts ranging from the *Rule* according to the statute of Margat (1204), by F. VIEILLARD, professor emeritus at the *Ecole des chartes*, to a substantial historical and spiritual commentary on our part. An Italian translation is currently underway by the Grand Priory of Naples.

echoes the preoccupation that the Lord should be no less honoured in the church celebration than he is in the person of the poor in the hospital. But it is also a spiritual necessity in the brothers' life. They are all invited to attend, insofar as possible, in the liturgy of the hours celebrated by the chaplain brothers; if the brothers cannot do so, they compensate by reciting a certain number of *Pater* - up to 150, corresponding to the number of psalms. Later, in the 15th century, the "little" office of the Virgin or of the dead was introduced. But the office will always be solemnly celebrated in the Order's churches, both in the "convent" and in the major *commende*. When the Hospitallers arrived on Rhodes, Foulques de Villaret ordered that the convent's church service be guaranteed by ten priests, and that is by the prior of the church with five chaplains and four secular brothers; they had to be assisted by two deacons, two subdeacons and four acolytes, and the statute specified that the office had to be celebrated "*as it was in our church in Acre*". Until the promulgation of the liturgical books written after the Council of Trent (1570), the Hospitallers observed in Rhodes the customs and calendar of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and did so for some time after their arrival in

Malta. A profound cultural identity can be seen in this fidelity to the liturgy of their origins.

The Order's Nuns

It is known that a female section existed inside the Order, both contemplative and hospitaller; the hospitaller “female” religious life is part of the Order’s authentic spiritual tradition and deserves to be studied more thoroughly. It has experienced different guises and there are gradations among the various communities, for example the aristocratic contemplative community in Siena, founded in 1188, and at the same time, the humble service of the women’s hospital in Pisa, rendered famous by St. Ubaldesca († 1206). The Beaulieu Hospital in France, integrated into the Order at the end of the 13th century, was in turn made famous by St. Flora († 1347), but with a mystical rather than hospitaller character. It is however very important that the Order, towards the end of the 16th century, appropriated these figures of female sanctity (Flora, Ubaldesca, Toscana) and proposed them as examples for their members and models of their identity. At a time in which the Holy See could have acknowledged only the

Order's military and chivalrous aspects, the elevated spiritual life or humble service of the nuns of St. John was also highlighted⁶. This was not only in writing; in 1584, Grand Master Verdalle set up, first in Birgu, then in Valletta, the nuns of the convent of Sant'Orsola, who still keep alive this tradition that is an integral part of the Order's history⁷.

The Brother Knights

The arrival and establishment in Malta in 1530 after the Great Siege, and above all the construction of the new city of Valletta, changed the Order's physiognomy even more than Rhodes. It is now seen basically as a knightly order for the armed defence of the faith (as well as patrolling the Mediterranean); the last

⁶ We refer to the recent study by L. DE PALMA, *Il Consiglio e le Costituzioni di Fra' Lionardo Bonafedi per le Giovannite di Firenze (XIV sec.)*, Ecumenica editrice, Bari, 2010, as well as *La cavalleria al femminile :il contributo delle donne negli ordini militari*, by several authors. CLD libri, 2010.

⁷ Equally famous are the Spanish nuns of Salinas de Anaña. Although the canonical links with the Order have changed over time, these monasteries represent the authentic tradition of women's religious life in the Order.

forms of community life still present on Rhodes (such as the closing of the *Collachium*, district reserved for the religious) decline. The Age of Enlightenment at the end of the 18th century ushers in the seeds of decay: influence of Freemasonry, vanity of the nobility, inactivity... There is a lot to criticize about this epoch but positive signs still exist. First of all, the Order does not lose its hospitaller vocation; on the contrary, there are numerous testimonies to the excellence and modernity of the *Sacra Infermeria* on Malta. Right to the end, the knights present on the island take it in turns to serve a day at the hospital and the Grand Master was no exception, “*both to perform the duties of a hospitaller religious and to give a good example*”. Some knights took this service very seriously and Jean-Baptiste de Freslon, commander of the Guards Regiment, visited the sick three times a week, dying in 1786 from a disease caught by attempting to persuade a sick person to confess. Equally there was much fervour and pomp around the liturgy in the conventual church of St John, and from the end of the 16th century we have numerous testimonies to the efforts made to instil the duties of

a brother knight in the young knights serving a novitiate on the island⁸. It is no accident that it was precisely in this period that the Order started to highlight its figures of sanctity, with Bosio being the first to publish the list and a concise history in 1633⁹. Finally, when the Order's old statute had to be written in the form of a code, Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan again stressed this reference to the Order's fundamental principles at the head of Title IV:

«By general consensus of the Christian people, hospitality takes the first place among all actions of piety and humanity, as the one which embraces all others. And if it has to be realized and revered by all good people with great emphasis, how much more by those who want to be known by the name of Knights Hospitallers? Because more than everything we must implement what we say in the name»¹⁰.

⁸ Again reference is to two fundamental studies on the period by G. SCARABELLI, *Culto e devozioni dei cavalieri a Malta*, University Press of Malta, 2004, and by L. DE PALMA, *Il frate cavaliere*, Ecumenica editrice, Bari, 2007

⁹ G. BOSIO, *Le immagini de' beati, santi della sacra religione di S. Gio. Gerosolimitano*, Rome, 1633.

¹⁰ *Code de Rohan*, Titre IV, *de l'Hospitalité* ; Malta, 1782, p. 109.

A Religious in the Storm

The French Revolution and later Napoleon Bonaparte's arrival on the island in 1798 could have been fatal for the Order. That they weren't was thanks to a handful of men faithful to their vocation who remained there and who, after the storm had passed, were able to reconstruct on other foundations, returning to their initial ideas. We have an incredible testimony in a letter of the last receiver of the Grand Priory of France, the bailiff Louis-Marie d'Estourmel. In 1799 this knight, who had seen the horror of the revolution in Paris and then fled to Malta, has just been thrown off the island and is in Antibes in compulsory residence. He writes to his sister, with an amazing intuition:

"I am content with my status as religious and don't even want to dream about my military status. What happened to me on M[alta] proves to me that this part, the military one, must be, and will probably shortly be, reformed by our institute, to return it to the themes of Blessed Gerard, our founder; if our Order has the fortune to reunite, no matter where, I think that there will be nothing better to do than to preach our religion for its

conduct and its hospitaller humanity, sustained by the most deeply-felt faith. This will be the best and will give us more results than weapons”¹¹.

It is moving to read these lines, that need no comment. The person writing them is in semi-captivity, deprived of resources, he has seen the collapse of a world that seemed immovable, he has witnessed the horrors and massacres of the revolution; from a human point of view he finds himself without a future. At this time the Order is no more: wiped out in France, the surviving elements scattered between the elusive Hompesch in exile in Trieste and Tsar Paul I who had proclaimed himself Grand Master on 7 November the year before; the pope, the only possible person to turn to, is imprisoned in the Certosa of Florence, awaiting deportation to France and death in the citadel of Valence on 29 August 1799. But despite all this Louis-Marie d’Estourmel senses that the Order’s survival will be based on its return to its religious origins and its hospitaller vocation.

¹¹ Departmental Archives of the Somme, 73 J 10. (communication by R. DE BOISSARD)

From Reconstitution to Modernization

For the entire 19th century the Order, while reconstituting, gradually implements this programme. Its hospitaller works develop progressively from 1850 and at the same time Pope Pius IX gives a decisive impulse by permitting the Order to open to members “of devotion” and to establish national associations. This opening to the lay faithful as well as these organizations unusual for a religious order reclaim, without anyone realizing it, some mediaeval aspects, such as the existence of the “confreres” associated with the Order and some evolutions in religious life also take place after Vatican Council II. Even the “crisis” of 1950 had beneficial effects since it forced the Order to update its own statute even before the Council request and, above all, led to the creation of the category of members “in obedience”. This institution is absolutely specific to the Order, although we can find some “antecedents” in the mediaeval *confratres* and we can also draw a parallel with some situations, *mutatis mutandis*, in centuries-old institutions or in new communities. Allowing the lay faithful to link themselves more closely with the Order by making a

greater commitment, involving authentic religious duties, anyway demonstrates that opening the Order to non-professed members does not mean that its religious nature is diluted; on the contrary, it is precisely the Order's religious core that now, as in its origins, gives it its meaning. If this were no longer so, the Order would be nothing else, to use Pope Francis' words, but a "charitable NGO"¹². The rebirth of the religious profession in the Order, the publication of the *Regulations and Commentary* (1969 and 2011) and the creation of the Institute of Spirituality (now underway) show clearly that the Order wants to prepare its future by remaining faithful to its sources, and first of all its nature as a religious order. The Order has taken different guises during its long history, it has suffered trials and crises that have sometimes risked crushing it, but it has been precisely Ariadne's thread of spirituality that has united so many different episodes. This tells us that the Order will face the

¹² "We can build many things, but if we do not profess Jesus Christ, things go wrong. We may become a charitable NGO, but not the Church, the Bride of the Lord". Homily, 14 March 2013, Sistine Chapel.

challenges and the evolutions of tomorrow only by remaining faithful to its religious identity, the one that united around Blessed Gerard the brothers who wanted to bind themselves with vows to serve the poor: *fratres ad servitium pauperum venientes*.

Fr. Bruno Martin
Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE PROFESSED KNIGHTS

(Translated from Italian)

In the recent publication of the Order of Malta's new *Regulations and Commentary* there is a statement worthy of particular attention, according to which «the Professed Knights and Chaplains are the core, the heart, of our religious order» (cap. XIV)¹. This definition could be dismissed as obvious but is justified if seen in the context of the historical and institutional development characterizing the last two centuries of the life of the Jerusalem Hospital.

¹ SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, OF RHODES AND OF MALTA, *Regulations and Commentary, Promulgated by H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing and approved by the Sovereign Council on 18 February 2011*, Rome 2011. The previous publication was *Regulations and Commentary approved by the Special Chapter General*, 27-28 October 1969, Rome 1969. The epigraph of this latter reads: «In agreement with the proposals concerning the religious renewal of the Order – applying the Conciliar Decree *Perfectae Caritatis* and the Pontifical Motu Proprio *Ecclesiae Sanctae* – proposals which were approved by the Special Chapter General of 21-6-1967, the Head of the Order convened a new Session of the Special Chapter General for the 27th October 1969», which approved the text.

Between the 19th and 20th centuries the Order of St. John experienced a long and tormented period beginning with the loss of its temporal power over the Maltese archipelago (1798) and continuing with the arduous reassessment of its identity and ecclesiastical mission in the contemporary world. The crisis inside and outside the Order marked a significant stage in its evolutionary process through the transformation of the Hospital's organizational structure and the realignment of its components. Both took the form of regulations in the *Constitutional Charter* reformed more than once between 1921 and 1997².

² With regards to the Order's previous constitutional regulations see M. BARBARO DI SAN GIORGIO, *Storia della costituzione del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta*, Roma 1927. During the 20th century the following were approved in order: *Statuts du Souverain Ordre Militaire de Malte* (1921), edited by G. MICHEL DE PIERREDON, Paris 1928; *Costituzioni del Sovrano Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano di Malta conformate al Codice di Diritto Canonico*, Rome 1936; *Carta Costituzionale del Sovrano Militare Ordine Ospedaliero di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme detto di Rodi detto di Malta*, Vatican City 1957. This *Primaria Lex Sacri Ordinis Fratrum Militum Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Hierosolymitani* was published by mandate of the Lieutenant of the Grand Master Fra' Ernesto Parternò Castello di Caraci (1955-1962) on 8 December 1956 (on which see M. COSTARELLA, *La Carta Costituzionale del Sovrano Militare Ordine Ospedaliero di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, detto di Rodi, detto*

One of the novelties decreed by these fundamental legislative texts was to have admitted as full members all those working in the Order, albeit professed brothers. The admission in the Order of non-religious lay members was an ancient practice, open to persons of any social condition (donats) and already documented in the 13th century. From the 15th century on the concession of the cross “of devotion” without obliga-

di Malta, «Il Diritto Ecclesiastico», 68 (1957), p. 116-120, 318-335; and also S. LENER, *Natura e prerogative del Sovrano Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano di Malta*, «La Civiltà Cattolica», 105 (1954), IV, p. 15-28, 164-178, 422-435, 241-553, 639-655). The *Constitutional Charter and Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta*, Rome 1961, was followed by the promulgation of the *Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta*, Rome 1966. In 1973 and 1978 some amendments were made: *Constitutional Charter and Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta. Promulgated on 27 June 1961 with the amendments deliberated by the Chapters General of 1973 and 1978*, Rome 1978. Finally, both texts were reformed by the Extraordinary Chapter General of 28-30 April 1997 (published in the «Bollettino Ufficiale del Sovrano Militare Ordine Ospedaliero di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, di Rodi e di Malta», special edition 12.1.1998; and filed in 2007); on which see M. DE PINTO, *La riforma della “Carta Costituzionale” e del “Codice” del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta*, «Odegitria», XVII (2010), p. 171-218.

tion of vows was reserved for eminent personages³. You became honorary knights (precisely “of Honour and Devotion”) by assuming some obligations and for the sole enjoyment of the spiritual benefits which the Hospital offered to its members.

Until the reform of 1953, the Knights of Justice and Professed Conventual Chaplains did not only form the “essential nucleus” of the Jerusalem Hospital, but also constituted the Order’s perfect body in which, as a honorific and spiritual title with the purpose of cooperating in the Order’s mission, lay and clerical men were admitted who did not take

³ The admission of lay non religious in the Order was an ancient practice: «from the start those who asked to enter the Order without vows was admitted among the Donats, regardless of his social condition: even a king, Andrew II of Hungary [king from 7 May 1205 - † 7 March 1235], received the insignia of Donat. In the 15th century, the cross of knights of the Order “of devotion” started to be granted to sovereigns, princes and eminent personages without the obligation of vows; the Chapter General of 1631 limited, as we have seen, this usage; even rarer, naturally, was the concession of the Grand Cross of devotion, generally reserved for sovereigns and reigning princes. An exception was the appointment of Giovan Battista Ludovisi to Grand Prior of Capua, without being professed, in 1614» (G.C. BASCAPÈ, *Gli Ordini cavallereschi in Italia. Storia e diritto*, Milano 1992, p. 42, note 19).

vows and thus did not possess the canonical status of the religious. Only Knights of Justice and Professed Conventual Chaplains – precisely the brothers – remained effective members of the Order, that is real religious Hospitallers and Brother Knights, recognized as such by the Catholic Church.

Although the constitutional reforms have shaped the Order of St. John's organizational structure along new lines but still respecting the particular identity of the Jerusalem hospital, it can be understood how the members of the First Class – the brothers – are defined as the “essential core” and “heart” of the Order. They are no longer considered as the Order's organism, but just a part of it and what's more numerically in a minority. But their function is essential for the rest of the organism, because if it disappears the Jerusalem hospital would no longer possess the identity of a religious order.

The Order of Malta exists because brothers exist and their existence remains *ad essentiam* for the Order which, if there were no brothers, would become secularized, that is it would cease to be a religious order and therefore would no longer be itself and would lose all its prerogatives.

The Heart of the Order

To explain better the definition of the First Class as “essential core” of the Order, the *Regulations and Commentary* adopts the metaphor of the “heart”. This is to prevent – in my modest opinion – reducing the presence of the brothers of a mere legal function and to elevate it to the highest level of the Order’s spiritual dimension. In other words, just as the heart muscle pumps oxygen into the blood so that the body can receive energy and life, the First Class is the source of spiritual life from which the Order’s members receive the life force for continuing along the path of personal sanctification mapped out within the Johannite religious family. Thus the sanctification itinerary of which the Order forms part reaches its perfection in the First Class, because it is a path of religious life that involves the observance of the evangelical counsels. The spirituality of the Professed continues to be the main beacon, guiding and inspiring those who, albeit not Professed, belong to the Order. It is no accident that the regulations have introduced the practice with which only those who have been members of the Order for at least one year can ask to be admitted to the First Class. Previously admission as

Soldier of Justice was direct, albeit specifying a period of novitiate but now the entry procedure for candidates to the First Class is much longer and more complex. They have to learn about the Order's spirituality through sharing in its the life and participating in its activities - in fact they undergo an authentic apprenticeship.

To learn and specify the elements of the Order's spirituality we have to study the *Regulations and Commentary*; at the same time, however, we have to remember that this text is the point of arrival of a tradition strongly rooted in the Order's spiritual background and in the personal experience of some of its brothers, well-known or not⁴.

⁴ On the topic of the Order of Malta's spirituality, besides the numerous articles appearing in the *Journals of Spirituality* published by the Order, we also point out: DUCAUD-BOURGET, *La spiritualité de l'Ordre de Malte (1099-1963)*, Paris, s.d.; R. N.-J. BARWIG, *Reflections on the spiritual life for members of the Sovereign Military Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta*, Roma 1981; L. SIREISKY, *Die Spiritualität im Souveräne Malteser-Ritter-Orden*, in «Der Souveräne Malteser-Ritter-Orden in Österreich. Im Auftrag des Grosspriorates von Österreich», ed. CH. STEEB – B. STRIMITZER, Graz 1999, p. 379-390; G. SCARABELLI, *Linee di spiritualità del Sovrano Militare Ospedaliero Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme, detto di Rodi, detto di Malta*, Milan 2001.

First of all the identity that the Order attributed to itself must be clear, that is «a lay religious Order, by tradition military, chivalrous and nobiliary», as stated in art. 1 of the *Constitutional Charter*. Since in the beginning the article refers to the Order's origins that «arose from a group of hospitallers of the Hospice of Saint John of Jerusalem», in describing the Order's profile the legislator has omitted – because taken for granted – the inescapable feature of its continuing to be a hospitaller religious order.

True Religious

It is perhaps easy to deduce the significance of this quality attributed to the Order's religious identity, because there are numerous other orders, congregations and institutes of consecrated life, male and female, devoted to the exercise of hospitaller charity. The qualification of “military” can be more problematic, because it has become obsolete in the mass of religious orders of the Catholic Church and in fact is attributed exclusively to the Order of Malta.

An authoritative expert in legal regulations, card. Giovanni Battista De Luca (1614-1683), gives an answer by explaining that the military orders are “*generally of two kinds. That is, there are those which are true and formal religions with the three essential vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and with the necessity to carry out a continuous year and the novitiate, (...) since the professed are true religious, identical to those of the monastic or mendicant orders with the only difference that they do not live collectively nor in convents, nor do they lead an identical life, and do not wear uniform, excepting for the sign*”. De Luca adds that these brother knights «are unable to marry and to obtain secular ecclesiastical benefits, such as pensions, nor can they possess property or make a will, that is make over, with other similar effects ensuing from a regular status. And the aforementioned religion of St John of Jerusalem, commonly called of Malta belongs to this type». Finally De Luca explains that «the other, much more frequent kind is that of those orders improperly called religions but which in effect are not ecclesiastical, that is charitable institutes approved by the Apostolic

See»⁵. For canon law these latter would be defined as “international public associations of the faithful”.

In its recent *Constitutional Charter* (art. 2, § 2), the Order of Malta has retained the reference to its traditional identity of military order, but understood as Christian militancy in the work of spreading the Gospel, as well as in charitable and hospitaller works, even for victims of war, without this apostolate involving the use of arms. Nonetheless, the Order’s rescue and hospitaller work can arrive in the combat zones. Later on it will be seen how this part of the Order’s identity affects the spirituality of the Professed, while in the meantime we examine the first of the attributes that help to define the Order as a religious order, and that is being a “lay” order.

Lay - Religious

It is easy to misunderstand the sense of this term because, in common language, “lay” can be confused with “secularist”, meaning an attitude, an ideology or a political system indifferent, if not opposed, to any

⁵ G.B. DE LUCA, *Il Cavaliere e la Dama, ovvero Discorsi familiari nell’ozio Tuscolano autunnale dell’anno 1674*, Rome 1675, p. 63-64.

public expression of religion or of the bodies and organizations of a religious nature significant an ethical, social, civil, political and legal level.

Instead, the attribution of “lay” to a religious order of the Catholic Church means acknowledging that the religious family is following Christ in the personal sanctification path mapped out for its members, so that it can follow, under the action of the Holy Spirit, the baptismal vocation. The aim of this path is the identification with Christ through professing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. This is a further special consecration that presumes baptismal consecration, without it having to be necessary, and involves totally offering your life in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

The first Hospitallers gathering in the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem were lay people who voluntarily accepted the authority of Gerard *hospitalarius*. For the love of God and for the salvation of their souls, they firstly formed a fraternity, offering their energies in the service of the sick, poor and pilgrims. During service in the Hospital, although they wore identical habits they were not religious nor did they lead a community life. They accepted Gerard’s authority to

give their lives in the service of their fellow men. In 1113 Paschal II granted this group of semi-religious, called *fratres*, the *Protectio Sancti Petri*, that is removed from any other ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction, and placed it solely under the Apostolic See. With the Rule of Raymond du Puy, written around 1140, *all the brothers who devoted themselves to the service of the poor* in the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem had to observe three things that they promised to God in the hands of the priest and on the book of the Holy Scriptures *that is chastity and obedience (...) and to live without individual property* (chap. 1). Thus, the *fratres* had become religious because they had professed the evangelical counsels, but they remained hospitallers because to consecrate one's life to the service of the poor it was not necessary to become monks and not even priests or clerics.

The Asceticism of the Professed

The ascetic nature of the Professed's spirituality can clearly be seen in these elements. Offering one's life for the love of God involves a personal detachment from any worldly interests, nevertheless it is carried out in the

world to steer mundane realities towards God and to sanctify them through charity. In other words, Johannite spirituality is the spirituality of a religious order with an active life. It is not a priestly spirituality, specifically for those called to perform the pastoral ministry, and neither is it an anchoritic-monastic spirituality because the brothers of the Hospital are not monks nor are they hermits, but hospitallers. Their vocation and their mission are not aimed at having care of souls (like priests) and neither at total contemplation and a life of prayer (like monks). The ascetic nature of the Professed's spirituality is typical of those who devote themselves to offering hospitality and to the ministry of spiritual and material consolation: to become a "neighbour" through mercy.

The Johannites, as religious, are dead to the world but they live and work in it through their Christian witness: "*asking to be received and admitted to the Company of Brothers serving in the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem,*" stated Fra' Giovanni Battista le Marinier de Cany (1645-1689) "*is the same as asking to renounce the world and its pomp, to consecrate oneself to a humble, base and harsh life serving the Poor and the Sick*". And if this were not enough, the Johannite must see his consecration not only as renouncing the world, but as the loss of

his life, transformed by offering it: “*Our Brothers, with the pledge made to God, continuously risk their lives serving others, both in the war against the infidels and in the hospitals and infirmaries. A sacrifice that is no less than any other sacrifice that God might ask of a simple man*”⁶. Thus the Professed Johannite has chosen to live in penitence in the expectation of the Parusia, that is the glorious return of Christ the Lord, of the definitive advent of the Kingdom of God and the gift of eternal life.

Fra’ Sabba da Castiglione (1480-1554), authority on Johannite spirituality, taught that being a brother in the Hospital “*without work is a vain, even dead religion*”. Thus, in the exercise of his apostolate of charity, what distinguishes the Johannite brother from the other faithful is that he is consecrated, recognizable mainly for the fervour of his life of piety. Every day the hospitaller brother would have heard “at least one

⁶ BIBLIOTECA MAGISTRALE ROMA, ms. 86, *Istruzioni intorno agli obblighi del proprio stato de Cavalieri di Malta distese dal Commendatore Fra’ Giambattista le Marinier de Cany della Veneranda Lingua di Francia e ristrette in compendio per ammaestramento d’un Novizio del medesimo Sacro Ordine*, p. 88.

mass” and recited daily prayers⁷. For greater devotion he had to recite the office of the Madonna and above all the *one hundred and fifty pater noster, being the first institution of our religion*⁸. The vigils and the feastdays in the calendar should be observed as specified in the Order’s regulations, which obliged the brother to receive Eucharistic communion at least four times a year. The same obligation applied to the sacramental

⁷ These are the precepts of Fra’ Sabba: *In the morning, when you arise, get into the habit of saying the under-mentioned prayers while you dress: Gratias ago tibi omnipotens Deus Aeterne, qui me hac nocte, et etc., Vias tuas, Domine, demonstra mihi, Illumina oculos meos, Pater noster, the “Credo of the Apostles”, which is the rule of the Christian faith. The Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, Ave, santissima Mater Dei. In principio erat Verbum e Qui habitat in auditorio Altissimi. And you must recite the same prayers in the evening when you go to bed, while you get undressed, and by doing so I hope that day and night you will be under the protection of Our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy Mother* (S. DA CASTIGLIONE, *Ricordi ovvero Ammaestramenti*, ed. S. CORTESI, Faenza 1999, Ricordo 2).

⁸ The daily recital of the one hundred and fifty *Pater noster* by the Professed replaced the daily use of the psalm book (consisting of one hundred and fifty psalms) for the recital of the Divine Office by clerics and monks. This practice was specially widespread for the lay brothers in the monasteries, who were unable to participate in the monks’ chorus using the liturgical books because they were often illiterate.

confession, and for this purpose Fra' Sabba recommended electing a priest "*of holy life, sufficient and practical*" as a permanent confessor, to be adopted as spiritual director.

This life of piety would have led the brother to practise daily union with God and at the same time would have guided him towards full communion with Christ through love, through his presence when meeting with the poor. "*Show yourself to be always willing and caress the poor,*" Fra' Sabba continued, "*because in them the true image of Our Lord Jesus Christ is reflected and shines, and most of all the poor elderly, the crippled, the homeless, the weak, the sick and the young, those you can clearly see are unable to earn a living. The same you will do to the poor wanderers and the ultramontane who are worthy of attention*" (Ricordo 5).

In the origins of the Hospital in Jerusalem the brothers' spirituality and life of piety, as they are described in the *Rule* of Raymond du Puy, were very simple and essential compared to those of lay brothers in the monasteries. After the militarization of the Order, the social and cultural status of the Professed rose until it corresponded, in our times, to a gentleman's level of education and religiousness. Despite

this, the Johannite spirituality was always a step ahead of the common condition, in fact it was seen as the model – under an ethical and religious profile – of the Christian knight and of the true gentleman. The knight brothers considered themselves to be the heirs of the *novum militiae genus* (the new kind of knight epitomized by military orders) created in Jerusalem after the first crusade, whom St Bernardo di Clairvaux had praised so highly. The spirituality they proposed was an alternative Christian model for the life and conduct of men dedicated to the military life. During the middle ages the Johannites – together with the Templars, the Teutronics and other military orders – had embodied the ideal type of Christian knight, the complete opposite of the lifestyle of the secular knights, with different interests from religious ones. In modern times, the Hierosolymitan Knights were very different from the idea of the courtly knight, worldly and frivolous; they espoused the model of the *miles Christi*, in conformity with the evangelical principles and infused with Christian virtues. It is no accident that the eight-pointed cross, adopted by the Johannites as their uniform, was given a high symbolic significance, evoking as it did Jesus' sermon on the mountain (Mt 5:1-12):

the lifestyle of the eight beatitudes represented the daily habit worn by the Professed. For the Johannite it was a continual stimulus to live in the tension towards the last half of his existence, and that is in holiness.

The true Christian knight fought the good fight of faith. Therefore the Christian witness of the Johannite could even go as far as martyrdom, although he usually only experienced the “white” martyrdom of charity towards the poor and sick: “*our Brothers,*” said Le Marinier, “*for the pledge made with God continually risk their lives serving others, whether in the war against infidels or in the hospitals and infirmaries. A sacrifice that is no less than any other sacrifice that God can ask of a simple man*”⁹. The knight’s spiritual battle meant that he had to deny himself every day to support the weight of the cross, following Christ up to the total gift of life for love of God and his brothers. The offer of his life was a profession of faith in the victory of Christ over death and sin, in the resurrection and in eternal life.

⁹ *Istruzioni*, p. 88.

An Ancient and New Spirituality

These elements of the Johannite spirituality have been preserved and transmitted to the modern age, although changes in society and the growing sensibility in the ecclesiastical community have given them a less anachronistic form. In other words, the Order of Malta's spirituality has been modernised but nevertheless remains faithful to the Hospital's ancient traditions.

The Order of Malta has laid down its arms, but its Professed have not forgotten their mission on the battlefields and have continued to combat the suffering of the wounded and sick, of the war widows and orphans, just as they take care of the victims of natural disasters and create health facilities, permanent or temporary, among the populations lacking any kind of medical or hospital assistance, and especially in mission lands and in developing countries. The high numbers of lay people entering the Order enables the Professed to disseminate the particular elements of the Order's spirituality beyond the boundaries of the aristocratic structure, bearing in mind the serious de-Christianization of society and the need for a new evangelization of the populations of ancient Christianity: a commitment that is still involving all the

components of the Church. The religious-lay nature of spirituality is thus rendered even more evident by combining the community profession of the Catholic faith with a personal confession of faith in Christ the Lord, paired with the daily witness of charity.

The Professed have thus assumed a new responsibility within the Order, because their life of devotion has also set an example for their non-professed confreres as well as provide an index of the Order's credibility for the Church and for society. The *Regulations and Commentary* return repeatedly to these aspects of the Professed's spirituality to clarify some indisputable and essential elements of the Knights of Justice's life of piety.

First of all, the centrality of the Eucharist in which the Knight of Justice is an assiduous participant, receiving communion. Then there is the daily liturgical prayer, that is the recital of the main parts of the Divine Office, frequent use of the sacrament of penance, private prayer, meditation, adoration, *lectio divina*, the annual spiritual exercises and the days of retreat and silence, as well as some practices of devotion, and especially the Marian prayer of the rosary and the *Via Crucis*. A life of piety that gives an idea of

how the spirituality of the Professed combines liturgical and community prayer with personal prayer to strengthen daily, through love, the presence of God in the life of a Johannite brother, to preserve the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the fragility of his existence and to enable him to perform his mission in the Church and in the world, serving Christ in the poor and sick.

The spirituality of the Order of Malta in practice translates into the vocation and the dedication of the Professed to *tuitio fidei* and to *obsequium pauperum*.

Mons. Luigi Michele de Palma
Conventual Chaplain

KNIGHTS AND DAMES IN OBEDIENCE 1956-2011

1. The judgement of the Tribunal of Cardinals, 1953

With letters dated 5 and 12 November 1951, Grand Master fra Ludovico Chigi Albani Della Rovere asked the Holy See to “*determine the nature of the sovereign and religious order of the Sovereign Military Hierosolymitan Order of Malta*”. Grand Master Chigi died on 14 November 1951, and, according to the 1936 Constitution, Baliff Fra’ Antonio Hercolani Fava Simonetti, as the most senior Baliff, took office as Lieutenant *ad interim* in charge of the government of the Order until the election of the new Grand Master. The Holy See requested that a new Grand Master not be elected until a new Constitution had been approved.

With a chirograph dated 10 December 1951, “*granting the repeated petitions of the Sovereign Military Hierosolymitan Order of Malta*” Pope Pius XII established a Tribunal of Cardinals¹

¹ The Tribunal of Cardinals consisted of Cardinal Eugenio Tisserant, chairman, and of cardinals Clemente Micara, Giuseppe Pizzardo, Benedetto Aloisi Masella and Nicola Canali.

to determine the nature of the sovereign and religious order of the Sovereign Military Hierosolymitan Order of Malta, to which numbers 2 and 4 of the first Title of the Constitution of the same Order refer, and the extent of its competence as well as its relationship with the Holy See².

On 24 January 1953 the Tribunal of Cardinals announced the final judgement regarding:

1. the nature of the sovereign order
2. the nature of the religious order
3. the extent of its competence as well as its relationship with the Holy See

After this judgement an intense work of codification³ was initiated by the Commission set up by the

² AAS, XXXXV, 1953, the entire judgement pp. 765-767, the quote p. 765.

³ The documentation on writing the Charter of 1956, the Rule for the Knights of Obedience of 1959 and of the Code is conserved in ASMOM, Fondo generale, W 1426-1437. My thanks to Valeria Leonardi and Valérie Guillot. I also thank Thierry Combéléran for his suggestions on the revision of the Order's law (1953-1959).

Sovereign Council⁴ and by Commission⁵ of Cardinals set up with chirograph of Pope Pius XII dated 1st February 1955 and with apostolic letters *sub anulo Piscatoris* dated 25 April 1955⁶.

The Order was governed by the Lieutenant *ad interim* Fra' Antonio Hercolani Fava Simonetti from 1951 to 1955; Fra' Ernesto Paternò Castello succeeded him as Lieutenant of the Grand Master from 25 April 1955 to 8 May 1962.

⁴ The Commission was created on 11 February 1954 and chaired by Don Angelo De Mojana; vice chairman bailiff Hutten Czapski, secretary Diego Prado Colon de Carvajal; members of the Sovereign Council with the subsequent intervention of Bailiffs Oer, Donnersmarck and Metternich for Germany and Robert Grant-Ferris for Great Britain. See G. MICHEL DE PIERREDON, *Histoire politique de l'Ordre Souverain de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem (Ordre de Malte)*, 6 voll., Paris 1956-2005, V, 2001, p. 70.

⁵ The Commission consisted of the chairman, cardinal Tisserant, and of Cardinals Micara, Pizzardo, Aloisi Masella, Canali, already members of the Tribunal established in 1951, with the addition of Cardinal Valerio Valeri, prefect of the Congregation of Religious.

⁶ PIERREDON, VI, 2005, pp. 638-640.

2. The creation of the Second Class in 1956

The term “class” to describe the different categories of the Order’s members appears for the first time in the Constitutional Charter⁷ *ad experimentum* of 1956. Over the centuries the Order, mainly made up of lay religious, had admitted other categories of members with different names: donats, confreres, knights of devotion, knights of honour, dames decorated with the cross of the Order. For the first time however the “Knights of Obedience” and the “Donats of Justice” instituted by the new Constitutional Charter are combined in a “Second Class” after the First Class of Professed Knights and Professed Chaplains.

The terms “obedience”, “donat” and “justice” had already been used in the Order, but had been attributed to categories of people, lay or priests, with different functions than those now attributed to the

⁷ *Constitutional Charter of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta*, Rome 1961, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Vatican City 1957. Promulgated on 8 December 1956 by the ordinary Sovereign Council presided over by Lieutenant Fra’ Ernesto Paternò Castello di Carcaci, becoming effective 1st January 1957.

Second Class. The first mention of a new category of members appears in a letter in early March 1954 from the Commission⁸ for the reform of the Statutes presided over by Angelo De Mojana di Cologna. In the letter, signed by the members of the Sovereign Council, dated 21 September 1954 to Pope Pius XII referring to the reform of the Order's Constitution, Lieutenant Hercolani writes:

Moreover, with the same aim a specifically established Commission of the Order has elaborated a plan for creating – desired also by the Holy See – a new class of Knights who, through a solemn Promise, shall commit themselves to special religious obligations and charitable work. This category, that could be open to all the Order's current ranks, including those who are not of noble lineage, must collaborate alongside the current Professed Knights in solemn vows, in all the offices, except that of the Grand Master, and certainly this new category will foster new vocations in the solemn profession⁹.

⁸ See note 4.

⁹ PIERREDON, V, 2001, p. 79. The letter was signed by Fra' Ernesto Paternò Castello, Fra' Raimondo del Balzo di Presenzano, Angelo De Mojana and Gottfried Erwin Gudenus.

Important points in this letter are the plan to create a new category of knights with a solemn promise, that this category could be open all the Order's ranks, including those who are not of noble lineage and the statement that "*certainly this new category will foster new vocations in the solemn profession*".

3. The pontifical brief *Præcipuam Curam* of 1956

With the brief¹⁰ *Præcipuam Curam* on 21 November 1956, pope Pius XII approves the Order's new Constitutional Charter, which is the *primaria lex eiusdem Ordinis*. The pope says he is happy to collect the first results of the work by the Tribunal of Cardinals established with the chirograph of 1st February 1955¹¹. The brief retraces the editorial histo-

¹⁰ The brief is reproduced in *Constitutional Charter of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta*, Rome 1961, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Vatican City 1957, p. 4-8, and in G PIERREDON, VI, 2005, pp. 641-643.

¹¹ PIERREDON, VI, 2005, p. 641.

ry of the Charter presented by the Lieutenant with his Council to the Holy See and reformed by the Council of Cardinals and orders that it be published and take effect “*written in the best form and amended*”¹².

The brief also establishes that the Lieutenant, who “*with diligence and zeal has contributed greatly to the achievement of what these letters treat*”¹³ remains in office for three years until the next chapter general, as set forth in the new Constitution. Lastly, the brief asks that the specific laws regarding the professed and knights of obedience be written and published “*at the soonest*”¹⁴.

¹² “*Scilicet ex animi sententia Nostri evenit, ut eiusdem Ordinis Primaria Lex, quæ Carta Costituzionale vulgato vocatur nomine, a Magni Magistri locum Tenente, una cum eius Consilio Ordinario Supremo, Apostolicæ huic Sedi porrecta et a Consilio illo Purpuratorum Patrum recognita, in aptiorem formam redacta et emendata, tandem edatur suamque vim obtineat*” (*Ibid.*, p. 641).

¹³ “*Statuimus præterea, ut idem Magni Magistri locum Tenens, qui diligentia sua et navitate ad rem quam hæ litteræ spectant, efficiendam quam non paulum contulit, in munere maneat usque ad capitulum generale ex novarum Constitutionum præscripto*” (*Ibid.*, p. 642).

¹⁴ “*Volumus denique ut ea præsertim legum pars, quæ pertinet ad rite instituendos Professos et Equites ab Obædientia, qui ex harum Constitutionum præscripto, secundam Ordinis classem efficiunt et ad eorundem operam disponendam, quam primum edantur*” (*Ibid.*, pp. 642-643).

4. The first *Rule* of the Knights of Obedience of 1959 and the *Code* of 1966

The *Constitutional Charter* was promulgated on 8 December 1956 and became effective on 1st January 1957 *ad experimentum* for three years. According to Pius XII's brief, a necessary condition for being able to approve the *definitive Constitutional Charter* was that it included specific legislation for Knights of Obedience.

It took the two Commissions, that of the Order and that of the Cardinals, two years to bring out an initial *Rule of Knights of Obedience and Donats of Justice*¹⁵. On 10 June 1959 the Sovereign Council had approved the part of the *Code* regarding the *Rule of Knights of Obedience and Donats of Justice* and, bearing in mind the notes sent by the secretary of the Commission of Cardinals and also considering that it was urgent to make it effective, said *Rule* was promulgated on 4 July 1959.

¹⁵ Promulgated with decree n°5288 of the General Index, session of 4 July 1959. This first "Rule" is published in PIERREDON, VI, 2005, pp. 647-656.

The *Rule* has nineteen articles, preceded by the *General Instructions* for the members of the three classes. For the first time the *proprium* of the Knights of Obedience is specified (Article I):

Knights of Obedience “obligate themselves by a special promise, binding in conscience, to a life leading to Christian perfection, according to their own state of life, in the spirit of the Order and in the field of its works in conformity with the prescriptions belonging to them and to the directives of their legitimate superiors. Full of spiritual worth in their promise before God, Knights of Obedience must diligently observe divine law and the precepts of the Church so as to be a constant example of piety and virtue, of apostolic zeal and of devotion to our Holy Mother the Church. They have to study with love and be faithful to the spirit of the Order, as set down in its Regulations, to its history and its millenary traditions and contribute promptly and generously in the achievement of its particular objectives, in the manner and to the extent they are indicated and ordered, enlivening with Christian obedience relations with their superiors and through charity the connections with their confreres and relationships with others.

In addition they pledge to use material goods justly avoiding exaggerated ostentation and, as far as possible, satisfying the needs of the poor. The Knights of Obedience will have the duty of setting an example of a life based on Christian morality, in accordance with the obligations of their status¹⁶.

Article II specifies the procedure for admission and, contrary to that proposed in Lieutenant Herculani's letter of 21 September 1954, states that this category should be "*open to all the Order's present ranks, including those who are not of noble lineage*"¹⁷; stated that access to the Second Class is reserved for Knights of Honour and Devotion and for Knights of Grace and Devotion.

For the non-noble members the 1959 *Rule* establishes Donats of Justice, covered by articles XVI to XIX. The *definitive Constitutional Charter*¹⁸ was promulgated on 27 June 1961 after being approved by pope John XXIII with the brief *Exigit apostolicum officium* dated 24 June 1961. The 1959 *Rule* was

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 648-649. Our translation from the French.

¹⁷ See note 9.

¹⁸ *Constitutional Charter of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta. Promulgated on 27 June 1961*, Rome 1961.

published, with some changes, in the *Code* promulgated on 1st August 1966¹⁹; article 7 b of the Code states: “the numbers of members of the Second Class is fixed at 500 but the Chapter General may propose an increase in this number to the Holy See”²⁰.

During the formation courses for the Knights and Dames in Obedience it could be useful to go over this *Rule*, tracing the changes in the *Codes* of 1966, 1979 and 1997. Among the passages left out of the subsequent editions is the following fine exhortation of 1959, under article IV:

They [in charge of the Probationship] must try to refine and strengthen in the Aspirant the sentiments of Christian piety and pursuit of perfection necessary for the Promise to have the value of a true and enduring *conversatio et suavitas morum* and to help render more abundant and fruitful the apostolate work that the Aspirant must perform as a member of the Order in its service²¹.

¹⁹ *Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta. Promulgated 1st August 1966*, Rome 1966.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6. The members of the Second Class currently number 673, with 119 Dames and 554 Knights.

²¹ PIERREDON, VI, 2005, p. 650.

The formula of the Promise is slightly different from the present one, as are some particular instructions for the Second Class.

5. The *Regulations and Commentary* of 1969

The special Chapter General of 27-28 November 1969, in application of Conciliar Decree *Perfectæ Caritatis* and of the Motu Proprio *Ecclesiæ Sanctæ*, elaborated an “*Interpretation and Comments of the Rule*”²² that was the most authoritative and extensive text for the spirituality of the Second Class before the publication of the *Regulations and Commentary* of 2011.

The *interpretations* and *comments* for the Rule of the Second Class replicate the most important points of the 1959 *Rule*²³. Among the *comments* of 1969, two in particular should be pointed out: that regarding the expression “binding in conscience” and that

²² S.M.O.M., *Regulations and Commentary*, Rome, 1970, pp. 27-43.

²³ For a comment on these single points refer to my article *The Promise of Obedience in the Second Class*, in “Journals of Spirituality”, V, Rome 2005, pp. 29-45.

regarding the “intermediate position”. There had been doubts about the interpretation of these expressions and the opinion of the Cardinals’ Commission established in 1955 was requested. The cardinals stated that:

The bond established by the promise is stronger than the promise of the Tertiaries or Oblates²⁴.

The Knights and Dames in Obedience hold an *intermediate position*²⁵ inside the Order’s three classes, both with regards to duties and to responsibilities. With reference to the ancient religious orders, the *commitment* in the Third Class is comparable to the commitment made by the oblate of monastic order and the tertiary of the mendicant orders. The *Promise of Obedience* is a form of *intermediate* obligation between the *vows* of the First Class and the *commitment* of the Third Class and is a *stronger*²⁶ commitment than that taken by the members of the Third

²⁴ *Regulations and Commentary* 1969, p. 20.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 20.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 20.

Class and, according to one of the Evangelical Counsels, is comparable to some forms of promise approved by the Holy See:

“The Church has always given permission and has accepted the fact that a special group of faithful might spontaneously bind themselves by a particular promise to pursue a useful spiritual objective” ²⁷.

In creating the Knights and Dames in Obedience,

The Holy See has conceded to the Order of Malta the authority to institute a Class whose Members are bound by the observance of *one* of the three Evangelical Counsels namely, Obedience, and this not by a temporary or perpetual vow, but by a special Promise that can be withdrawn. The members who make this promises are seeking to attain Christian perfection by limiting their full liberty – within the possible limits imposed by their profession and their family status – by the

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 20.

promise to obey their Superiors in the Order, by following the prayers and spiritual exercises especially established for them in the Rule and by cooperating in an exemplary manner with the realization of the aims of the Order²⁸.

6. The *Codes* of 1979 and 1997

In 1979 the *Constitutional Charter*²⁹ and the *Code*³⁰ were promulgated with the amendments decided by the Chapters General of 1973 and 1978. The *Charter* replicates³¹ the articles of the 1961 *Charter*; the Code

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 22.

²⁹ *Constitutional Charter of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, promulgated on 27 June 1961, with the amendments decided by the Chapters General of 1973 and 1978*, Rome 1979.

³⁰ *Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, promulgated on 1st August 1966, with the amendments decided by the Chapters General of 1973 and 1978*, Rome 1979.

³¹ Articles 8 § 1 b and 9 § 2.

devotes its entire chapter VII to the members of the Second Class, from article 107 to article 125.

In 1997 the new Constitutional Charter and the Code³² were promulgated, reformed by the Extraordinary Chapter General of 28-30 April 1997. The new Charter introduces Dames in the Second Class, calling both Knights and Dames “in Obedience” (instead of the previous formula “of Obedience”), Knights and Dames of Magistral Grace in Obedience and also introduces that withdrawal from the Promise cannot be unilateral, but has to be decided by the “Grand Master, with the deliberative vote of the Sovereign Council”³³. Other amendments are also introduced, of which the most significant is the suppression of the Donats of Justice.

³² *Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, promulgated on 27 June 1961, reformed by the Extraordinary Chapter General of 28-30 April 1977, Rome 1977.*

³³ *Code 1997*, pp. 92-93; *Regulations and Commentary 1997*, p. 62.

7. *Regulations and Commentary* of 2011

The *Regulations and Commentary*³⁴ of 2011 devote 20 pages to the Second Class, to be studied, analysed and meditated. Of particular importance are the *Introduction*³⁵ and the *Fundamental Considerations for the Second Class* that stress the specific aspects of the vocation of the Order's members "in Obedience". The introduction summarized what I have covered in this article, that is the motu proprio *Præcipuam Curam* of 21 November 1956 and the Charter *ad experimentum* that institute a new Second Class in the Order, adopted by the *definitive Constitutional Charter* of 1961 and by the Code of 1966, amended with the *Charter* and *Code* of 1997:

The introduction of this new Second Class (Members in Obedience) has to be seen against the background of the worldwide expansion of the Order after World War II, and the need of

³⁴ The documentation on the editing of the *Regulations and Commentary* of 2011 is kept in ASMOM, Fondo generale, W 1900-1906.

³⁵ *Regulations and Commentary*, Roma 2011, pp. 59-60.

support for the Members of the First Class to lead a growing institution. Additional Members were needed to carry out functions which formerly could only be exercised by Professed Members. Since together they would form a group imbued by a religious character, which leads a religious and sovereign Order, it was considered important that these additional Members possess certain qualities and make a Promise of Obedience³⁶.

The specific reference to the context in which the Second Class was instituted: “*against the background of the worldwide expansion of the Order after World War II*” is perhaps what explains both Grand Master Chigi’s initiative to *reform* the Statutes, and Lieutenants Hercolani and Paternò’s efforts to make the Order more responsive to changed situations and above all its global growth in the different continents. Also significant was the need for new members who could perform the functions hitherto reserved for the professed members with the specific indications that they be carried out *together* and with a *religious char-*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

acter, “since *together* they would have constituted a group with a *religious character* at the guide of a religious and sovereign Order”.

The term *religious character* was often repeated in the preparatory texts from 1956 to 1959 with the adjective *spiritual*: the creation of the Second Class was explicitly desired to foster the *spiritual* growth of a greater number of the Order’s members:

The institution of the Second Class has extended the possibility, for “non-Professed” Members, to follow a path to Christian perfection in the spirit of the Order’s charism ³⁷.

This character of the Second Class was already established in the 1959 Rule, and confirmed in the *Regulations and Commentary* of 1969 that adopt the teachings of Vatican Council II with regards to both the lay and religious members. The *Regulations and Commentary* of 2011 also adopt the teachings of Vatican Council II as well as subsequent documents of the Magisterium, accentuating more precisely the

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

universal vocation for holiness and the “multiple ways to serve Christ”, including that of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem with the *Vows* in the First Class, the *Promise* in the Second Class and the *Commitment* in the Third Class:

The three Evangelical Counsels (Poverty, Chastity and Obedience), in their multiplicity, are proposed to every disciple of Christ. They have to be put in practice by each Christian according to his vocation³⁸.

The *Fundamental Considerations for the Second Class* point out that “accepting the obligation to live according to a particular spiritual rule in a particular order of the Church entails a more decisive form and a clearer testimony of a life in accordance with the Gospel and as a disciple of Christ”³⁹.

Fr. Costantino Gilardi OP
Grand Cross Conventual Chaplain *a. h.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

NOTES FOR THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE ORDER OF MALTA'S CHAPLAINS

The Priests in the Order of Malta

To achieve its aims ex Art. 2 §1 of the Constitutional Charter¹, the Order of St. John the Baptist of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, of Malta, which is a religious and lay Order, also numbers among its members the Priests or Chaplains who, are an integral part of the Order itself.

The Chaplains belonging to the Order of Malta's members of the first class, to which the Knights of Justice, also called Professed belong, are Professed Conventual Chaplains who have taken religious vows². The Code, in articles 51-60 gives regulations

¹ *Constitutional Charter and Code of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, promulgated 27 June 1961, revised by the Extraordinary Chapter General 28-30 April 1997*, Rome 2007, p. 7-55.

² For a systematic overview of the Code's regulations see T. RINCÒN PERÈZ, *De los institutos de vida consagrada y las sociedades de vida apostólica*, in *Comentario Exegetico al Código de Derecho Canónico*, Pamplona 2002, II, 2, pp. 1387-1814. See A. MARINI DETTINA, *La professione negli Ordini Cavallereschi*, in *Apollinaris*, 78 (2005) n1-2, pp. 517-525.

for the Conventual Chaplains and article 50 says that “Professed Conventual Chaplains with religious vows consecrate themselves to God and, under the authority of the Superiors, dedicate themselves to the pastoral care of the members of the Order, to religious assistance towards its charitable and missionary works, and to the service of its churches”³. According to art. 9 para. 1 of the Constitutional Charter, the Professed Conventual Chaplains take the profession of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience according to the Code, “aspiring to perfection according to the Gospel. They are religious for all purposes of Canon Law and are governed by the particular rules which concern them. They are not obliged to live in community”. Articles 51-50 of the Code also contain rules for Professed Conventual Chaplains⁴.

A priest must not consider his admission into the Order of Malta as an honour but rather a commitment

³ *Constitutional Charter and Code*, Art. 50 *Code*.

⁴ See also *Regulations for the Professed Conventual Chaplains*, Rome 2002. It is current practice for a priest who makes his religious profession becoming a Professed Conventual Chaplain to remain in his original diocese.

to a special and specific ministry in and for the Order⁵. The Chaplains of the Order of Malta, are undoubtedly effective members, as laid down by the Constitutional Charter and Code, which are the primary sources of the Order of Malta's law. Finally, they are defined and mentioned in the *Regulations and Commentary* which gives legal, doctrinal and hortatory guides, as well as spiritual guidelines. The full membership of priests in the Order of Malta, either as Professed Chaplains or as Conventual Chaplains *ad honorem* and Magistral Chaplains implies, according to the status of each, living the special Order of Malta's charism.

Regarding the Spirituality in the Order of St. John the Baptist of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta

Generally when we speak of the spiritual patrimony of an order we mean its physiognomy, its function that expresses how the faith is lived in the experience of the Church, according to the cultural forms and

⁵ *Regulations and Commentary, Promulgated by H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing and approved by the Sovereign Council on 18 February 2011, Rome 2011 p. 53-54.*

historical moments of ecclesiastic life. This spiritual patrimony expresses the spirit and aims of the founders, who give the Order its physiognomy, nature, purpose, spirit and dispositions, with the traditions that have been formed inside it. In this case reference is to can. 578 CIC 83.⁶

Christian spirituality is that experience that intimately touches, absorbs and convinces in the meeting with God in Christ, provoked by the Word of God listened to, recounted, witnessed internally by the Spirit itself. This experience must be announced, discussed with the brothers in faith, underpinned by a discreet and effective interior presence that leads to a personal and social witness in the Order itself, like life and hope. The Order of Malta must be understood as a community, that is an ecclesiastic place and entity and not only a mere instrument. The secular spiritual patrimony of the Church, and in particular that possessed by the Order of Malta, must guide every Christian generation towards the living faith, the act of believing and surrendering to God as *fides qua cred-*

⁶ T. RINCÓN – PÉREZ, *Sub. Can. 578*, in *Comentario Exegetico*, II,2, p. 1415-1416.

itur, prayer and piety. The spiritual patrimony expresses the unity of the faith in all the faithful, and the “unity of ecumenical identity” in serving, expressing, living, defending and illustrating the common faith, where history becomes a reference, an opening and projection towards the future.

Christian spirituality and that of the Order of Malta is expressed in the liturgical prayer and in the way indispensable for the *Christifideles*, that is in the celebration of the sacraments and especially the Eucharist. This latter is the culmination, the norm, the criterion, the benchmark, the source of every Christian prayer. The spiritual patrimony of the Order of Malta has to unite with that of the Church, inserting it in that culture of the faithful in the different Christian communities (Priories, Sub Priories, etc.) according to the Order’s charisms and traditions⁷.

⁷ CCC n. 2684 that continues: “The different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are essential guides for the faithful. In their rich diversity they are refractions of the one pure light of the Holy Spirit”. See reference in J. DIMECH, *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Valuteers of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta*, Malta 2006; G. THADIKKATT, *The Source of the Spirituality of the Syro Malabar Church*, *The Harp* 17(2004) 131-160.

Firstly it must be said that all Christians are called to holiness (*Lumen Gentium* 39-43), following Christ in the Church according to their status in life (LG 41), experiencing their faith in ecclesiastical communion. The Order of Malta offers the chance to achieve holiness by acting out its charisms. For priests in particular references can be made to the elements of can. 1029 and can. 378 CIC 83, naturally according to the Order's principles and charisms. To achieve Christian perfection in the Church according to can. 577 CIC 83, you can be called to become members of the Order of Malta, religious and lay order but which also has chaplains; in agreement with said Code, the Constitutional Charter states its purpose to be the: "promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members, service to the faith and to the Holy Father and assistance to one's neighbour" (art. 2 §1). Thus the Order of Malta's chaplains, legally, spiritually and morally full members of the same Order, have the fundamental task and duty of aiming at holiness both personally and as ordained ministers, that is priests, to help all its members, and to promote the Christian and spiritual life, achieving the aims laid down in the Order's Constitution, art. 2 §1.

Art. 50 of the *Code* divides this pastoral and spiritual activity into: a) pastoral care of the members of the Order; b) religious assistance towards its charitable and missionary works; c) service of its churches⁸. With regards to spirituality of chaplains no distinction is made as to the exercise of their specific ministry for the lay faithful members of the Order. In the end, it just signifies personally living a charism as teachers of the faith for the lay members.

The Order of Malta's spiritual experiences have varied in history (and we can acknowledge the contradictions, sins and lack of response to God's plan). As witnesses to the Order's values the chaplains must express that faith, hope and charity, with the connotation of gratuitousness, mutual attention, promotion of the person and for the person.

The Order of Malta's spirituality must have as reference the Word and the Sacraments, living in communion with the Church, prayer, and in particular a special devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary of Philermos, St. John the Baptist, Blessed Gerard and all the Order's Saints and Blessed, practising the virtues inherent in its charisms.

⁸ *Constitutional Charter and Code*, Art. 50 *Code*.

Theological Virtues with Direct Effect on *Tutitio Fidei and Obsequium Pauperum*

Some fundamental requisites emerge in part of art. 3 del Regulations for Conventual Chaplains: an integral priestly life involving liturgy, theology, spirituality and discipline in maintaining the faith and customs. The unique nature of the Order of Malta embraces the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity that characterise membership in the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, with all the related aspects. Just think of the constant appeal for every Christian, and above all for members of a religious order, of conversion, with periods of fasting, praying and charity, but also self-control, combating passions, greed, conceit, unhappiness and avarice (directly contrasting with defence of the poor), but also impurity, together with egoism, envy and jealousy.

The Virtue of Faith

The Christian faith is the first virtue that appears, the first virtue of the triptych of the three theological virtues. For all the faithful, and especially for the chap-

lains, it is necessary to live the faith with a concreteness in agape (in charity) and in the community, trying to love concretely where Christ himself enters: “each time you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me”. Having faith in God means entrusting yourself to Him with complete trust in His grace and His strength, it is believing in yourself not as self-referentiality but as recipients of the gifts of divine grace. In St. John’s Gospel, chapter 10, Christ depicts himself as the good shepherd who would lay down his life for his sheep and who also tells us (John 10:10) “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly”. To have faith is to live in fullness, to incarnate in your existence the strength of the Holy Spirit. To construct your life in faith with the help of God is to become grace and gift for your brother; in this way you achieve fullness.

It is no accident that the Sovereign Military Order of Malta took *tuitio fidei* as its motto. This term indicates observance, vigilance, custody, defence, protection, care, taking care, treating, supporting, watching and keeping. We see that they are terms which will be our concern, with relation to our status, all our life. The fact of belonging and working, and thus recognizing yourself in the Order of Malta’s values implies for each of us

living in full the theological virtues, faith, hope and charity - as Christians and in a special way as experiencing its charism. Observing the faith implies living in conformity, in compliance, in respect and in obedience. Vigilance in keeping the integrity of the faith. This also refers to the part of the Order that is military, where vigilance is a duty of the soldier knight. Defence also refers to a military Order, where protection involves a service for the faith and for the *Christifideles*. Taking care means being full of solicitude and of thoughtful and diligent attention that the faith be preserved by ensuring that it is protected. This care is also expressed in custody, a typical verb for expressing a deaconship and a military character. Treating, through bearing witness to the faith, the wounds of the body and the spirit. Supporting and watching also refer to the Order as a military order, maintaining firm the faith.

The Virtue of Hope

If the theological virtue of faith tries to fulfil the relationship of the human being with the three persons of the Trinity, then hope becomes the will and

tension to seek and possess it. Hope has as its aim God Himself and is expressed by a person's desire to stretch out to the Trinity. Hope is realistic and implies a labour of love, a work of faith as 1Thess 1:3 says, and endurance in hope and gives the energy for combating discouragement and physical and spiritual obstacles. Our daily commitments must be characterized by hope as a) anticipation of the heavenly Jerusalem where there will no longer be mourning nor tears nor lamentations; b) helping the human beings, especially those who suffer, with the kindness of love, benevolence and compassion. The qualities of hope are: a) steadiness (1Cor 10:12; Phil 2:12); b) lovingness and being charitable, elements necessary for becoming a member of the Order of Malta.

The Virtue of Charity and Charitable Works

We read in 1Cor 13:13: "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love". Love is the greatest commandment. The root of love is divine grace; God who is love; the horizontal dimension is anthropological and has as reference the Person,

the Other. The term love is translated with *eros* but also with *agape* that means free and joyful giving, love that creates the value of the other who is loved for what he or she is, that becomes love of giving. Agape is the recognition of the other as a person, as you are.

Charity includes a) mercy (Eph 2:4: God is rich in mercy) and its works, that generate compassion, tenderness and benevolence, extinguish hate and create solidarity. The fruits of charity are also characterized by benignity, gentleness, patience, kindness, peace, compassion and joy (Gal. 5:22-23; 1Cor 13:4-7; Eph 5:31, 6:2; Col 3:12-15). Charity must be expressed b) in the solidarity that is the ancient works of corporal and spiritual mercy (Mt. 25:31-46), where the highest example is fraternal communion. The third expression of charity is c) the justice that must be performed in charity

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta has taken as its motto not only *tuitio fidei* but also *obsequium pauperum*. But what does *obsequium* mean? The first assonant term is *ossequio* as respect, reverence and homage. *Obsequium* also means obedience, support, amenability that involves comprehension and indulgence (the opposite of rigorousness, gratuitous severity). The term also involves loving compliance as sat-

isfaction, the desire to satisfy others' needs; it requires respect, courtesy and willingness.

Obsequium pauperum is expressed in charity, that for the chaplain is a grace and a gift received from God but which must be bestowed on the Confrere and especially to the sick. This exercise of charity must be discreet, not intrusive, not importunate, not taxing.

The path of charity and of *obsequium pauperum* leads us to live in humility every day, in our daily routine, in our habitual or occasional relations or even in the extraordinary ones that the Lord himself enables us to experience. *Obsequium pauperum* prompts us to open up our hearts and see the presence of the other beside us in a new way. The text in Mt. 25:31-46 signifies that we have a lord who was the first to suffer hunger and who gave food to the famished; the first to suffer thirst and who promised that he will give water that will gush forth for life eternal and we shall no longer be thirsty; the first to visit the sick and to give them not only words of comfort, but also health, hope, and meaning in life; he bent over the sinner, he came into the world for this!

Besides living fully the virtues which directly pertain to the Order's charism, the Chaplain must also

practice the virtues that the four arms of the eight-pointed cross symbolize, and that is prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance.

Living the Beatitudes

The evangelical beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12) pertaining to the points of the Maltese cross are gifts of God, the virtues that lead to a good life and happiness for Christians. Traditionally the eight-pointed cross refers to the evangelical beatitudes, relating to the commitment of members of the Order of St. John against the egoistical satisfactions that people seek, in connection with the virtues that are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The beatitudes thus correspond to the gifts the Holy Spirit made to man and the chaplain will be the witness and leading force for appropriating these gifts.

1) Poverty of spirit that opens up the kingdom of heaven. Humility is related to this beatitude that makes us cry for our sins and fear God⁹.

⁹According to St. Ambrose poverty in spirit is related to temperance.

2) The beatitude of those who mourn is associated with prudence and precedes fortitude.

3) The meek shall inherit the earth, because besides fortitude they seek the Father's will.

4) The beatitude of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness leads to the virtue of righteousness which is associated with mercy, expressing itself in material aid and in alms-giving.

5) The merciful are the compassionate who follow the virtue of the counsel to give succour to the least¹⁰.

6) The beatitude of purity of heart refers to both the body and the soul which enjoy a serene intelligence to achieve beatific contemplation.

7) Blessed are the peacemakers; this exultation is united with wisdom, it conforms to God's will.

8) Persecution; this beatitude is associated with the fortitude that enables us to support with meekness and humility the trials and persecutions.

¹⁰ For Thomas it is the virtue of piety.

Devotion to Mary Mother of God of Mount Philermos

Every member of the Order of Malta, in particular the priests, have a special veneration for Mary Mother of God of Mount Philermos, through prayer and ever deeper meditation on the *mystery of Mary* and of her eminent place as Mother of God in the work of redemption. This veneration must be performed with simplicity of heart, with prayers of intercession and thanksgiving, rendering homage to the divine majesty for the gift made to Mary. Marian devotion, far from purely conceptual science, intellectual and abstract, must be based on the mystery of the revelation of God that is manifested in substance, in history and that is shown in contingent and concrete conduct. This devotion must fill the chaplain with a great veneration for Mary Mother of God, to discover the action of God in history and in time.

A practical indication for the Order of Malta's chaplain, besides celebrating all the Marian feasts of the universal Church and of our Order, both with the Eucharistic liturgy and in the canonical hours, is to recite daily the *Angelus* (called the people's shortest breviary by T. Schnitzler), together with the prayer of

the hours and the Eucharistic celebration of St. Mary on Saturday. Another Marian prayer par excellence is the *Hymnos Akàthistos*, the most important Byzantine testimony to praise for the Mother of God, together with the veneration of the image of the Mother of God of Mount Philermos.

Devotion to St. John the Baptist

St. John the Baptist is the protector and guide of the Order. He is baptizer, prophet and witness, he gave his life, from conception to martyrdom, to prepare the way for the advent of Jesus Christ. St. John the Baptist is an example of asceticism, contemplation and mission, essential characteristics of the baptized, but also of the Knight to be true witness: it is he who brings each member of the Order of Malta to Christ¹¹.

¹¹ E. LUPIERI, *Giovanni Battista belle tradizioni sinottiche*, Brescia 1988; E. LUPIERI, *Giovanni Battista tra storia e leggenda*, Brescia 1988; E. LUPIERI, *Giovanni e Gesù. Storia di un antagonismo*, Roma 2013; M. SODI, 'Vox clamantis in deserto'. *S. Giovanni Battista tra arte, storia e fede*, Vatican City 2013.

The cult of St. John the Baptist with the request for protection was often encountered in ancient times, and in the near East there was an iconic representation called *Deesis* of the saint with Christ in the centre and the Virgin Mary on the other side as intercessors in the Last Judgement. This devotion and request for patronage expresses the hope that humanity, and in our case the Herosolymitan Order, has placed in the mercy of the saint, united with the Virgin in the work of intercession. In mediaeval times St. John the Baptist was the protector and intercessor, the *advocatus*, he who presents the Order to the Lord, the saint who takes care of the Order and its members by protecting them in all the circumstances of their history. St. John the Baptist is he who, having heard the voice of God, helps each member of the Order of Malta to recognize Christ, to obey his voice, to pray humbly to Christ, to give thanks to God eternal, alive and holy. St. John the Baptist is the guide, intercessor and advocate, together with the Mother of God, toward Christ and God in history and in the Last Judgement.

Devotion to Blessed Gerard and the Order's Saints and Blessed

The founding saints are a reference not only for the idea that inspired the foundation, but also for living its charism. From Blessed Gerard we learn profound spirituality in serving the poor and sick, seeing Christ in them (Mt 25:40) The Order's saints and blessed are those who have lived its charism fully, becoming examples and benchmarks for us all. They are also those who intercede for the members as a whole, as well as personally for each of us.

Conclusions: the Chaplains in the Order of Malta

The chaplains, in communion with the Knights of Justice of the Sovereign Order, must first of all live personally the Order's charisms, at the same time ensuring the sanctification and active participation of all the Order's members in the promotion of its spirituality and in the achievement of its mission as set forth in the Constitutional Charter Art. 2 §1.

It must be remembered that we are dealing with a lay religious order, hospitaller, chivalrous and military, and sovereign. For the sanctification of its members it requests a special service in the faith, hope and charity towards our fellow men.

For the spiritual activities of a chaplain of the Order of Malta, the areas in which the mission of the Church has to be carried out have to be defined as well as the different functions in the context of a lay religious order. Besides living and personally being witness of the Order's charisms, the main duty of a priest in the Order of Malta is accompanying and providing spiritual paternity for all its members in the different classes. The duty of the Order's chaplains is also to seek (respecting the principle of variety and in communion with the Knights of Justice) the areas in which to work with the *Christifideles Laici* assisting with spiritual paternity the entire Order, in the prospect of a *diakonia*.

The priests in the Order must seek those forms of cooperation with all the other Order's members according to personal responsibility respecting, spiritual autonomy and personal liberty. The Order of Malta's chaplains have the task and duty to aim per-

sonally at holiness and to promote it through bearing Christian and spiritual witness, in accordance with the Order's charism, achieving the aims established in its Constitution, art. 2 §1. This pastoral and spiritual activity specific to the Order's chaplains has the following aspects: a) pastoral care of the Order's members; b) religious assistance in its charitable and missionary works; c) service of its churches¹². Moreover, the Order of Malta's chaplains must guarantee and protect the right of association, in accordance with the Order's directives, promoting the participation of all the members and controlling its effective exercise in the context of its charism so that all occurs in unity and in charity.

In conclusion, the Order's chaplains must be fully committed to its spirituality by living and loving membership in the Order, but at the same time contemplating and inspiring with purified and purifying eye the good carried out and to be carried out accord-

¹²According to Art. 50 of the *Code*.

ing to its particular charisms, helping their confreres enter the invisible world of the mystery of God, towards holiness.

Msgr. Natale Loda

THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF VOLUNTEERS

(Translated from German)

The expectation of people who serve under the eight-pointed cross is not only that they have a professional competence in the multifaceted care for the human person, but also that they are familiar with that for which the sign under which they serve stands. The helpers, too, of the charities of the Order of Malta need, accordingly, *“in addition to professional formation, especially a formation of the heart: they have to be led into that encounter with God in Christ that awakens love in them and opens their heart to their neighbour, so that the love of neighbour no longer remains, to them, a precept that is, as it were, enjoined from an outside force, but a consequence of their faith, which expresses itself in love (cf. Gal 5: 6).”*¹ The significant element of such spiritual formation is, therefore, not solely the transfer of knowledge, but, surpassing this, enabling the “encounter with Christ”. This

¹ *Benedict XVI.*, *Deus Caritas Est* 31.

shapes, on the one hand, the manner in which the helpers serve those in need, and equips them with the necessary tools, on the other, to give an answer when they are asked about Him in whose name and under whose cross they serve.²

1. Creating Opportunities for Questions

For the formation of the heart and the faith of the helpers, there is not one approach that fits all. And earlier strategies cannot be readily used in today's situation. Firstly, the Order of Malta works, in its charities, together with many people of good will some of whom are not at all, or not anymore, familiar with or connected to the sacramental, the communal and the life of faith of the Church. Secondly because the Christian faith, the way it is lived out and the way it sees the human person, is called into question to a more fundamental degree than it has been for a long time, especially in Middle Europe. Thirdly and final-

² Cf. 1 Pt 3:15.

ly because we, as a consequence of this, are living through an estrangement from the faith of the overwhelming majority of the generation of children and grand-children of the faithful who still feel at home in the Church.

In this time of upheaval we do still, to an extent, live in an environment that is seemingly still civilised by Christianity and shaped by the Church. In this, however, an overwhelming speechlessness is often evident as soon as existential questions are asked of the faith of the Church or of God himself. Often, this is covered up or displaced by an all the more unquestioning clinging to practices of the faith that have ceased to be understood a long time ago, and that certainly do not come naturally.³ Even if, in the familial and societal environment of the Order of Malta, there still seems to be, to a degree, a strong influence of the faith and the life of the Church, the life of the church is, here, too, often only seemingly and formally still

³ A young woman once told me that her father, a very accomplished and deeply pious member of the order, replied to a question regarding the faith that she was truly agonising about: “*But darling, one does know these things, doesn’t one?*”, with which the conversation was finished.

intact, while fundamental questions asked of the faith of the Church remain unanswered. Where the illusion of a plausibility of the faith is part of the societal discourse, and particularly the younger generation has not fully moved away from the practices of the faith, there is a great reluctance to ask about the faith. Where someone has to be afraid to open themselves up to ridicule by asking questions that have only seemingly been answered, or to risk being seen an outsider, the vitality of faith is but an illusion. Where nobody dares to ask, and nobody can tell who Jesus is to us and who we are to Jesus, what “salvation” means and how one can attain it, and why the church is holy despite the many rascals it has in it, there the faith has died by having been silenced.

An important prerequisite for the formation of faith in the charities of the Order of Malta seems to be, therefore, to create spaces (i.e. times and places, opportunities and atmospheres) in which people can ask the seemingly most simple and elementary questions of life of the faith of the Church and can find answers without being afraid of being ridiculed. In the Order of Malta and its charities, too, it has to be our concern to recognise the illusion of a plausibility

of the faith that exists without questioning and to do away with it, and to thus give people the freedom to ask about those things that support and change their lives and that of those closest to them, and endows them with hope even in the middle of death and through it.⁴

2. Love as a School of Faith

Another prerequisite for spiritual formation was already present at the very inception of the Order of Malta. For the first school of faith is love. This is already true for relationships between people. That one person loves another can never be proven, but always has to be believed. All outer signs of love are ambivalent and can equally well be self-expression,

⁴ It can be very painful to embark on such journeys of learning. When, a while ago, a lady, during a course on the faith here in Ehreshoven, began to sense what it means for her life when Jesus Christ on the cross descends into the depths of her own life and suffering, and is present in them as the crucified Risen One, she broke into tears and asked why she had to live to 52 for someone to explain to her so that she could understand, and how differently her life would have gone if she had realised earlier.

attempts at finding solace for one's own solitude, or a compensation for personal crises. This is, in all its differences, also true of the relationship with God. We are meant to not only **hold sentences for true**, but to believe the witnesses of God, to believe God His Son and His love to us. Faith is - in contrast to an opinion or knowledge - a question of relationship. Faith only occurs when I believe *something* as related by *someone*. This is why it is important that, in spiritual formation, we do not at first address the question of how Christians are meant to live. This is because Christianity is not, in the first instance, a moral question, and being a Christian does not consist firstly in being an upright person (and many upright persons would feel insulted by being called Christians). Rather, the formation of faith has to be, firstly, about who God in Jesus Christ is to us, and who we are to him. We need a *Christocentric* school of faith to realise that God cares for the world *anthropocentrically*.

The encounter with great affliction, and the current challenge to the notions of the dignity of being human, of the human right to life, and the notion that humans are out of their depth when faced with decisions about life and death - all that which shapes

the service of the Order of Malta in this time, and challenges it – makes it all the more important that the Christian concept of God, and the resulting concept of the human person, is understood.

If helpers and volunteers of the works of the Order of Malta are to know the faith of the Church and the faith in Christ, this cannot be done without a connection to the service they give, with the Church, to those in need. Of course there have to be dedicated events to understand, accept and live the faith (such as religious exercises, retreats and courses that teach the faith). But they are meant, in the first place, to help the very service become an encounter with Jesus Christ both for those serving, and those receiving the service. Here, He has promised to love alongside those who allow themselves to be sent, by Him, into the midst of the affliction of the world. Here, He promised to reveal himself as the one who has made a connection with the least of His brothers and sisters. Here, we experience the mercy of God, which is needed not only by those whom we serve, but also by us ourselves, who, in service particularly, are able to recognise our talents and strengths as well as our weaknesses and wounds.

3. Learning the Faith in Hearing, Praying and Serving with the Church

The helpers can grow in faith where they have reason and opportunity to ask questions and to find answers, and where they are aided in their interpretation of events to recognise that, and how, their service becomes a particular space for faith and for friendship with Jesus Christ. These opportunities for growing in faith become concrete in the three fundamental practices of the life of the Church (*martyria*, *liturgia* and *diakonia*), which also fulfil themselves in the vocation of the Order of Malta and its charities, to protect the faith (*tuitio fidei*) and to be obedient to the outcry of the poor (*obsequium pauperum*). The helpers and the employees of the charities of the Order of Malta enter a place of learning for their faith firstly where the salvific actions of Jesus Christ are being witnessed to them by His witnesses (*martyria*), where, secondly, they celebrate them in the prayer of the Church and receive them in her sacraments (*liturgia*) and thirdly and lastly in the places where they become part of performing them in the service to their brothers and sisters (*diakonia*).

a. Witness – hearing about God

For the spiritual formation of the volunteers in the charities of the Order of Malta, the encounter with witnesses of the faith is essential. The most obvious witnesses are firstly those with whom they serve: friends and relatives, priests and chaplains, members of the Order and experienced colleagues. In this it is important that we learn not only to study the sources of faith together, but to also tell each other how we live from these sources with the God of whom these sources tell. Talking about personal faith is still a taboo for many (including many members of the Order of Malta). Many shy away from discussing the faith. We should have the trust in God and in each other that we can learn this way of talking and of narrating. The experiences that we exchange do not have to be great mystical or charismatic ones. And we don't all have to have studied theology, either, to bear witness. People want to encounter credible Christians who live their everyday lives with its big and small challenges with God, and who interpret it in the light of the faith in His becoming man, and His sacrifice for us.

For many members of the Order of Malta, however, the most impressive witnesses were among the old

and sick, handicapped and poor people for whom they had the privilege to be present. This is why it is important for the helper, too, to accompany those in need especially on the journeys of faith. How many helpers have encountered people in Lourdes whom they were intending to serve generously, and who then turned out to be the ones who, through their faith and their wisdom, their bravery and their humour, became servants and generous givers of gifts of their helpers? It is those people that volunteers need to learn to listen to. And in their proximity, the role of the listening Mary of Bethany and the role of her industrious sister Martha can be one and the same. While we serve them, we hear Jesus in His witnesses.

And lastly we have to try to make the large number of witnesses that we encounter, with and in the Church, accessible to the volunteers. Beginning with the apostles and evangelists and the witness of the Holy Scripture, then the tradition and the authoritative witness of the Church. Chiefly, however, the witness of the saints, and in particular the saints of the Order (the witness of whom is, unfortunately, mostly sparse) and the saints of charity of the whole of the Church. She does encourage us, after all, especially

through the last few Popes, to open our hearts especially to the witnesses of the past decades, and to befriend them. They have believed in the same God who looks after us in our days, and entrusted themselves to the same Spirit that is also leading the Church and us Christians today. To discover this treasure of faith and to live out of it in our time and our place, we need wise, well trained, teachers of the faith who are rooted in the Church and who are receptive to the pastoral elements of their role.

b. Liturgy – belonging to God together

The awareness of belonging to a community that reaches up to heaven, the pilgrim Church on earth and the triumphant one in heaven, is particularly practiced in a dignified liturgy. When the congregation intones the Sanctus, it very consciously places itself in community with the heavenly hosts, the angels and the ones perfected in the Lord. In this, we need to make sure that the liturgy is being celebrated in faithfulness to the Church and in unity with her, and that it is arranged with an acute sense for the holiness of the events, in a manner that is appropri-

ate. A particular challenge lies in heightening the receptiveness for holy symbols through which God who became man works salvation in us and through us. Part of this is the openness and the readiness to admit the word and work of God into our own lives, together with the poor and the sick. His work of salvation intends, after all, to be admitted and allowed into the depths of our own lives – also into the abysses of guilt and entanglement, of hurts and losses, of life that is not lived or hampered, which we ourselves did perhaps not know of for a long time and which we only learnt of, ourselves, on painful paths in the relationship with people in need. This is because, where we together with the poor hear the word of God, bring our lives to God in prayer and believe that He works in the (sacramental) acts of the Church, the word of God sounds different, and even affliction that is hidden can come to light, and God's salvific work can reach our repressed guilt and our unacknowledged hurts of the heart and the soul.

The readiness for a twofold representation is also part of the growth in faith in the liturgy: On the one hand it happens in the experience that many in the service of the Order of Malta have made with the

prayer of those whom they accompany. For myself, the promise to pray for me, from handicapped companions and friends, or those who were suffering in body or mind, has been a great gift of solace. They pray from a different place to the one I pray from, they have a different proximity to the cross, and to this place of God-forsakenness to which the Son of God allows himself to be taken to overcome sin and death. Those who have heard, at one time in their lives, the Gloria sang or prayed in the Basilica of Pius X. In Lourdes, from thousands of stretchers and wheelchairs, and from the mouths of those shaken by life, the sick, handicapped and dying, get an idea of where their prayer comes from and where it goes – and what an honour it is to be allowed to enter into this prayer.

On the other hand, representation also happens where the helpers pray for those whom they serve. This is because, after all, we can never allow our service to be limited to exterior, material and physical help. Pope Francis sees “*the worst kind of discrimination from which the poor suffer [in the] lack of spiritual care. [...] They need God, and we cannot omit to offer them His friendship, His blessing, His word, the celebra-*

tion of the sacraments, and to show them a way of growth and maturing in faith. The preferred option for the poor has to show itself, chiefly, in an extraordinary and overriding religious care.”⁵ And where members of the Order of Malta pray with and for those they help, they are also strengthened themselves in the trust in God’s closeness and in the faith in His promises. Many young people around me have particularly experienced this when praying the psalms: While, often, they do not seem to correspond to their own feelings and their own situation in life at all, they make sense for the suffering person next to them. And particularly where these cannot pray themselves, the praying helpers experience that they are taking their place and that they are able to say for them, properly and rightly: “*My soul is sated with suffering, my life is close to the realm of death. [...] My eye becomes dull with misery. Every day, Lord, I call to you; my hands reach out for you.*” (Psalm 88:4.10) And where they pray in this way for those who have been given into their care, they are able to recognise that these are not only the words of the author of the psalms in days

⁵ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium* 200.

long gone, that it not only makes the silent cries of the disheartened that are close to them audible, but also turns the sighing of their own soul into a prayer, who finds new hope, as the soul has found people to pray with who know its pain and its distress, and bring them to God with it.

c. Diakonia – loving with God

Lastly, the service itself can become a school of faith (that is also witnessed to and celebrated at the same time). The Christian difference does not consist in performing works that are seen as specifically Christian, or in merely following the example of Christ. We should do the latter, but it does not differentiate us from those who do not believe in Jesus, but accept him as a model and example amongst many. The Christian difference consists in the fact that we enter into the movement of God's love to His people as revealed in Jesus Christ. This means, firstly, that we ourselves believe in and accept the love of God in Jesus. This happens most explicitly in the liturgy and the sacraments of the Church, in which the love of God explicitly gains physicality. Where our life as

Christians is shaped in this way, we ourselves become gifts of love. We receive the body of Christ not only because this is the way in which Christ wants to connect himself to us as individuals, but because we ourselves become the body of Christ through Him. And this also changes our relationship to the brothers and sisters in faith, with whom we are members of His body, with whom we are related to him and sent by Him, and who we, in a manner of speaking, “co-receive” when we receive Christ. And we become the body of Christ for others, for the world, for those to whom Christ sends us. To go to those in need, as a Christian, means to go to those in need with Christ - and so as people who are, themselves, spoken to by the love of God, reconciled and made able to love.

And we go to those of whom we believe that God has already loved them before, that they are “precious and valuable” in His eyes. It belongs to our faith in God that we also believe His love for the other. Whoever they may be, whichever way they may have chosen to live their lives, whether they be rich or poor, healthy or sick, sinner or saints - through Him they are our “*brothers and sisters for whom Christ died*” (Hans Urs von Balthasar). This is what we mean

when we speak of Christ's presence in the poor person. They are not only a vessel or a shell of His presence. After serving in Lourdes, in a very devoted and loving way, a member of the Order of Malta was asked by an elderly lady: "*Why are you doing all of this, and why are you being so nice to me?*". And he answered with the best intention: "*Because I see Christ in you.*" Later, the woman told me sadly: "*And I thought he meant me*". What the helper had meant, was: "*I have understood how Christ is to you. How you are so precious and valuable to Christ that He Himself wants to be wholly there for you and in your place at any cost, so you are also precious and valuable to me. Because Christ means you in this way, it is an honour for me that to me, too, you mean so much alongside Him.*" Where we focus on truly meaning our neighbour is where we recognise that we have done with Him what we have done for the least of our brothers and sisters.

Where the helpers and volunteers in the works of the Order of Malta find space in which faith can be asked about, and answers given, the faith of the Church can once again become plausible and relevant. Where they learn to believe in the living out of

the faith of the Church they can decide, freshly, to partake in the dynamic of the love of God, which shows itself in His becoming man, and which is co-performed by the Church. Where they experience, in service, the closeness of Jesus Christ to us humans, they will grow in faith which expresses itself in love (*Gal 5,6*).

To the least of our brethren

Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren,

you did it to me. (Mt 25:40)

You have gone before me, Lord,
to the least of our brothers and sisters,
to the hungry and the thirsty,
to the stranger and the naked,
to the sick and those in prison.

Take me with you to them, Lord,
so that I can find them and find you with them,
so that they and I can be sisters and brothers again,
and together be with you.

Whatever I do for them
is done with you and also for you.

What we receive from one another
is what you yourself wish to give us.
Wherever we serve one another,
we serve you and your Kingdom,
which none can establish in our midst
but you, and you alone.
Amen.

Rev. Fra' Georg von Lengerke, SOM
Professed Conventual Chaplain

THE SPIRITUALITY OF LEADERSHIP
IN THE ORDER OF MALTA:
A SPIRITUALITY OF SERVICE

“Whoever wishes to be the first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”¹ ‘Service’ is at the heart of Christ’s teaching and ‘service’ has always been at the heart of our Order since its origins in the 11th century. In his *Rule*, Fra’ Raymond du Puy, the 2nd Master of the Order, calls himself the ‘serf of the poor of Christ’. This was uncompromising language to express the kind of service expected of new knights: “It was not unusual, of course, for a Christian institution to insist that each of those it cared for represented the person of Christ, but the Hospitallers went further. Their admission rite made use of the unusual phrase ‘serf and slave’. A candidate promised to be the ‘serf and slave’ of his ‘lords’ the sick.”²

¹ Mt 20:27.

² ‘*The St John Idea*’ an unpublished paper by Professor Jonathan Riley-Smith.

This would imply that the knights were to regard themselves at the absolute service of the poor, indeed were ‘owned’ by the poor. In the 2nd regulation of his *Rule*, Fra’ Raymond says that the brethren should dress humbly “*because our Lords the poor, whose serfs we declare ourselves to be, go forth naked and foul with dirt. And it is a shameful thing for a serf that he should be proud and his Lord humble.*”³ In this way, members of the Order have always responded to what Christ meant when He said, “*In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me*”.⁴ ‘Service’ also inspires the ‘*tuitio fidei*’ of the Order, and together with the ‘*obsequium pauperum*’, our twin charisms give us the very reason for the Order’s existence: “*The purpose of the Order is the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its Members, service to the faith and to the Holy Father, and assistance to one’s neighbour.*”⁵

³ *The Rule of Raymond du Puy* New English translation by Fra’ John Eidinow.

⁴ Mt 25:40.

⁵ *Constitutional Charter* Art 2 §1 (*Purpose*).

It is therefore not surprising that in considering the spirituality of leadership in the Order of Malta, the spirit of 'service' should be at its heart. This is completely consistent with the Church's teaching and tradition on the kind of authority to be exercised by those who are its leaders, at whatever level. The *Code* of our Order states that the "*Grand Master as religious Superior and Sovereign, is to devote himself entirely to the growth of the Order's works and serve as an example in religious observance.*"⁶ In 2008, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life issued an instructional document entitled '*The Service of Authority and Obedience*'⁷. The members of the First Class, that is the Professed Knights of Justice and professed Chaplains, are recognised in Canon Law as being in the category of 'Institutes of Consecrated Life', and therefore what is written in this document is of particular relevance to them. However, as is made clear in the Regulations

⁶ *Code* Art. 134 (*Duties*).

⁷ *The Service of Authority and Obedience* Instruction, May 11th, 2008 from The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

and Commentary, members in Obedience and of the Third Class are also members of the Order, even though not as ‘religious’ having taken the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, but in different ways and degrees.⁸ So key points made in the ‘*The Service of Authority and Obedience*’ (SAO) about authority can be applied in various ways to all in the Order who have positions of leadership.

“In consecrated life authority is first of all a spiritual authority.” (SAO 13a) “Persons in authority are called to guarantee to the community the time for and the quality of prayer. (SAO 13b) The authority of leadership should be at the service of obedience to the Will of God. As faithful members of the Church, we are fulfilling the universal calling of all God’s people to holiness through our particular membership of the Order, and should be doing all that we can to fulfil its mission. Leadership in a religious order is not primarily a matter of simply ensuring that its aims, structures and procedures are organised and followed as effectively as possible, as in the leadership and manage-

⁸ See the ‘Preamble’ in ‘*Regulations and Commentary*’, 2011.

ment of some secular business concern, important though these things are. For it is a matter of seeing these things in a spiritual context. It is therefore firstly a *spiritual* leadership. All our leaders, at whatever level, should realise that they are called to serve an ideal that is much greater than themselves, and they should place themselves at the service of what the Holy Spirit wants to bring to fruition through the particular charisms of our Order. “*This ideal can only be achieved in an atmosphere of prayer and humble seeking, which allows (those in authority) to grasp the action of the same Spirit in the heart of every brother and sister.*”⁹ Leaders are in the position of assisting the promotion of the spiritual life, and this will include the ability to listen to others and to the signs of the times through prayer, attentiveness to the Word of God, and the ‘rule’ of our Order, as contained in *Constitutional Charter* and *Code*, and the Regulations and Commentary. Priors, Regents and Presidents, the leaders who are the ‘Superiors’ of their respective Priors, Subpriors and Associations, must ensure

⁹ SOA Section 13.

that they promote the sanctification of themselves and the members “*by furthering their participation in the spiritual life, and works of the Order, and to instil the consciousness of belonging, and fidelity to a world-wide Order under the leadership of the Grand Master.*”¹⁰

There must ensure that there are proper programmes of formation, which really do help candidates to understand the true nature of the religious order they aspire to join, and always in absolute fidelity to Order’s *vade mecum*, the ‘*Regulations and Commentary*’. As circumstances permit, there should be regular occasions organised for spiritual life to be intensified, for example in the liturgical celebration of the Order’s feasts, in retreats and days of spiritual recollection, in the participation in local, national and international pilgrimages. An obvious duty is to see that projects and programmes are established in which members can fulfil their duties of service to the sick and poor, encouraging all members to participate.

¹⁰ *Regulations and Commentary*, Section VII.

“Persons in authority are called to promote the dignity of the person.” (SAO 13c) Superiors should have respect for the dignity of all members in their Pories and Associations. This can be done by getting to know them, giving them appropriate appreciation and positive consideration, respecting confidences and helping them to grow in their membership of the Order. They should also do all they can to ensure that the dignity of the sick and the poor whom we serve is fully respected. Superiors should have a good relationship with those who are officers in their Pories and Associations.

“Persons in authority are called to inspire courage and hope in the midst of difficulties.” (SAO 13d) *“We must undergo many trials if we are to enter into the reign of God.”*¹¹ Superiors must realise that they may have to deal with difficult situations arising both inside and outside their communities. They must not retreat from these, but involve themselves personally, being ready to help whilst humbly recognising their own

¹¹ Acts 14:22

limits and the need for help from others. Of course, a superior is entitled to obedience from those under his charge, but as the Code of Canon Law makes clear, the superior is the first one who must be obedient: to the law of God from whom all authority comes and to whom he will have to render an account in conscience, to the teaching and laws of the Church, and to the proper law of the Order. The *Code of Canon Law* also says that

“by their reverence for the human person, (superiors) are to promote voluntary obedience. They are to listen willingly to their subjects and foster their cooperation for the good of the institute and the Church, without prejudice however to their authority to decide and command what is to be done.”¹²

“Persons in authority are called to keep the charism of their own religious family alive.” (SAO 13e) “Persons in authority are called to accompany the journey of ongoing formation.” (SAO 13g) The exercise of a superior’s

¹² Canon 618 ‘*Code of Canon Law*’ Vatican City, 1983

leadership must include being at the service of distinctive character of the Order, and therefore having a thorough personal understanding of it. Many problems which arise within the Order find their origin in a failure of members individually or collectively to have understood the true nature of the Order, and it would be disastrous if superiors were in anyway guilty of not understanding this themselves. The Order is not a 'social club for wealthy Catholics which engages in a few charitable activities and occasionally some religious ones'. Neither is it a 'Catholic' version of the 'International Red Cross', though of course much can be learnt from the excellence of that organisation. It is a religious order of the Catholic Church, its fourth oldest, and was solemnly recognised as such 900 years ago by Pope Paschal II in *Pie Postulatio Voluntatis*. Now that the *Membership in the Order of Malta: Regulations and Commentary* has been published and promulgated, superiors must do everything in their power to ensure that it is read, understood and implemented. As the Grand Master has stated, "*Members of religious Orders are required to read and re-read the Rule of their Order on a frequent basis...I commend the use of this document to all members of the Order. Please*

refer to it often – rather in the way of the monasteries of the Benedictine tradition where an extract from the Rule of St Benedict is read every day in choir... Please use it to help you achieve perfection in your lives as Christians and as members of the Order of Malta.”¹³ It would be a mistake to think that ‘formation’ is something which is only needed when candidates are preparing to enter the Order, or when the professed are pursuing their journey towards taking Solemn Vows. Superiors should ensure that all members are enabled to grow in their membership of the Order, and this does not exclude themselves. The recently created ‘Institute of Spirituality’ and its associated ‘Centre for Formation and Training’ are being established precisely to provide ‘in-service training’ for those who are assuming positions of leadership, or are already in them.¹⁴

“Persons in authority are called to keep alive the ‘sentire cum Ecclesia’.” (SOA 13f): The phrase ‘sentire cum Ecclesia’ essentially means ‘thinking with the

¹³ *‘Regulations and Commentary’*: The Grand Master’s introductory letter.

¹⁴ By Decree of HMEH the Grand Master, the ‘Institute of Spirituality of the SMOM’ was created. It is defined as the “*cornerstone of a larger Training centre where some training courses will be carried out for*

Church'. All members must remain in communion with the Church by being faithful to the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, as expressed, for example in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in the decrees of Church Councils and in Papal Encyclicals, and acting upon it. Article 9, paragraph 3 of the *Constitutional Charter*, obliges members of the Order to “*conduct their lives in an exemplary manner in conformity with the teachings and precepts of the Church and devote themselves to the charitable activities of the Order, according to the provisions of the Code.*” Superiors must do all that they can to encourage their members to live in accordance with their obligations as members of the Order, and in section VII of the ‘Regulations and Commentary’ they are reminded of this important duty. Where necessary members should be reminded of the commitments they accept-

members of the Order and for the different groups of person that have particular responsibilities within the Order.” The Institute is entrusted with the task of “*making texts on doctrine and training, organising courses on fundamental topics of spirituality, on the nature of the religious life and specific training, in the light of the charisma and the history of the Order.*”

ed when joining the Order. The failures of individual members to live their lives in an ‘exemplary manner in conformity with the teachings and precepts of the Church’ can cause great scandal and damage to the reputation of the Order. Those who are known to be members of the Order, and yet publically criticise the teachings of the Church, or fail to live their lives in conformity with the Church’s moral teaching would be examples of this. Superiors must handle such cases with great sensitivity, but also where necessary have recourse to the disciplinary procedures envisaged by the *Code* in articles 119 to 129.

“Persons in authority encourage the taking up of responsibilities and respect them when taken up.” (SAO 25a): Superiors should convey the strength that comes from Christ and the courage to overcome difficulties and attitudes of ‘giving up’ to those with whom they collaborate. Although they have the ultimate responsibility for everything that happens within their Priory or Association, they obviously cannot themselves do everything, and indeed should not. Superiors need to be present when they should be, to foster a spirit of interdependence and collaboration, and not believe that everything depends on their own

efforts. We have a structured organisation which aims to fulfil the mission of the Order, with particular members having their own defined responsibilities and the authority to fulfil them. Superiors should seek to promote a genuine spirit of communion, based on prayer and a shared desire to further the aims of the Order. They are the guarantors of the Order's rule, and should promote an understanding that even when acting alone, each member is doing so in the name of the Order and must work within its ethos, established guidelines and procedures.

"Persons in authority have a merciful heart and a sense of justice". (SAO 25d,e): Superiors should be willing to show forgiveness and mercy to those who have caused difficulties. They should be able to correct and give another chance to those who have made mistakes and want to be forgiven, remembering that without hope of forgiveness a member will find it difficult to get back 'on track' and may inevitably add wrong to wrong and failings to failings. However, if it is necessary to have understanding for the wrongdoing of individuals, it is also necessary to have a rigorous sense of responsibility for the good of the Order as a whole, and for those who may have been damaged by the wrong actions.

Understanding for our confreres cannot exclude justice for those who have been wronged. Superiors should not ignore the failings of those members who spread gossip, calumny and detraction, and if necessary appropriate action must be taken against them, as such behaviour has no place in the fraternity of a religious order, and can cause great damage. As St James says, “*The tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. How great a fire is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a great fire.*”¹⁵ It will also be well to remember what the *Rule* of Raymond du Puy says, “*And let no brother accuse another brother unless he would be able to prove the accusation properly; if he has made an accusation he cannot prove, he is not a good brother, and should suffer the same penalty the accused would suffer, if the accusation could be proved.*”¹⁶

“*Persons in authority promote collaboration with the laity*”. (SAO 25e): As far as our Order is concerned, we can interpret this as our collaboration with those who are not members of the Order. We are blessed with a large number of volunteers throughout the world who

¹⁵ *Epistle of St James* 3:5-6.

¹⁶ *Rule of Raymond du Puy*, 18

assist us, and many projects simply could not happen without their invaluable assistance. It is a duty of superiors to play their part in ensuring the clear transmission of the charism and mission of the Order to those who wish to receive it and work with it, ensuring that appropriate encouragement, training and support is available. “True to the divine precepts and to the admonitions of our Lord Jesus Christ, guided by the teachings of the Church, the Order affirms and propagates the Christian virtues of charity and brotherhood.”¹⁷ In this collaboration with non-members, we are contribution to the building up of the Body of Christ which is the Church.

*

The spirituality of leadership in the Order of Malta is indeed a spirituality of service. If leaders in the Order were to see their positions simply as means of becoming greater or ‘affirming’ themselves, having themselves served or making others serve them, they would clearly place themselves outside the Gospel model of authority and leadership. St Bernard of Clairvaux’s words to his disciple who became a Pope are worth some attention:

¹⁷ *Constitutional Charter*, Art. 2 §2 (*Purpose*)

*“Consider if you have made progress on the way of virtue, of wisdom, of intelligence, of goodness. Are you more arrogant or more humble? More benevolent or haughty? More indulgent or more intransigent? What has developed in you: the fear of God or a dangerous effrontery?”*¹⁸ A spirituality of leadership is above all one of humility. Whatever kind of leadership is being exercised within the Order, no better summary of its proper characteristics could be given than to finish with a quote from the Conciliar Decree *Perfectae Caritatis*: *“Superiors, as those who are to give an account of the souls entrusted to them, should fulfil their office in a way responsive to God’s will. They should exercise their authority out of a spirit of service to the brethren, expressing in this way the love with which God loves their subjects. They should govern these as sons of God, respecting their human dignity.”*¹⁹

H.E Fra’ Duncan Gallie

Member of the Sovereign Council

Director of Vocations to the I° Class of the Order of Malta

¹⁸ St Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Consideratione*, II, X, 20.

¹⁹ II° VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Perfectae Caritatis* on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, 14.

“SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN HOSPITALLER ACTIVITIES”

(Translated from French)

“And moreover we make another promise which is not made in any other religion, because we promise to be servants and slaves to our Lords, the sick ” (Cf. Statute ...)

This phrase from the 14th century ritual for solemn vows illustrates the specific nature of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta.

Ever since the creation of our institution in Jerusalem by Blessed Gerard, *“hospitaller and servant of the poor and friend to strangers”* (founder’s epitaph), sustained from the start by the Church and later recognized with Pope Paschal II’s bull *“Pie Postulatio Voluntatis”*, Gerard and his companions devoted themselves to serving poor pilgrims; today’s hospitallers are the heirs and continuators of this commitment.

When Gerard’s successor, Raymond du Puy, wrote his Rule around 1140 he, servant of the poor and guardian of the hospital (of Jerusalem), *«ordered those who come first of all to put themselves at the service of the poor to observe the monastic vows of obedience,*

chastity and poverty". This is how the first knights devoted themselves, through the three vows, to the service of the sick. It is this particular vocation of the hospitallers that constitutes the uniqueness of this religious institution.

The Rule of Raymond du Puy consecrates the Order's vocation; in accordance with Christian values, the Order devotes itself to serving the poor and the sick, bearing witness first of all to God's love and love of one's neighbour, and invites its members, through their commitment, to aspire to sanctification. This is why, 900 years later, the hospitallers, like the volunteers, are responding to Pope Francis' invitation to "go to the outskirts" to meet the others and with them to encounter Christ.

When the hospitaller bends over a sick person he participates in the suffering that Christ supported for us; likewise, when the hospitaller, wearing on his heart the white cross with the eight points that symbolize the Beatitudes, bends over a sick person he is the image itself of Christ who bends over suffering humanity. In this double encounter we commit our-

selves to His humanity, affectivity and spirituality, underpinned by the Order of Malta's almost millenary values that render the charismas "*tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*" indivisible.

Our history, our origin, our experiences, our joys and our trials all form part of us when we listen to those we receive and accompany and who reveal themselves to us and to whom we act not only as servants ("*receive them and give them the best you have in your house*") but, at Christ's invitation, as friends.

Our experiences of sickness, of misfortune, of pain and of physical or moral suffering prompt the essential spiritual questions asked by every living person. By concentrating its works on the indefeasible dignity of the human being, the Order's entire culture places us in front of the various stages of life encountered in our organizations, in our commitments and in our actions:

- the births in our maternity wards,
- the suffering in our hospitals,
- the isolation in our cities and our actions to combat this,

- the dignity in those we help to integrate, especially in the young,
- the death and hereafter in the elderly and dependent, in the dying ...

We are witnesses of this, but we are also the “repositories” of a treasure of fragile humanity made up of suffering and joy, of experiences and expectations.

Bearing witness to our Faith with our pledge to serve signifies acting according to Christ’s example of love, which gives a meaning to our charitable works; this is not only a humanitarian effort limited to physical care, but it gives a sense to looking after and accompanying the body and soul to meet God’s expectation of expressing His love to our neighbour so that he himself can do the same to others.

In Christ’s school, “the suffering servant” and “the servant of the suffering”, spirituality requires us to enter the apprenticeship of the presence and proximity of suffering.

But the return to our spiritual roots cannot be reduced to just training or learning to listen better, to

understand better, to be more just and more truthful. This return to our roots that the spiritual approach requires naturally requires an inner silence and the willingness and capacity to let others touch us. This is a way of poverty and benevolence.

It is this necessity to respect people's most intimate feelings that links us to the spirituality of Christ's fraternal consideration and offering, because what we receive does not belong to us: we are there as servants of the suffering humanity whom God loves and of whom God takes care, through our commitment but also through our coreligionists and others with whom we have the duty to meet and unite.

In our pledge, charity is expressed with its active aspect: to love God and put words and sentiments into action and concrete commitment. Our merely human actions will become actions of God because these are carried out in Him and through Him.

“Do not only look at what you are, but look at Our Lord beside you and in you, ready to go into action as soon as you need Him, and you will see that everything is all right” (Saint Vincent de Paul)

The Holy Father Benedict XVI emphasized the charisma of our Order and invited all men and women engaged in serving the poor and sick, hospitaliers or volunteers, to live intensely the mission to which Our Lord has called us and to cultivate its core features.

“In this sense, your Order, compared with other organizations that are committed in the international arena to the care of the sick, to solidarity and to human promotion, is distinguished by the Christian inspiration that must constantly direct the social engagement of its members. Be sure to preserve and cultivate this your qualifying characteristic and work with renewed apostolic ardour, maintaining an attitude of profound harmony with the Magisterium of the Church. Your esteemed and beneficent activity, carried out in a variety of fields and in different parts of the world, and particularly focused on care of the sick through hospitals and health-care institutes, is not mere philanthropy, but an effective expression and a living testimony of evangelical love”.

It is this evangelical love that strengthens and gives meaning to our actions, still extremely relevant today

and adapted to the needs of our time. We must be witnesses through our ability, our behaviour and our general attitude and be aware of bearing the vocation of a religious institution. We must remember every day our daily prayer, to be shared with all the men and women who work with us:

“ ...to help me to remain faithful to the traditions of our Order, in practising and defending the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion against impiety and in exercising charity to my neighbour and above all to the poor and the sick” .

Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel

September 2014

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE ORDER OF MALTA IN DAILY LIFE

*Create eyes in me, and so may I see with your eyes,
For I cannot see with my own eyes.*

*Create in me a pure heart
So that your holy power may reside within me,
So that, through the power of your Spirit
I may in a spiritual fashion
Inhale your salvation.
Provide me with hidden hands
So that with them I may carry the fiery Coal.*

St. Joseph the Visionary (Syriac 8th century)¹

Even for individuals who claim and are really convinced that their own beliefs, values and behaviour are not determined by the assertions, standards and practices of the market economy or contemporary liberal secularism, there can be a more or less con-

¹ *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life. Introduced and translated by Sebastian Brock, Cistercian Publications Inc., Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1987, pp. 356 & 357.*

scious acceptance of a core concept of that economy and its underlying paganism, i.e. the notion of complete freedom of choice.

It would be foolish and mistaken to deny that each one of us is not constantly faced with the need to make choices across the vast spectrum that constitutes the reality of human life. These choices range from the most banal to the most sublime, from the choice of the most ordinary commodities and activities that make everyday life possible, to profound moral choices that concern our immortal souls. It is important to make this apparently self-evident assertion because the persuaders, hidden or blatant who want us to 'buy' something, or 'buy into' something, would have us believe that there is hardly a single area of our lives that is not subject to choice.

At its most banal, we are assured that we can and do create our own reality, can create our own world. This is true, if only to a limited degree, if the world in which we live is the sole reality we are ever going to experience. In such a world which lacks the possibility of opening on to another, eternal, dimension, every aspect of life, from the most basic physical needs to

the highest achievements of artistic endeavour can become a commodity. Life and everything connected with it becomes 'product' and, therefore, marketable.

Within such a world – in fact, a world without God - spirituality becomes one of the many ways of coping with the essential absurdity of filling in and trying to make sense of the short span of time between our coming into being and our ceasing to be. However poetic, however benevolent, however altruistic, however heroic, humanly speaking, such spirituality may be – or, since evil really exists, may not be – this spirituality remains essentially a life-choice or, less kindly expressed in the jargon of the advertiser, a life-style choice. Such 'spirituality' remains one among many choices offered in the market.

As Christians who have died and risen with Christ in Baptism, spirituality must mean a heaven of a lot more. As members of the Order of Malta, we are called to live the mystery of Christ in all its fullness but filtered through the special prism of the Order constituted by its two inseparable principles, *Tutio Fidei* and *Obsequium Pauperum*.

If it is possible at all to speak about a spirituality of the Order of Malta, this can be done only from within the totality of the mystery of Christ and His Body, the Church. A genuine spirituality is not a private invention or project but a gift received, recognized, accepted and developed from and within the Church. Further, the 'spirituality' of any, order, congregation, movement or group in the Church is only one *tessera* or stone that goes to make up the whole mosaic. It is this awareness of being part of something greater that prevents the Order from becoming its own project, a sect, a life-style choice.

In spite, however, of what was said above, membership of the order does have elements both of choice and of life-style. When we become Christians, although we freely accept Christ's call, it is He who does the calling, the choosing, 'You did not choose me, no, I chose you, and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit.'² As persons of free will we can, it is true, choose not to be chosen, but the original

² Jn 15.16

summons comes from Our Lord. Again, the effects, the results of this being chosen, do, or should, govern our style of life. In the words of Pope Pius XII, speaking about the liturgy, one's life-style, or better, one's existence as a Christian is motivated by the 'supernatural breath in the midst of everyday life.'³

Clichés do not become any less true for being clichés. One of these is that we do not leave our faith safely behind us in the church when the Sunday – or for some, the daily – liturgy is over. Like any real Christian, the member of the Order of Malta tries to bring the 'supernatural breath', tries to breathe that supernatural reality in and into the midst of everyday life.

Tuitio Fidei is not, or is not only, a defence of the Faith against external enemies, a culture-war against those perceived as more or less wilfully wrong, invincibly ignorant, merely mistaken or, indeed, simply

³ Mediator Dei, par. 206.

different. This is not to deny that there are enemies of the Faith. This is not to deny that in recent decades, persecution of Christians, which has always existed, has reached a new pitch of virulence, hatred and actual physical and psychological violence. Sometimes, indeed, this violence is all the more pernicious for being clothed in more or less decorous discourse. Sometimes this attack on the Faith takes the form of a consciously cultivated indifference. Defence of the Faith, however, begins and takes place from within the Faith, from within the hearts of the Faithful.

Tuitio Fidei begins inside oneself, tries to make room for the 'supernatural breath' of God's grace that gives meaning, purpose, hope, direction, to all our believing and doing. This defence takes the form of right belief and right behaviour in our own personal lives that flows over in our dealings with others. The everyday spirituality of the Order teaches us to see with the eyes of Faith and to act with the heart of the Faith. Seeing with the eyes of Faith helps us to grow in loyalty to the Church and its Magisterium, not in a fanatical, uncritical, ideological, manner but in a humble willingness to listen and in a humble desire to

be, and sometimes even an insistence on being, heard. Such a loyalty to the Church also builds up one's own conscience, one's ability to justify and defend one's belief and behaviour in the face of various onslaughts, onslaughts against oneself and against the Church as institution.

Such gifts are nourished, the 'supernatural breath' is inhaled through the Church's liturgy, in particular the Mass, through the Church's other sacraments, through private prayer in which the individual appropriates, makes his or her own, the riches celebrated and offered in the liturgy. These gifts are further nourished by the study of the Faith, in particular by the prayerful reading of the Scriptures and study of the Church's teaching. An indispensable consequence of this nourishment, of this breathing is that we allow what can remain words, to become Word made flesh through involvement in good works, through charity of heart, charity of and in awareness and outlook and, essential for members of the Order, charity of and in action, most particularly for the sick and poor, our true icons of our true Lord.

Once one has acquired the armour that defends one's own faith, it becomes possible to act in defence of the Faith in a wider context. Here it is not, of course, a question of one following the other. Each kind of defence depends on and nourishes the other but it is certain that neither one can flourish without the other.

Obsequium Pauperum, too, is founded on a deep awareness of one's own poverty, neediness, one's dependence on God's grace. The awareness that one's own life is not a private project, but that even its very coming into existence depends on others, creates, demands a consciousness of solidarity and interdependence. Here, one is not speaking only of biology – we all have to have parents – but also of spiritual solidarity and interdependence. No-one can baptize him- or herself. From the first moments of our existence we depend on others, not only for physical existence and survival, but for spiritual life, growth and fulfilment. It is not purely a matter of poetry that the Church is called the Body of Christ. It is not merely pleasant imagery to describe ourselves as being members of that body, or in another image, as being graft-

ed on to the true Vine who is Christ. It is this expanding realization of our membership of one another, of our dependence on one another and, above all, of our dependence on Christ, that preserves us from a self-centred, materialistic anaesthetization of our awareness and conscience. It is this expansion of a heart aware at one and the same time of its own poverty and weakness but also of the gifts that it has received, that makes an awareness of the needs of others a challenge, a duty and a possibility. This expanded heart saves us from living an excused life, that is, a life excused by our own heedlessness, laziness, irresponsibility, love of comfort and which is, literally, a world away from a forgiven, absolved, life.

In the four Gospels there are six stories of feeding the multitudes. [give references] These have both a practical and a Eucharistic thrust. Our Lord is acutely aware, has overflowing compassion for the physical and, indeed, psychological, needs of the thousands who have flocked to him; flocked for whatever reason, the show, the fun, the possibility of miracles, the message. Above all, however, he has an overflowing compassionate awareness that he himself is the real

bread for which all are hungering, even if they may not be aware of it. For Our Lord, physical feeding and spiritual feeding go hand in hand. There can be no doubt, however, that the physical feeding is based on and points to the spiritual feeding. It is this reality that makes it possible to speak of a spirituality of the Order of Malta.

In the last section of Chapter 58 of his Rule, speaking of the ceremony during which one is accepted as a member of the community, St. Benedict requires the candidate to promise what he calls *Conversatio Morum*. This is often translated rather prosaically as ‘Conversion of Life’, or more quaintly in older editions, ‘Conversion of Manners’. What Benedict is talking about here – and has explained what this involves in the earlier sections of chapter 58 and elsewhere in the Rule - is the living, the living out, of a practical, everyday, spirituality. This conversion is one that happens in the everyday, this conversion is one that takes time, takes a lifetime. This conversion is a possibility and a duty for every Christian and happens by the faith-, hope- and love-filled performance of the duties, including the strictly religious

duties, of one's state in life and always in the awareness that all we do and are has meaning only to the degree that it is steeped in and reflects the mystery of Christ. Like most human reality, this daily round, this immersion in duty and generosity, is not always exciting or fun.

Spirituality in the everyday life of a Christian and a member of the Order is not simply a conviction or ideology put into action, however useful, valuable and praiseworthy, or indeed for some, even intellectually exciting. Much less is the spirituality of the Order of Malta an expression or justification of a sense of being an elite within an elite. Spirituality in the everyday is the normal Christian path, sometimes trudged along, sometimes sprinted along, in and into the mystery of Christ. Focus on any aspect of this mystery who is Christ, if this focus is exercised, with him and in his grace, always embraces the totality of that mystery. For this reason, the member of the Order who employs the double prism of *Tuitio Fidei* and *Obsequium Pauperum* has a doctrinal and practical guide along the path to and of the one essential saving mystery.

In order to defend, one must have something to defend, one must know what one is defending. In order to serve the needy, one must be aware to the extent to which one is needy oneself. To breathe the 'supernatural breath in the midst of everyday life.', one needs to learn how to breathe in and out that supernatural air that is the breath of God, the breath of the Holy Trinity with which we were sealed by the Holy Spirit in our baptism and confirmation in Christ. This is a supernatural respiration, not an artificial respiration, which we receive, primarily through the Holy Eucharist, but also through the other sacraments, through private prayer, study and our exercise of charity.

Thus, spirituality, the spirituality of the Order, is not a self-invented New Age recipe for coping with the absurdity of a life and world without God. Christian spirituality is a Christ-breathed gift to each one of the baptized which gives him and her, in the words of the Syriac Fathers, the luminous eye and luminous heart that enable one to see, understand and live the mystery that is Christ, not simply as a private arrangement between oneself and Him but in

harmony with the Church, his Body, and in the service of the most precious limbs of that Body, the sick and the poor.

*Stir up within me
The vision of your Mysteries
So that I may become aware of what was placed in me
At holy baptism.
Sanctify me by you Mysteries,
Illumine my mind with knowledge of you,
Make your hope to shine out in my heart.*

(Isaac of Nineveh [Mosul] 2nd half of the 6th century)⁴

Henry O'Shea, OSB,
Glenstal Abbey, Co. Limerick, Ireland

⁴ *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life. Introduced and translated by Sebastian Brock.* V. nota 1. pp. 351.

SPIRITUALITY AS THE FONT OF SERVICE

Introduction

The spirituality of a religious order should effectively promote not only the personal sanctity of its members, but also the charisms of that order. In the case of the Order of Malta, its spiritual traditions, which are varied and multiple,¹ support its particular charisms: *Tuitio Fidei, Obsequium Pauperum*. Defending the faith and serving the poor are not easy tasks in the materialistic Western societies in which we live today, societies that idealize wealth accumulation and personal gratification as the primary measures of a successful life.

¹ Over the years, there have been several interpretations of the Order's early spiritual values. Some historians have claimed that the Order was inspired by the Rule of St. Benedict, while other recent and more definitive studies point to the influence of St. Augustine's rule on Master Raymond du Puy (1120-1160). See Alain Beltjens, *Aux origines de l'ordre de Malte: de la fondation de l'hôpital de Jérusalem à transformation en ordre militaire* (Brussels: Poot, 1995); Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, "The Origins of the Vocation to the Knights of St. John", *Journal of Spirituality* 9 (2008), p. 17-26.

A recent study² of American young adults found that those born in the 1980s and 1990s have decidedly less concern for others or interest in community than previous generations. More than 70% say that being wealthy is “very important” to them, while only 45% believe that “developing a meaningful philosophy of life” is a worthwhile goal. In short, the survey indicated that “...recent generations are less likely to embrace community mindedness and are focusing more on money, image and fame.”³ Regardless of how shallow such goals may appear, they have gained significant traction among many today.

Citing this study is not an indictment of the so-called American Generation X and the more recent Millennial Generation. Rather, the survey’s findings are stark testament to the insidiously alluring environment in which these young adults have been edu-

² Jean M. Twenge, Elise C. Freeman, W. Keith Campbell, “Generational Differences in Young Adults’ Life Goals, Concern for Others, and Civic Orientation, 1966-2009,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 102, No. 5 (2012).

³ Jean M. Twenge, “Recent Generations Focus More on Fame, Money Than Giving Back.” (March 15, 2012).

cated and formed. Indeed, if vast majorities of young Americans are increasingly embracing a kind of self-centered hyper-materialistic world view, then how much more difficult is it to live the charisms of the Order in American or Western culture today?

This very challenge is reason enough for members of the Order to look to their spiritual lives to sustain the many and varied works of the Order that are focused on serving the poor and disenfranchised throughout the world. These ministries range from Malteser aid to Christians in Iraq and Syria to care for migrants from Africa bound for Europe to humanitarian aid in Gaza to thousands of local ministries in prisons, soup kitchens and healthcare facilities wherever there are knights and dames.

Only a strong and vibrant spiritual life can serve as a counter-weight to a world fixated on wealth accumulation and personal fame. As contemplatives in action, or as the Grand Master has put it “monks in the world”⁴, knights and dames are called to work in

⁴ HEH Matthew Festing, “The Grand Master’s Reflections,” *Journal of Spirituality*, 9 (2008), p. 7.

this materialistic vineyard, one that is increasingly indifferent and often hostile to both their ideals and their efforts. It is obvious that in our work, we cannot be sustained by humanitarian feelings alone. Instead, our work in the Order's ministries must be motivated by a concrete, emotional attachment to imitating Christ in His self-giving love. Thus, we must rely upon our spirituality to nurture our work and to give us the strength and motivation necessary to serve the sick and the poor. Consequently, we need a dynamic spirituality — a spirituality, as St. Ignatius Loyola pointed out, that reflects a vision of life, of work and of love.

God in All Things

For Ignatius, and many other great saints, the spiritual life rests on the realization that *all* things in this world are presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love to Him more readily. In other words, God is in all things in this world. God not only exists throughout and within the world — His creation — but He is also intimately involved in our day-to-day activities. He is not remote, not detached, not indifferent. He is present everywhere and in all

situations. In all things and in the midst of the world where we toil for the poor and sick, He is found. No matter how inhospitable or even hostile we may find our world, God is there. Henri J. M. Nouwen, speaking of the relationship between the notion of God everywhere and prayer, put it this way:

Praying is living. It is eating and drinking, action and rest, teaching and learning, playing and working. Praying pervades every aspect of our lives. It is the unceasing recognition that God is wherever we are, always inviting us to come closer and to celebrate the divine gift of being alive.⁵

This is an important recognition, for it explains in part what we mean by “contemplatives in action” and how we can embrace creation, in all its imperfection with serene joy as a means to know God and return His love.⁶

⁵ HENRI J. M. NOUWEN, *With Open Hands* (South Bend, Ind., Notre Dame Press, 1974), quoted in Wendy Wilson Greer, ed., *Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Only Necessary Thing* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), p. 40.

⁶ DAVID L. FLEMING, S.J., *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), pp. 1-6

We find, as Mother Theresa consistently reminded us, Christ in the most physically repugnant of the poor and sick. We can, therefore, work happily in the world, with all its obvious shortcomings, because we know that God is present in all our encounters. He has given us the world as the gift of creation, so that we may come to love the Creator.

Nouwen saw the affirmation of “God in all things” in prayer itself. “The great mystery of the contemplative life,” he said, “is not that we see God in the world, but that God within us recognizes God in the world.”⁷ By this, he means that contemplatives in action, such as knights and dames of the Order, come in touch with God as the center of their beings. Once in touch with this reality, the sense of God as present in all things in the world and in all that we encounter in our ministries, takes hold:

Through the discipline of prayer, we awaken ourselves to the God in us and let God enter our

⁷ HENRI J. M. NOUWEN, *Clowning in Rome* (New York, Doubleday, 1979), quoted in Wendy Wilson Greer, ed., op. cit., p. 35.

heartbeat and our breathing, into our thoughts and emotions, our hearing, seeing, touching and tasting. It is by being awake to this God in us that we can see God in the world around us.⁸

For Nouwen, contemplative prayer and through it the very real “discovery” of God in us is the window to a world in which God is in all things. In his classic work on the spiritual life, Benedictine Dom Wulstan Mork emphasized the fact that there is no clash between contemplation and action. In fact, “[b]oth are aspects of the same act – love... We go to prayer out of love, and we go to action impelled by that same love.”⁹

Bernard Lonergan also saw contemplation as the root of action when he suggests that we should “yield to the inbuilt intentionality of [our] own consciousness...and [we] will eventually discover ‘a region for the divine, the shrine of ultimate holiness...the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.’”¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ DOM WULSTAN MORK, O.S.B., *A Synthesis of the Spiritual Life* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 121-22.

¹⁰ JAMES L. CONNOR, S.J., ed., *The Dynamism of Desire*, (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), p.31

For Lonergan, spiritual development can in fact bring human beings to an understanding of inbuilt laws of God which, with God's grace, help man to transcend self-centered desire and reach out toward genuine human authenticity and Christian holiness. This interiority and search within for God, expressed by Ignatius, Nouwen, Mork and Lonergan, is the basis for the "intimate relationship between contemplation and ministry,"¹¹ a relationship that is that heart of the vocation to the Order of Malta.

The Call of the King

For Ignatius, the link between ministry and contemplation is further underscored by the "call of the King", an invitation to all to *work directly with Christ* in the world. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Christ calls his followers to assemble under His banner to overcome injustice and oppression and to battle the evils that beset humanity. For knights and dames, this is a personal invitation to work both alongside Christ and with others who have, by committing themselves to the Order, answered Christ's call. Ignatius was con-

¹¹ *Ibid.*

vinced that we cannot answer this call with the intellect alone. A fulsome response requires us to engage our hearts which, in turn, compels us to look deeply *into* our hearts:

Responding to the Call of the King requires that we think deeply about ourselves. What place does Jesus have in our lives? What has been our relationship with him? What is it now? What do we hope it will become?... Where does he figure into our ambitions? How does he affect our goals? Do we want to serve his purposes in our work? In our interactions with friends and family? Do we want to be an evangelizer?¹²

Putting our heart into our ministries does not mean that we are merely emotionally engaged in them. Rather, as Fleming points out, it means that our entire inner orientation, the core of our being, is committed to working with Christ in the world. This is not an inner state easily arrived at, for we are speaking of a total surrender to working with Christ to transform our world. Nor is it an inner orientation

¹² D. FLEMING, S.J., *op. cit.*, p.69-70.

that, once found, never again escapes us. Christ Himself pointed out this difficulty and challenge when He said, "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." (Matt. 15:8)¹³

Ignatius sees both an exterior and interior mastery of self as critical in achieving this inner orientation to work with Christ. Outwardly, there is no manifestation of inner turmoil (impatience, jealousy, pride, and so forth) by word, action, or body language. But this exterior control must find as its source "an inner effort and desire to imitate Christ in his self-giving love" which means charity and humility should "shine forth".¹⁴ In other words, in all that knights and dames do, they should "[g]ive the advantage to others; esteem them as better than yourself; show them respect and reverence; recognize in them the image of Christ."¹⁵

Dom Wulston Mork comes at the same issue from a slightly different perspective. He begins with the

¹³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ JAMES L. CONNOR, S.J., ed., *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

premise that we must be for the Father another Christ. He says, "...in every way Christ's life is ours: it is our exemplar and our source, ours to follow and to live by."¹⁶ Mork points to St. John Eudes (1601-1680), whose spirituality was based upon intense personal relationship with Jesus and who spoke to the issue of motivation:

...so you must be animated by the spirit of Jesus, live His life, walk in His ways, be clothed with His sentiments and inclinations, and perform all your actions in the dispositions and intentions that actuated His life. In a word, you must carry on and perpetuate the life, religion and devotion which He exercised upon earth.¹⁷

A Vision of Love

The third point that Ignatius makes is that our lives of action in the world must be guided by a vision of love. Prayerful reflection and progress in spiritual life

¹⁶ W. MORK, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹⁷ Quoted in W. MORK, *Ibid.*, p. 63.

provide us with the means to transform our disengaged hearts of stone into hearts of love, hearts that inspire us to engage in the Order's ministries as a response to Christ's call. Our prayer life should lead us to find God and fall in love with Him. Jesuit General from 1965 to 1983, Pedro Arrupe, S.J., put it this way:

What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what gets you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.¹⁸

If we need a spiritual life that helps us fall in love, then our prayer life, as contemplatives in action, cannot turn us inward with an exclusive focus on ourselves. For knights and dames, our spiritual practices should bring

¹⁸ PEDRO ARRUPE, S.J., quoted in Jim Manney, *God Finds Us* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2013), p. 17.

us closer to others, foster compassion for the poor, and point us in the direction of human solidarity. Nouwen, who himself worked with the sick and disabled for many years, saw prayer in this light. In the personal intimacy of prayer, God not only reveals our own “belovedness”, but also His love for all humanity. Our prayer life, therefore, should “deepen our sense of responsibility for others.” Echoing the key role of the heart, Nouwen says that personal interaction with God in prayer “...evokes in us an always increasing desire to bring the whole world with all its suffering and pains around the divine fire in our heart and to share the revitalizing heat with all who want to come.”¹⁹

Mork ties the notions of interior spiritual life and the life of active evangelical zeal together by reminding us that we cannot be contented with knowing, loving and serving God, but we must also dedicate our lives to *making* God known, loved and served by others. In our ministries, we give to others what we

¹⁹ H. NOUWEN, *et. al.*, *Compassion* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), quoted in W. Greer, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

have profited from in our spiritual lives. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that our works and ministries will thrive only to the extent that they are united to Christ Himself through this nexus of contemplation and action.

In all of our apostolic works we must remember that it is primarily Christ our Head acting through us His members. In our love of Him we give Him our humanity completely that He may continue to “cast fire upon the earth” through our contact.²⁰

Conclusion

Many spiritual traditions can lead us to this point: a prayer life that opens our hearts to loving, and being loved by, Christ as the basis of our commitment to the poor and sick. Bernard Lonergan said, “True love...is a first principle in one’s living...the origin and source that prompts and colors all one’s thoughts and feelings, all one’s hopes and fears, all one’s joys and sorrows.”²¹ The highest form of love is being in

²⁰ W. Mork, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

²¹ James L. Connor, S.J., ed., *op. cit.*, p. 29

love with God, total self-surrender to the gift of God's love. Lonergan spoke of a spirituality that brings man beyond himself, transcending himself, ceasing to be an animal in a habitat and becoming a genuine person in community.

It is this dynamic state, one that is never fully attained or permanently established, that fuels our work in the world and forms the basis of an active life of service to others. Neither mere humanitarian sentiment nor vague notions of improving the world can sustain the work of the Order. Rather, the Order's ministries can only be supported by a dynamic spirituality that fosters a deep love of God and others and is motivated by our willingness to "put on Christ" in our daily lives. Such spirituality will unfailingly support knights and dames, as we live out the Order's charisms in a world with very different values and priorities, yet one in which God is present everywhere.

Fra' Richard J. Wolff, Ph.D.
Sub-Priory of Our Lady of Lourdes

THE ORDER OF MALTA'S INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY

(Translated from Italian)

The Order of Malta's Institute of Spirituality project is now underway and some further information in this regard could be helpful¹.

The idea of an Institute of Spirituality is not new and was prompted by the aspiration to have a "Training Centre" in Rome. Both institutions were discussed during the Order of Malta's Strategic Seminar held in Venice from 16 to 18 January 2009. The resolutions of Working Group 1 included the request for a "convent" in Rome that would function as a '*training house*' for the various classes of Order of Malta members. The idea was also to use it as a centre for retreats and a place where the Order's Professed Knights would be able to spend periods of community life (*the topic of Working Group 1 was in fact the First Class or Knights of Justice*).

¹ The article "*The Order of Malta's Institute of Spirituality and Training Centre*" by Winfried Graf Henckel von Donnesmarck was published in the Journals of Spirituality (n.14 in 2013- pp.115-123).

In a religious order such as that of Malta, formation should provide an intimate knowledge of the Christian doctrine, of the teaching of the Church and of the charisma of the Order itself; this essential task can be performed by an Institute of Spirituality. In the Venice Strategic Seminar, Working Group n. 4 on the Order's Christian educational function had already inquired about this, whereas Working Group n. 6 on the promotion of the Christian culture had suggested setting up a study and training centre.

In subsequent years the project of the Institute took shape alongside that of a Training Centre. During the celebration for the 900th anniversary of the "*Pie Postulatio Voluntatis*" (February 2013) two meetings were held in which the duties of the Institute were gradually mapped out. In particular the topics of study and teaching were discussed as well as the choice of teachers.

On 21 June 2013, on the occasion of the Government Council meeting, His Highness the Grand Master issued a decree establishing the Order of Malta's Institute of Spirituality. This is the text of the decree:

**Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of
St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta**

**“Decree No. 11088 of Gen. Index \approx Meeting of the
Sovereign Council of June 21, 2013.**

Object: Establishment of the Institute of Spirituality

Taken note of the greater and greater exigency for the Members of the First Class to have some periods of Common life, and to enhance the spiritual aspect of their life, aspect that, in the same time, is at the base of the behaviour of life of all the members of the Order of Malta;

Considering that the creation of an Institute of Spirituality should represent the cornerstone for a more extended Formation Centre where formation courses could be treated for the Members of the Order and for various groups of people that hold a task in the Order's organization;

WE FRA' MATTHEW FESTING
with the favourable vote of the Sovereign Council
DECREED AND DECREE

Article 1

The Institute of Spirituality of the Order of Malta is established.

Article 2

The Prelate *pro-tempore* of the Sovereign Order of Malta is responsible for the Institute of Spirituality

Article 3

The Institute of Spirituality has the task to produce the texts on doctrine and formation and to organize courses on basic themes of spirituality, on the nature of the religious life and the specific formation, in the light of the charisma and the history of the Order of Malta

Article 4

The Institute of Spirituality will be situated at the see of the Sovereign Order of Malta on the Aventine

The Chancellery is charged of the execution of this Decree.

Jean-Pierre Mazery
Grand Chancellor

Matthew Festing
Grand Master

The basic tasks of the Institute are fixed in the decree as well as its aims according to the needs of the Order's members.

The first two paragraphs of the decree describe its purpose: deepening of the spiritual life of the members of the Order's first class and other classes. It was also established that the Institute would mainly be operating in the Training Centre:

Art. 3 gives the Institute the task of organizing courses on basic spirituality themes, on the nature of religious life and on specific training, in light of the charisma and the history of the Order of Malta.

The same article also assigns the Institute with the “*task of producing texts on doctrine and training*”.

The Institute is placed under the responsibility of the Prelate “*pro tempore*” (art. 2) and is located in the Order of Malta's seat on the Aventine Hill (art. 4).

In the International Strategic Seminar on Rhodes (14-16 February 2014), the theme of Working Group 7 was the: “*General Concept for a Central Training Body*”. On that occasion the papers and discussions referred to the aforesaid decree and made an in-depth survey of the functions of the Training Centre and Institute of

Spirituality and of their mutual working relationship, with a special regard for the preparation of spirituality courses. One of the Working Group's recommendations was that: *"the Prelate should form an 'Institute of Spirituality' Council under his supervision"*.

The Institute of Spirituality and the Training Centre were also discussed by Working Group 8 *"Recruitment and Training of the Order's Leaders and other Executives"*, which considered them institutions for achieving the aims laid down by the Group².

A new meeting on the Institute of Spirituality was held in Lourdes in May 2014 in which, the themes the Institute will treat, were examined. These include: The Religious Life in the context of ongoing formation in Christian life; -The Liturgical Life (Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours): introduction and discussion according to the various classes of recipients; -The Word of God: knowledge of the Bible and *'lectio divina'*; -The Magisterium of the Church with special reference to recent papal documents; – The Spirit

² With regards to Group 8, the Rhodes Strategic Seminar Proceedings include an in-depth study on the institutions in question by Fra' Duncan Gallie, Director of the Training Centre.

and Life of the Order's Members with regards to "*Regulations and Commentary*"; – "*Obsequium pauperum*" – the Order of Malta and the poor and sick; – The Spirituality of the 1st Class and in Obedience Class; – Christian social doctrine.

For the individual topics, a list of teachers from the Rome ecclesiastical universities and others was reviewed.

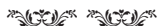
With reference to the task entrusted to the Institute by the decree to produce texts on doctrine and formation, the texts already existing in the various languages must be traced, in particular those written for the Order of Malta, both catechetical and formative. New texts will be added as indicated in the decree. It could also be helpful to publish the lessons held in the various courses.

Successively a Council of the Institute of Spirituality was formed with the Grand Commander and the Director of Centre of Formation as members as members *ex officio* and with other five members.

A booklet on the Order of Malta's history that highlights the spiritual aspects accompanying its historical vicissitudes was also recommended. This task has been assigned to three authors, each of whom has

been given a certain epoch in the Order's history.

A further meeting of the Institute of Spirituality was held on 22 October 2014, in which more operational issues were treated.



Some notes on the Training Centre

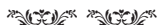
Since the time of the Venice Strategic Seminar the Order's authorities have been seeking a location for the Training Centre on the Aventine Hill. It was soon seen that the plan for a kind of "convent" in one of its buildings would be difficult to accomplish.

An agreement with the Benedictine Monastery of Sant'Anselmo, adjoining the Order of Malta's seat on the Aventine Hill, will permit the Order to make use of 26 rooms in a wing of the monastery destined for the guest quarters, currently under radical restoration. Besides the accommodation, the Order of Malta's training courses will also be able to make use of other services of the monastery. In the Order's premises a large meeting room is already available and, naturally,

the church of ‘S.Maria in Aventino’ connected to the Order’s building.

H.E. Fra’ Duncan Gallie has been appointed Director of the Training Centre, which can offer courses for Professed Knights, applicants and novices as well as other classes of the Order ranging from the presidents of associations to those in charge of the various activities of the Order itself.

The Institute of Spirituality’s activity will be applied to the various courses with doctrinal and spiritual programmes coordinated with the Training Centre.



Pope Benedict XVI, in the address given in St. Peter’s Basilica to the members of the Sovereign Order of Malta on 7 February 2013 for the ninth centenary of the “*Pie Postulatio Voluntatis*”, acknowledged that the Order, “*from its earliest days, has been marked by fidelity to the Church and to the Successor of Peter*” and that it has also distinguished itself “*for its unrenounceable spiritual identity, characterized by high religious*

ideals”. The Holy Father recommended that it “continue to walk along this path, bearing concrete witness to the transforming power of faith”.

It will be the task of the Institute of Spirituality to implement Benedict XVI’s instructions and ensure they take root among the Order’s members. It is very important that the Institute and Centre are considered as works of the entire Order.

+ Angelo Acerbi

JOURNAL OF SPIRITUALITY
PAST ISSUES

1. *A Consideration on “Novo Millennio Ineunte” for the Order of Malta* (2002)
2. *Toward a Spirituality of Communion* (2002)
3. *“Tuitio Fidei” and “Obsequium Pauperum” Today* (2003)
4. *The Pilgrimage* (2004)
5. *Order of Malta: Criteria for Identity and Life Commitments* (2005)
6. *St John the Baptist: Guide and Witness* (2006)
7. *Ecclesial Dimensions of the Order of Malta* (2007)
8. *Human Virtues - Christian Virtues – Events – The Young* (2008)
9. *Order of Malta: Fundamental Directions for a Renewal* (2008)

10. *Introduction to Prayer* (2010)
11. *Formation and Service* (2010)
12. *Order of Malta and New Evangelization* (2011)
13. *The Order of Malta and the Year of Faith* (2012)
14. 900 Years of the *Pie Postulatio Voluntatis*: Stimulus for a Renewal (2013)

Past Issues are downloadable from the intranet of the Order

